

Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the UK Bridges Board

Meeting held at Clarence Court, Belfast, on 18 June 2008.

Present:

Richard Fish	CSS/Cornwall CC (Chair)
Ronnie Wilson	DRD (Northern Ireland)
Tudor Roberts	Transport Wales
Bill Valentine	Transport Scotland
Greg Perks	CSS/Northumberland CC
Awtar Jandu	Highways Agency
Rod Howe	British Waterways
Brian Bell	Network Rail
Bob Flitcroft	CSS/Lancashire County Council
Dave Ambrose	CSS Wales/Neath Port Talbot CBC
Stuart Molyneux	Metropolitans / Salford MBC
John Carpenter	SCOSS
Andrew Oldland	DfT (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Yeoell, David Mackenzie, Paul Williams, Jim Moriarty, Graham Cole, Graham Bessant, Paul Foskett, Edward Bunting and Alan Dray.

2. Note of last meeting and matters arising

Note of last meeting

DfT Secretariat - as it is now planned to engage IHT as the Secretariat, the Board expressed its thanks at the last meeting to the DfT staff who have provided the Secretariat since the Board's launch in 2001. The Chairman wished this to be formally recorded.

Matters arising

TRANSEC's interest in roads and bridges - to consider issues arising at the Security of Road Tunnels and Bridges stakeholder group meeting, the Board proposed to invite Mike Wilson of HA to its October meeting

3. UKRLG feedback

UKRLG Review

The Board accepted the view that a UKRLG with a smaller, more strategically focussed membership could enable a greater number of other issues being delegated to the Boards.

The Board expressed the hope that HELG remain semi-independent of UKRLG and able to consider all aspects of efficiency in relation to highways.

Sustainable transport system

The comment was made that all Whitehall departments were issuing sustainability strategies, and that it was important that these should not conflict with the DfT strategy.

Transport asset inventory and condition data

The Board requested an update from DfT as soon as the mechanism is agreed for distributing the £15 million that has been announced to facilitate production of asset management plans.

Carriageway condition indicators

It was noted that a letter advising local authorities to continue surveying carriageway condition on unclassified roads would need to come from CSS rather than from the UK Roads Board or DfT.

4. CSS/Network Rail Liaison Update

Assessment and Strengthening Programme

The most recent CSS/Network Rail liaison meeting took place on 22 May. UKBB 04/08A showed the progress report for Bridgeguard 3 assessment and strengthening programme. The table showed that 25% of the overall programme had been completed. The main concern of Network Rail (NR) was the low rate of application of interim measures. NR's aim was to have 90% of BD21 assessments completed by 2009, and 100% completed by 2010. The NR team represented at the CSS/NR liaison group were keen to progress the assessment and strengthening programme. The first step was that they already had the raw data showing state of progress.

Gerry England was now the Director of Civil Engineering at Network Rail. He had decided that NR Regional Directors should be responsible for progressing the Bridgeguard programme in their areas. Andy Milne was co-ordinating the national Bridgeguard programme and was collating the statistics. Kent Farrell had left the team. The Bridgeguard team now consisted of Alan Dray, Ian Bucknall and Brian Bell. Brian Bell had agreed to produce a paper for circulation summarising the responsibilities of the National Bridgeguard 3 Programme Manager.

Action - Brian Bell

The Board asked NR whether a costed programme for Bridgeguard 3 could be produced. NR's response was that they were not sure whether the local authorities

were now using the prioritisation tool for bridge work. NR needed access to the authorities' calculations in order to be able to work out a costed figure.

Tony Norfolk (CSS) was looking to complete work on general network rail/local highway authority agreements before he retires. Bob Flitcroft would arrange a meeting with Tony Norfolk.

Action - Bob Flitcroft

Post Tensioned Special Inspections (PTSI) funding.

Brian Bell agreed to produce a statement on this on behalf of NR, and forward it to DfT.

Action - Brian Bell

Vehicle Incursions

NR were already in the process of writing to English local authorities whose progress with implementation has been poor. It was noted that NR also planned to write to the Scottish Government. It was suggested that NR should write to Scottish local authorities individually if their progress with implementation was poor. Bob Flitcroft agreed to raise this issue at the next CSS/NR liaison meeting.

Action - Bob Flitcroft

NR confirmed that winter gritting on level crossings was the responsibility of NR rather than the highway authority.

Brian Bell agreed to let the Secretariat have a copy of the Vehicle Incursion Mitigation Statistics for circulation.

Action - Brian Bell

Parapet Damage on waterway bridges

Rod Howe asked whether parapet damage on waterway bridges is the responsibility of British Waterways or the highway authority. This was an issue that he would raise with CSS. He was also in favour of regular meetings between British Waterways and CSS, and was considering writing to Graham Cole to set up these meetings.

Action – Rod Howe

5. Standing Committee on Structural Safety (SCOSS) - Presentation by John Carpenter

There had been recent concern within the industry about bridge safety, especially regarding the collapses which occurred on the I-35W (USA) and Montreal bridges. In the case of I-35W, design error was quoted as major contributory factor. However, SCOSS considered it important that mechanisms such as training, supervision, independent review, software validation and risk appraisal were in place to ensure that faults were not allowed to develop.

The Montreal collapse was quoted as due to a number of factors but was also a reminder that shear failure was sudden, and there were still some unknown factors connected to this. A recent *Structural Engineer* journal paper cast doubts on EC2 design formulation.

The Board's six strategic objectives had been noted with interest by SCOSS. SCOSS hoped that 'safety' includes people and structure as well as traffic, and suggested that 'efficiency' and 'economy' could go in hand with good 'safety', and that 'communication' could be added to the six strategic objectives. 'Quality communication' is important rather than 'volume communication'.

The three objectives introduced by SCOSS (the 3Ps) were as follows:

People

SCOSS urged all those with bridge interests to adopt Appendix 4 of the Health and Safety Executive's approved *Code of Practice on the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations*. Appendix 4 dealt with 'corporate competence' requirements for employees. Having good systems was also a test of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act.

Process

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) was producing some guidance sheets, at SCOSS' suggestion, relating to the production, quality control and use of software. SCOSS was keen to see the introduction of 'independent reviews' - different from Category 3 checks. Some concerns had been expressed to SCOSS regarding the operation of Category 3 - e.g. was it being undertaken by those with the appropriate competence?

The SCOSS Note on Eurocode assumptions stated that it was important that the assumptions in EN1990 were not forgotten. ICE were publicising this as a Policy Paper. SCOSS asked the Board to do the same.

SCOSS had made extensive comments on HA BD19/90.

Product

CE Marking: SCOSS was keen to see an explanatory booklet produced on this subject. It was important that designers fully understood the implications and limitations of EU standards in this respect. SCOSS was trying to find someone willing to fund what would be a simple guide to follow-on from the DETR 'CE Marking' guide of some years ago (but directed towards construction).

World-wide sourcing: Australia had had some problems recently with bolts sourced from outside the country. The British Construction and Steelwork Association (BCSA) had issued a guidance note on this. Bridge engineers needed to be alert to quality issues in relation to what was now often a world-wide sourcing situation.

Liquid Metal Assisted Cracking (LMAC): examples were continuing. These were small in number, but serious nonetheless.

CROSS

The CROSS scheme allowed confidential reporting of faults. SCOSS was working towards a long-term scheme for confidential reporting of faults. This had been proved to be worthwhile and was expected to be copied in other EU countries. Ten newsletters have been issued to date. SCOSS needed more contributors for the newsletter. A suggestion had been made that organisations (through managers etc) should decide what examples they may have, and create their own 'de-identified' report so they may be satisfied that no confidential material is involved. This could then be sent to CROSS. SCOSS urged all bridge sponsors to contribute to CROSS. SCOSS saw this as a good way to avoid complacency that could lead to further incidences of bridge collapses. John Carpenter will contact Neil Loudon (HA) to clarify the HA position on the adoption of the CROSS scheme.

Action - John Carpenter

6. UK Bridges Board Work Programme

The Board considered the letter of 29 April 2008 from Nick Bisson (DfT) and UKRLG Paper 22/07. It was agreed that the set of discussion notes for the preparation of a work plan were a transitional document which needed to be developed into a work plan which is consistent with UKRLG requirements. Greg Perks was taking this issue forward. Board members were requested to send their comments to Greg.

Action - Board members

7. Research

Bridge Inspection Competence and Training

This contract has now been let to TRL/Atkins. The first project steering group meeting had been arranged for 1 July. Stephen Pottle (TfL) would chair the group. The group membership had been agreed at the May 2008 meeting of BOF.

Masonry Parapet and Automated bridge inspections

It was hoped to let these two projects through the DfT procurement framework shortly.

Strengthening of Steel Structures and Non-metallic reinforcement

On these two projects, there was a need to resolve procurement issues relating the project originators' wish to retain intellectual property rights (IPR). DfT's view was that, if the research were being publicly funded, the IPR should be publicly available, with as many authorities as possible able to benefit from the research.

Asset management

It was noted that UKRLG projects to cover asset management and asset valuation, and local authority design and maintenance guidance would need to encompass bridges and structures.

Dry Stone Retaining Walls

CIRIA were collating comments on the last draft of the report to be issued. Brian Bell requested that CIRIA be asked for a copy of the consolidated comments to be circulated. The view was expressed that a Board project steering group should establish a role in managing the project, rather than allow CIRIA to assume the entire function. Ronnie Wilson agreed to organise a meeting. Richard Fish would propose to CIRIA that he provide a foreword for the published version of the guidance.

Approval procedure for funding within DfT

The Board requested that DfT provide them with information on how projects are recommended for approval by UKRLG, and the criteria used for further recommendation by the DfT Chief Scientist.

8. Tunnel Operators' & Geotechnical Asset Owners' Forums

A meeting of the Geotechnical Asset Owners' Forum would take place on 24 June. Edward Bunting from DfT would attend.

9. Vehicle Incursions onto Railways

There is still concern about the number of potential incursion sites in England and Wales where no remedial measures had been implemented. Network Rail were not able to produce separate figures for England and for Wales. Two hundred implementations were still to be agreed in England and Wales. There had been better progress in Scotland. Some authorities in Wales had implemented measures, but NR had not met half their costs and had tried to cap their contribution at £5k. NR's response was that they would take any spending request on its merits.

The protocol relating to assessment and scoring of sites had originally been published by DfT. The Board were in favour of a working party to consider whether this protocol needed to be revised. The Chair would write to Nick Bisson (DfT) to request this.

Action - Richard Fish

Network Rail had forwarded to DfT the name of a contact point for local authorities who have queries over agreeing work with Network Rail. Paul Foskett (DfT) would meet the Office of the Rail Regulator soon and would discuss the issue of co-ordination between Network Rail and local authorities in relation to vehicle incursions.

10. Any Other Business

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting be re-scheduled from Wednesday 15 October to Friday 17 October.

UK Bridges Board Secretariat
1 July 2008