

NOTE OF THE 21st MEETING OF THE UK BRIDGES BOARD.

Meeting held at Great Minster House, London, 4 October 2006.

Present:

Richard Fish	CSS Cornwall CC (Chair)
Greg Perks	CSS/Northumberland CC
Elizabeth Hopkins	Consultant UKRLG Review
Awtar Jandu	Highways Agency
David Mackenzie	SCOTS
Edward Bunting	Department for Transport
Bill Valentine	Transport Scotland
Tudor Roberts	Welsh Assembly Government
Alan Dray	Network Rail
Ronny Wilson	DRD (Northern Ireland)
Paul Long	London Borough of Hillingdon
Rod Howe	British Waterways
Bob Flitcroft	Lancashire County Council
Graham Cole	CSS/Surrey County Council
Dave Ambrose	WATO
Andrew Oldland	Department for Transport
Chris Hudson	Department for Transport

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dana Skelley, David Yeoell, Jim Moriarty, Paul Foscett, and John Collins.

2. Note of last meeting and matters arising

Note of last meeting

Paul Long pointed out that he did, in fact, attend the meeting in Inverness.

Bob Flitcroft reminded the Secretariat that he no longer worked for Bolton MBC.

Item 3 - Maintaining a Vital Asset - Dave Mackenzie confirmed that there is not a demand to have this document translated into [Scottish] Gaelic.

Matters Arising

Surveyor [Bridges] Conference - This will take place on **14 March 2007**, at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham.

Tunnels Sub Group - It was suggested that the Tunnel Owners' Forum (a purely public sector group) might report on a regular basis to the Board. Edward Bunting will ask Robert Ford of the Highways Agency for a copy of the Forum's terms of reference, in order to see if a link can be established.

Alan Dray pointed out that in the meantime, he is willing to share best practice (for tunnels) with the Board.

Traffic Management Code of Practice - The UK Traffic Management Board have decided not to produce a Code of Practice to match those of the other Boards. Instead, the UK Roads Board intends to produce a smaller document on the maintenance of traffic management paraphernalia, rather than traffic management itself.

CSS/Network Rail Liaison - Richard Fish has not yet sought a meeting with Network Rail.

Review of Codes of Practice - Within W S Atkins, Mike Bordiss has taken on Mike Kendrick's role in reviewing the 3 codes of practice. Atkins is considering whether to use its website www.roadscodes.org to record any comments that stakeholders may have on the update of the codes.

3. UK Roads Liaison Group Feedback

Greg Perks is assisting Elizabeth Hopkins, the consultant conducting the management review of the UK Roads Liaison Group and its boards. EH will report to the UK RLG prior to its meeting on 8 November and will meet with the Board chairs after that meeting, in order to clarify her initial views. A further report will be produced for the UKRLG meeting scheduled for 28 March.

The proposed meeting between the UKCEC and the Board Chairs has not yet taken place.

4. Asset Management

Only 41 local authorities responded to the CSS questionnaires sent out regarding the Code of Practice. Consideration now needs to be given to how best to take this work forward, given the low response. Greg Perks is unable to say who responded but can disclose the percentage of respondents that were county councils, unitaries and metropolitan boroughs.

Some concern was expressed that the low response could be a sign that authorities are not very advanced in implementing the Code.

TAMP Review - The Department for Transport has commissioned WS Atkins (Alan Taggart and Lila Tachsi) to look at local authority progress (excluding London). A random selection of Local Transport Plans showed progress ranging from Hertfordshire (who have made excellent progress) to certain local authorities who have barely made a start. The work will involve 3 stages:

- An update on progress since the production of Local Transport Plans;
- Looking at about 20 local authorities' progress for the purpose of sharing best practice and
- Investigating a handful of local authorities to see how they are actually putting their plans into practice.

An inception meeting of the review group was scheduled for 23 October and the work is expected to be of about six months duration.

Asset Management Sub-group - There has been no news regarding volunteers for this sub-group. The Secretariat will remind Dana Skelley about this. Greg Perks has prepared some terms of reference (sent out for comments) but again has heard no more since.

Action - Secretariat

5. CSS/Network Rail Liaison

Bob Flitcroft was interested to get DfT views on incorporating the proposed CSS/Network Rail prioritisation system into the LTP process. The development of the system is currently making good progress.

It would be helpful to have something in time for the next CSS Bridges Group meeting. Edward Bunting will report back on this.

Action - Edward Bunting

The CSS/Network Rail aim is that the system should be ratified at the UK Bridges Board meeting in February 2007. This should give adequate time for the system to be in place for the 2008/09 LTP bidding process.

CSS and Network Rail also plan a joint strategy (including a strategy on cost sharing) on the management of Network Rail post tension bridges. This will be progressed at the next liaison meeting between CSS and Network Rail. This meeting will also discuss proposed guidance on how authorities should approach Network Rail to gain access to Network Rail property.

Vehicle Incursions

There are now 10,400 potential vehicle incursion sites on Network Rail assets to be investigated, of which 621 have been identified for mitigation and of which 170 have had work done to date. Alan Dray will circulate, via the Secretariat, the Vehicle Incursion Status Report, giving further details. The document will be circulated with this note.

It was suggested that David Knight of DfT be invited to the next meeting of the Board to talk about revision of the DfT guidance on incursions.

It is Network Rail's view that costs for incursion work should be shared with local authorities on a 50:50 basis. There is concern that some local authorities may not be able to pay their 50% share.

It was agreed that Alan Dray would bring, to the next meeting of the Board, details about level one failures.

Paul Long mentioned that Network Rail have offered a "Track Possessions" seminar, as this subject has aroused a lot of interest. PL offered to provide a note on this for interested parties.

Bridgeguard 3

It was reported that the completion of the programme could take up to 10 years, depending on funding. Around 1300 bridges remain to be strengthened or replaced. Local authorities' contribution to the funding of the programme is a major issue for which they will have to budget over the coming years. It is estimated that around 75% of the programme cost would be for local authorities.

It is estimated that only 50% of vulnerable structures have had a weight restriction placed on them. In 373 cases, a permanent weight restriction has been imposed (which is regarded as a permanent solution).

The Board are concerned that bridges may be failing assessments when they are actually in acceptable condition, meaning that local authorities would be spending money unnecessarily on bridge repairs. Some Board members were in favour of an independent investigation covering all failed bridges.

It was suggested that, when Network Rail assess a bridge, the bridge should be given an independent assessment in addition to that carried out by the NR engineers. NR replied that, in Scotland, the Category 1, 2 and 3 assessments are carried out separately, with Category 2 being carried out by a separate team from the team doing Category 1. Category 3 assessments are carried

out by a independent consultant (Parsons Brinkerhoff). However, this system is not used UK-wide.

Local authorities with a good capacity to be "intelligent clients" are already questioning some of the assessment results. TfL have already opened up a line of communication with Network Rail.

Network Rail will report back at the next Bridges Board meeting on further progress.

6. Bridge Owners Forum

Transport for London is now represented on the Bridge Owners Forum (BOF), as is the Manchester Ship Canal.

Fifteen research proposals have been submitted to the BOF this year. All of these are from universities, none at all from bridge owners. The latter are concerned that university research is not relevant enough, so BOF is chasing owners for contributions. The list of 15 projects has now been whittled down to 2. The BOF timetable for assessment of research will be disseminated by Campbell Middleton.

BOF has opened up a line of communication with the Australian Government, where shared access to documentation will be granted.

The BOF website is evolving, and could be made interactive in the future.

BOF is holding a two and a half day forum next September, with bridge engineers from other countries attending.

7. Research

Performance Indicators - The contract for this project has now been extended 6 times, but is due to finish in December 2006. It was pointed out that a decision needed to be taken as to when these PIs would be required by DfT.

Action - DfT

CSS comments on the local authority indicators are now being sought.

As a result of the White Paper on local authority performance management, it may not be possible to introduce the bridge indicator as a Best Value Performance Indicator. However, it could still be introduced by DfT under the LTP process, and could be used to determine funding need.

Dry Stone Walls - The 2nd meeting of the steering group took place in August. The group is hoping to look at a 2nd (and final) draft in November. Things have been held up slightly due to Miles O'Reilly's being unwell. It is hoped to complete the work in March 2007.

[Older] Metal Bridges - The first draft for this project has been produced. "Older" is no longer in the title. The 2nd draft is on its way and the project aims to follow a similar timetable to that of Dry Stone Walls.

Decision Support Tool - The inaugural meeting for this project took place at the Transport Wales headquarters in Cardiff on September 12. Funding is being split 50:50 between DfT and Transport Wales. Tudor Roberts pointed out that this project, which ties in with *Management of Highway Structures*, represents a good opportunity to address performance indicator issues and can promote good asset management at a local level. CSS have gathered a lot of information on bridge management systems and databases, which will be made available to the contractor. Edward Bunting would be grateful for any comments from the Board regarding **UKBB 9b/06** (Decision Support for Bridge Engineers). DfT have made requests for steering committee members for the project. Another request will be made by DfT.

Action - Secretariat

UK RLG Research Programme for 2006/07 - This has been delayed due to DfT Chief Scientific Adviser taking a considerable time to review the projects. The programme has 20 projects, five of which are either directly or indirectly related to bridges. Edward Bunting would be grateful for comments on UKBB 9a/06 (Commuted Sums etc) as this is a cross-board issue which *could* cover bridges.

Edward Bunting would also be grateful for volunteers to make up steering groups for the 4 projects. Richard Fish will chase this up at the next CSS Bridges Group on 18 October.

UK RLG Research Programme for 2007/08

The proposals for 2007/08 will be put to the UKRLG on 8 November.

Bridge Owners' Forum Research Proposals (see also UKBB 15/06) - It was agreed by the Board that, of the two projects put forward by the BOF, that of Automating Bridge Inspections would be put forward to the UK RLG as the Board's number one priority.

It was noted that the project entitled *Scanning of Highways Agency Research* could also go forward to the UKRLG, but that this project would be consultancy not research.

10. Any Other Business

It was agreed that, when *Management of Highway Structures* was approaching the two year mark, it would be a good time to hold a conference.

Date and venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the UK Bridges Board will take place on **21 February 2007**. A room has been reserved in Great Minster House, London.

RLTSF3/DfT
24 November 2006