

Minutes of the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), held on 11th November 2009 at the Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT)

Present:

Matthew Lugg (ML) (Chairman substituting for John Dowie)	UK Roads Board
Mostaque Ahmed (MA)	DfT RLTD
Jim Barton (JB)	Transport Scotland
Andy Bailey	DfT
Paul Foskett	DfT
Ray Gercans (RG) (substituting for Derek Turner)	UK Network Management Board
Richard Morgan (RM)	Welsh Assembly Government
Andrew Murray (AM)	DRD Northern Ireland
Stephen Pottle (SP) (substituting for Greg Perks)	UK Bridges Board
Dana Skelley (DS)	UK Lighting Board
Mary Lewis (MLw)	IHT
Justin Ward (JW)	IHT (Secretariat)

In attendance (for items 1 -4):

Mike Bordiss (MB)	Independent Consultant/ATKINS
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1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Matthew Lugg welcomed everyone to the meeting. Matthew Lugg informed the group that John Dowie had requested that he chairs the meeting in John's absence. Apologies were noted from John Dowie, Greg Perks, Derek Turner and Spencer Palmer.

2. Previous minutes

The previous minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting. Matthew Lugg thanked IHT for their support with the Commuted Sums work that is due to be published on the 19th November 2009.

3. Presentation on HELG

Matthew Lugg introduced Mike Bordiss, Chairman of the Highways Efficiency Liaison Group (HELG). Matthew noted that there should be a close relationship between the UKRLG and HELG.

Mike Bordiss introduced HELG, noting that it was an umbrella organisation with membership drawn from organisations such as the Department for Transport (DfT), Highways Agency (HA), Transport for London (Tf), County Surveyors Society (CSS), TAG, Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT) and companies from the Highways Term Maintenance Association (HTMA). HELG assists this range of organisations to

facilitate, share, and disseminate information. Mike noted some of the recent successes:

- A new portal website that has been well received
- A new tool kit – for general efficiency improvement
- An efficiency conference
- Profile within the technical press
- High level influence at the DfT/HA
- Supported the creation of nine Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs)

Mike noted that future efforts would focus on:

- Developing more case studies
- Develop 'how to' guides
- How to introduce LEAN improvements across the highways sector
- Develop the website further to help Local Authorities with the development of contracts

The Group thanked Mike for his presentation and noted that it was useful to maintain a relationship between HELG and the UKRLG. Suggested we have an annual update.

<p>Action: Mike Bordiss to ensure links to the UKRLG website on the HELG website www.helg.org</p>
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4. Items for decision

The Group noted and agreed to the recommendations in the reports from ATKINS:

From the paper UKRLG and Boards Oct Nov 09:

1. The revised winter service elements of Well-maintained Highways are published as an 'essential' update to the Code.
2. DfT formally notifies local highway authorities of the winter service revision and takes the opportunity to notify authorities of the wider complementary guidance process.
3. A dialogue is opened with the Institution of Civil Engineers on the future of the ICE Design and Practice Guide for Highway Winter Maintenance.

The Group discussed the presentation and background to the papers tabled for the updates to the Codes of Practice (COP) and agreed that it would be useful to demonstrate an 'audit trail' behind the documents. Mike Bordiss noted, and Justin Ward confirmed, that the update papers had been circulated to all the Boards (UK Bridges Board, UK Lighting Board, UK Network Management Board and UK Roads Board) prior to the UKRLG meeting and the proposals have been supported by all the boards. However the Group noted that it would be useful to understand who was involved with the consultation group for the Codes to ensure sufficient scrutiny from their representative organisations.

Matthew Lugg noted that the Highway Risk and Liability Claims document is owned by ICE and should be removed from the list of documents in scope. The Group agreed that all the Codes needed to have an update on Climate Change.

Action: Mike Bordiss and ATKINS to develop a cover report with the names of the people represented on the steering group overseeing the updates to the Codes of Practice and provide an update report on the process – to be included for the current cycle of updates and all future updates

Action: Mike Bordiss and ATKINS - add a reference to the 'Network Management Duty' in the WHM Code

Action: Highway Risk and Liability Claims document to be removed from list of documents in scope as it is document supported by UKRLG but owned by ICE

Action: Complementary Guidance for all Codes to include an update on Climate Change

Action: Complementary Guidance to be grouped together into a complete document (incorporating Appendix H and Section 13 with the Complementary Guidance) and published on the UKRLG website

The Group discussed the Asset Management Guidance and asked for clarity over where this would fit within the Business Plans of the Boards. The Board agreed that the UK Roads Board would own it but be instructed by the UKRLG. The Group supported the recommendation (from the paper UKRLG and Boards Oct Nov 09 Asset Management Guidance):

Revised transport asset management guidance should be published by the UKRLG to replace the CSS Framework for Highway Asset Management. The new document should build on and consolidate existing guidance, be developed based on lessons learnt from implementation of asset management, learn from any early experiences of implementing the new financial reporting requirements, and be published by autumn 2010.

5. Update on Winter Service

The Group discussed the Winter Maintenance Review; the Group noted that the LGA had produced their own report into the Severe Weather in February 2009. The Group discussed the approach for the launch of the update to Well-Maintained Highways (WMH) and agreed that there needed to be alignment between:

- Written Ministerial Statement
- DfT to write to Local Authorities about the update to WMH (as it is an essential update to the COP)
- Update to WMH on the UKRLG website
- DfT to produce a short leaflet on Winter Service Preparations

Action: Justin Ward to circulate press article on the LGA report into the Severe Weather in February 2009

6. UKRLG

The Group received updates from each of the Boards.

UK Bridges Board

Stephen Pottle raised the issue of a funding shortfall for Bridge Inspector Training Research and Paul Foskett responding stating that DfT would fund the shortfall. Stephen raised the issue of funding for Bridge Owners' Forum but this was to be discussed in more detail under the item of Research – see below.

Action: DfT to fund the shortfall for Bridge Inspector Training Research

UK Lighting Board

Dana Skelley noted that the UK Lighting Board had helped gain agreement for prioritising the review of the Statutory Instrument. Dana also noted that the UK Lighting Board is not in the business of product testing but can add value on gathering Case Studies to help identify the advantages and disadvantages of LED trials. The Lighting Board was supportive of the Traffic Signs Policy Review by the DfT that is in the early stages but might mean that the direct requirement to illuminate traffic signs will cease.

UK Roads Board

Matthew Lugg noted that the UK Roads Board is encouraged by the support from DfT on National Road Condition Reporting. Matthew raised the concerns that the UK Roads Board has over the accreditation of SCANNER vehicles as the Contract will run out in September/October 2010. Paul Foskett noted that the DfT was currently reviewing the structure of the contract and that this was a detailed issue that was being investigated. Matthew noted the UKPMS study and that this needs to be reviewed and requires continued investment.

Action: Matthew Lugg/Chris Capps to discuss UKPMS with Mostaque Ahmed and Paul Foskett

UK Network Management Board

Ray Gercans noted that the UK Network Management Board was working on SatNav routing for HGV vehicles. The Group agreed that this was a useful piece of work to focus on. Ray noted that research was an important focus, but the Group agreed to pick this up during the item on research.

7. Access to the Profession

Mary Lewis discussed the paper on Access to the Profession noting that focusing on skills for the profession had been part of the remit of the UKRLG. The Group noted that this was a useful area – in terms of succession planning for the industry, ensuring access to the profession and addressing skills shortages – and it was useful to recognise as an important element that the UKRLG support.

Action: Justin Ward to add text on UKRLG to outline that the UKRLG recognise that skills and support for the profession is important

8. Research

Paul Foskett talked through a draft specification produced by the DfT on the role of the UKRLG in regards to research.

Ray Gercans asked for clarification of how this specification links with the current Transport Advice Portal (TAP) as this was due to include research at a later stage of the project. The Group agreed that it would be useful to be provided with an update of TAP. The Group agreed that TAP was a useful resource but some members of the Group felt that the scope of the specification was slightly different from what TAP provides.

Stephen Pottle raised the issue of funding for the Bridge Owners' Forum (BOF) noted that the UK Bridges Board had recommended that the DfT continue to fund BOF.

Action: DfT - the UKRLG supported the proposal specification developed by the DfT
Action: All – Any comments on the proposal specification to be sent to DfT
Action: DfT – To consider funding BOF for another year
Action: DfT - Progress report on UKRLG research to be provided at the next UKRLG meeting including details of funding
Action: DfT - the proposal specification should be clear and consider the coverage of academic research

9. Climate Change

Paul Foskett introduced the item on Climate Change noting that each Government Department was preparing a 'Departmental Adaptation Plan'. Paul introduced a study by DEFRA that the UKRLG could feed in comments to as this study focused on Climate Change and the implications for the Transport Infrastructure. Jim Barton noted that Scotland had carried out a report on Climate Change in regards to the Transportation Sector and Matthew Lugg noted that there was the three Authorities report that looked at the implications of Climate Change on highway management.

The Group noted that the COP are a potentially good source for raising further guidance and advice on Climate Change and the Transportation Sector.

Action: DfT to ask ATKINS to prepare a brief to include more guidance/advice on Climate Change to the COP, within the scope of the current project

10. Terms of Reference

Justin Ward noted that he would add an item of Climate Change to the Terms of Reference for the UKRLG Boards, circulate this to the Chairman for sign-off prior to final publication.

11. Transportation Professional

Justin Ward noted that the December issues of Transportation Professional would feature the UK Network Management Board. Dana Skelley noted that timescales for Transportation Profession content can be fairly limited and allowing more time for comment would be helpful. The Group suggested that a feature on Devolved Governments might be good for 2010.

Justin Ward noted the current limitations of the UKRLG website and Paul Foskett confirmed that DfT was currently reviewing the contract for the UKRLG website looking to renew the contact with the inclusion of a Content Management System (CMS) for the new website.

12. Business Plan

Mary Lewis outlined the Business Plan, noting that there was not enough time for a workshop. Mary outlined key areas for the UKRLG Business Plan:

- Climate Change
- Research
- Responsive Body
- Think tank model
- Codes of Practice Updates
- Cross-cutting issues

The Group agreed with Mary's suggestion that a Board Chairs meeting should be set-up to address cross-cutting issues.

Action: Justin Ward to arrange Board Chairs meeting to address cross-cutting issues for the UKRLG

The Group agreed with Matthew Lugg's suggestion that the UKRLG should invite the Chairman of HTMA to the next suitable UKRLG meeting as this would enable a discussion on how to protect the infrastructure and investment in highway maintenance.

Action: Justin Ward to draft letter inviting HTMA Chairman to the next suitable UKRLG meeting

13. Date of next meeting

16th April 2010