

## **NOTE OF THE 15<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE UK BRIDGES BOARD.**

**Meeting held in Room LG4, Great Minster House, London, 9 February 2005.**

### **Present:**

David Lynn	Warwickshire CC/CSS (Chair)
Steve Pearson	CSS/Derbyshire County Council
Ian Holmes	DfT RLTSF3
Edward Bunting	DfT RLTSF3
Awtar Jandu	Highways Agency
Ken Laing	SCOTS
Ronnie Wilson	DRD (Northern Ireland)
Bill Valentine	Scottish Executive
Tudor Roberts	Welsh Assembly Government
Graham Cole	CSS/Surrey County Council
Steve Tart	Manchester City Council
Jim Moriarty	London Underground Ltd
Mick Backshall	Network Rail
Brian Bell	Network Rail
Frank Paine	LOBEG
Rod Howe	British Waterways
Greg Perks	CSS/Northumberland CC
Dave Ambrose	WATO
Dana Skelley	Transport for London
Andrew Oldland	DfT RLTSF3
Chris Hudson	DfT RLTSF3

### **1. Apologies**

David Yeoell was not present at the meeting. Tudor Roberts attended in place of John Collins, and Brian Bell attended in place of Alan Dray.

### **2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

#### **Arrivals/Departures**

Jim Irons announced shortly before 9 February that he had left the UK Bridges Board. His replacement Ken Laing was welcomed by the Board. Steve Tart and Frank Paine both announced that this would be their last

meeting. David Lynn thanked them, on behalf of the Board, for the excellent contributions that they have made to the work of the Board since it first met in September 2001.

#### Minutes of last meeting

These were accepted by the Board, without amendment.

#### Maintenance Backlog

The Bridges Backlog 2000 estimates were rudimentary. At present research into intervention levels is taking place. Bridge Authorities are currently using 1998 levels and there is a question mark as to whether these are suitable for all classes of roads.

What is needed now is a *consistent inventory of stock*. When the Code of Practice is published, local authorities will be advised to get inventories in place.

#### Performance Indicators

The Highways Agency contract with Atkins is currently overspent and will remain so until the start of the new financial year, in April. Awtar Jandu is keen to know if DfT money will be available for 05/06. This cannot be guaranteed at the moment.

#### Dry Stone Walls Research Project

This project is going ahead with CSS funding. It was decided to leave it that way for the time being, with the possibility of joint DfT/CSS funding in the future.

### **3. Roads Liaison Group Feedback**

#### PFI Scheme Specifications

Andrew Hugill (4Ps) gave a presentation at the RLG about the Private Finance Initiative. The 4Ps have held a meeting to discuss specification of PFI contracts for street lighting and highway maintenance. It is DfT's aim to standardise the specifications and contract documents. Bridges Board members were concerned that there should be correct bridge specifications for highway maintenance PFI schemes. This is thought to be especially important in rural areas where there has been no experience of highway maintenance PFI.

The 4Ps will produce a set of draft contract documentation. Depending on the content of this, DfT will consider using contractors to advise on the bridge

specifications. The matter will be discussed at the next Roads Liaison Group meeting.

#### PFI Scheme Accounting

Concerns were also raised about accounting for highway maintenance PFI schemes. DfT is working on the production of accounting guidance, with CIPFA and the Treasury.

#### **4. Gershon Review**

Anne Stanford spoke to the Group about the Highways Agency's role as a "change agent", able to assist local authorities make efficiency gains, as well as learning from them. There is currently a "Collaboration and Efficiency Team" in the Highways Agency, consisting of Anne Stanford and 5 others. One of their aims is to assist local authorities to make a total saving of £190 million in the area of road procurement.

Continual efficiency is one of the main features of the Gershon Review. Because there are currently only 6 people in the Collaboration and Efficiency Team, dealing with nearly 150 local authorities, the team are keen to work through the medium of existing groups, such as Government Offices, CSS, TAG, LOTAG etc. The Highways Agency hope that Regional Centres of Excellence will focus on efficiency gains in roads procurement and spread the knowledge across local authorities in general.

Brian Bell pointed out that Network Rail had made efficiency gains by taking rail maintenance in-house and doing away with contracts. This has also led to an improvement in the infrastructure.

David Lynn would welcome an update from time to time from the Highways Agency team. This could be beneficial because of the scope of representation on the Bridges Board. Dana Skelley and Ronnie Wilson both expressed an immediate interest in learning more about the work of the Collaboration and Efficiency team.

In the meantime Mark Kumar of the Highways Agency will get in touch with Dana Skelley and Ronnie Wilson and advise them as appropriate.

#### **5. A Strategic Plan for the Roads Liaison Group and its Boards**

Several updates were made to Edward Bunting's draft revised Terms of Reference for the Roads Liaison Group. These were as follows:

Paragraph 2 should read "relating to the construction, maintenance, *and operation of* highways in the UK"...

Paragraph 3 on membership should include SCOTS, WATO, LOTAG and TAG.

Paragraph 5 should read "construction, maintenance *and safety of* highways"...

It was suggested that Edward Bunting could redraft the Bridges Board Terms of Reference along the same lines as that of the RLG.

## **6. Cost 345 - Procedures Requirements for Assessing Highway Structures**

Awtar Jandu presented **BB 66/05**. It was agreed that he would bring this subject back to the Bridges Board, when he considers it appropriate.

## **7. Research**

Masonry Arches - An electronic copy of this project should be available in late summer. A hard copy should be available by the end of the year. CIRIA will be invited to the November meeting of the Board, as this will be the next time that Brian Bell will attend in place of Alan Dray.

Bridges Code of Practice - The 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the Code was produced just before Christmas 2004. The contractor has applied for more time to produce a third draft, which will now be sent out for peer review. The final document should be ready at the start of May, with final approval to be given at the May 2005 Bridges Board meeting. It is planned to launch the Code at a dedicated conference hosted by *Surveyor* magazine. This will probably be in July this year, but it is not known exactly how *Surveyor* wishes to take this forward yet.

From a list of possible names, it was suggested that the title be *Well Managed Structures*.

Performance Indicators - the working documents for the local authority bridge performance indicator are being produced by W S Atkins and should be finalised by 18 February 2005. These will be placed on the CSS web site and used as the basis for the 12 month trial period for the indicator. Local authorities should now have sufficient information to take part in the trial.

The outcome of the 12 month trial will determine the final format of the indicator. Final guidance documents will be launched in February 2006.

## **8. Network Rail Bridgeguard Strengthening Programme Issues**

The process for assessing weak Network Rail over-bridges is now coming to a close. The task of identifying capacity requirements and priorities for strengthening now needs to be resolved with highway authorities.

Network Rail are proposing that a priority system is agreed that would enable decisions on priorities to be made, to schedule the work to suit funding availability. British Waterways and London Underground also expressed a wish for their structures to be included in any prioritisation system agreed.

There will be a meeting between CSS and Network Rail on 28 February, in Manchester. It was suggested that this issue be discussed at that meeting. It was also suggested that Ian Holmes, Dana Skelley, and representatives from LOBEG, WATO and SCOTS attend. In order to do so, they should contact either Brian Bell or Steve Tart.

Brian Bell will report back to the Bridges Board on the outcome of this meeting.

**Action - Brian Bell**

## **9. Management of Sub-standard Structures (application and development of BA 79)**

It was decided to hold a separate meeting to discuss this matter. Awtar Jandu will arrange this with the relevant persons. He will report back to the Board on the outcome.

**Action - Awtar Jandu**

## **10. Disability Discrimination Act**

Edward Bunting presented **BB 69/05**. David Lynn said that the paper was very useful, but that no further action was needed from the Bridges Board, for the time being.

## **11. Any Other Business**

Tunnels Directive - Edward Bunting will consider whether a sub-group or a working group needs to be set up in the light of this directive, and whether something needs to be written into the Bridges Board Terms of Reference.

**Action - Edward Bunting**

**12. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday, 11 May, at Great Minster House, London**