

NOTE OF THE 24th MEETING OF THE UK BRIDGES BOARD.

Meeting held at H2, Great Minster House, London, 17 October 2007.

Present:

Richard Fish	CSS Cornwall CC (Chair)
Greg Perks	CSS/Northumberland CC
Paul Foskett	Department for Transport - Part of the meeting up to item 8
Awtar Jandu	Highways Agency
John Collins	Welsh Assembly Government
David Mackenzie	SCOTS
Ronnie Wilson	DRD (Northern Ireland)
Jim Moriarty	London Underground Ltd
Brian Bell	Network Rail
Dr Campbell Middleton	University of Cambridge/BOF Chair
Rod Howe	British Waterways
Paul Long	London Borough of Hillingdon
David Elbourne (for Item 8)	DfT TRANSEC
Bob Flitcroft	Lancashire County Council
Graham Cole	CSS/Surrey County Council
Dave Ambrose	CSS Wales
Stuart Molyneux	Salford MBC
Andrew Oldland	Department for Transport (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dana Skelley, Edward Bunting, Chris Hudson and Bill Valentine.

2. Note of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Note of Last Meeting

Page 6 - Highways Agency Bridge Inspection Manual - Awtar Jandu reported that the A5 sized "pocket" version of the manual has been issued.

Matters Arising

Vehicle Incursions - See Item 4

Research - see Item 6

3. UKRLG Feedback

Revision of Highways Act 1980 - the UK Roads Board are considering putting forward suggestions for revision of the Highways Act. The UK Bridges Board would like to contribute their views to this.

SCANNER surveys - TRL have completed their audit. All accredited machines are now competing for the work.

Roads Board Newsletter - it was suggested that the UK Bridges Board should also issue a Newsletter.

Asset Management - it requested that the slides of Pam Williams' presentation to the UK Roads Board should be circulated to the UK Bridges Board.

Action - Secretariat

UKRLG review

Richard Wiggington (ex County Surveyor of Gloucestershire and Warwickshire) will do a further review which will build on the results of the review carried out by Elizabeth Hopkins.

The new review will cover reporting lines, administration and secretariat, and the connections between the Boards and the research process. Richard will report the results at next month's UKRLG meeting.

Bob Linnard's move - Bob has now moved to a different post and DfT is in the process of appointing his successor.

4. CSS/Network Rail Liaison Update

Bridgeguard - the Liaison Group is still not in a position to produce a programme with costs. Another meeting has been scheduled for December 2007. The information should be ready to feed into the February 2008 Bridgeguard meeting.

Bridge Incursions - Network Rail has circulated papers showing a national picture and a regional picture, regarding incursion sites and work carried out to date. A meeting has taken place with DfT to discuss this issue, and DfT are producing advice for ministers.

Indemnity Clause - It was noted that some authorities in Scotland had been deleting the indemnity clause from their agreements with Network Rail, but that the strengthening work was still going ahead.

Access to Network Rail property by local highway authority staff- Network Rail have made a presentation to LOBEG regarding track possession. At present, NR want to review this presentation before releasing it for nationwide circulation.

It was noted that liability agreements were needed, between Network Rail and the highway authorities, for safety fencing on footways and for Tuberight bridges (these is concern that these could be hidden defects on these bridges).

Protocol on Bridge Strikes - The third draft of the protocol on bridge strikes will be discussed at the CSS Bridges Group tomorrow. The decision will be taken at this Group whether to circulate the draft.

5. UK Bridges Board work programme

See Paper 14/07

Greg Perks will collate any comments on this paper, so that he can then produce a second draft.

6. Research

Update on Current Projects

Concern was expressed by Board members that, where projects proposed by the Bridges Board had been approved by UKRLG, they were not being commissioned. Windows of opportunity to appoint the best contractors to do the work were therefore being lost. This view was supported by the Bridge Owners' Forum (BOF) chairman.

The Board requested that DfT put in place a formal procedure to notify them about which stage the approved projects have reached in the procurement process, and clarification about the way in which projects are procured. BOF would be in favour of each project having a technical spokesperson who would chair the project board.

The Board requested that projects which had been approved could now be commissioned.

However, DfT stressed that they had to follow the correct procurement procedures, and that this could sometimes be delayed because of other demands on DfT maintenance team's resources.

The Board requested that three of the projects that had been given approval could be commenced with a minimum of delay. These were the research into competence of bridge inspectors, bridge deck slabs with non-metallic reinforcement, and carbon composites for strengthening of steel structures.

Paul Foskett offered to hold a further meeting with Campbell Middleton and other Board members.

UKRLG Research Programme 2008/09

There was some discussion of the prioritised list of research projects for 2008/09, about whether it was appropriate for the Bridges Board to ratify the 2008/09 projects before the earlier outstanding projects have been started.

BOF has put forward seven proposed projects for 2008/09. As BOF have not been told that the money for the 2008/09 funding is not available, the Bridges Board have agreed that they will continue with the process of considering these projects for ratification, and propose ratified 2008/09 projects to UKRLG.

7. Implementation of Management of Highway Structures.

Greg Perks reported that he is not receiving any more comments on the implementation survey. The milestone target dates for implementation are now being reviewed. The new dates were proposed by the CSS Bridges Group. The three new milestone years are 2008, 2010 and 2012.

The CSS regional groups are discussing the implementation of the Code in their own areas. In some areas, implementation is being delayed due to problems with resourcing.

Graham Cole will be giving a presentation on implementation of the Code, at the 8 November Bridge Management conference.

8. Transec's interest in Roads and Bridges

The next meeting of the Roads Tunnels Security Group is on 19 October. There are now representatives from the devolved administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The meeting will be briefed about what is going on within the HA.

9. Minnesota Bridge Collapse

The Board consider that the training and qualification of bridge inspectors and the implementation of the Code of Practice are issues which should be addressed to avoid the possibility of bridges in the UK failing in the same way as the Minnesota bridge.

The BOF have received information coming from the USA about the reasons for the Minnesota bridge collapse. The advice they have received is that the quality of training of bridge inspectors in the USA was found to be poor.

Some concern was shown by Board members that there was no requirement in the UK for inspection results to be calibrated. The Board recognise that there needs to be a relationship between the design/assessment calculations for a bridge and the inspection regime for that bridge.

The HA are currently assessing the Boston Manor Road viaduct. The repairs to this structure are shown in the CSS Bridges Guide.

10. Tunnel Operators Forum

There was no news to report under this item.

11. Bridge Owners' Forum Annual Report

Campbell Middleton reported that a representative from the National Roads Authority of Ireland had now joined the Group. He has given a presentation about the EIRSPAN bridge management system.

The Forum has hosted other visitors from the EU and the USA Federal Highways department.

Cam Middleton advised that funding support for BOF will continue for the three years from 2006.

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12. Decision Support Tool

The consultants (Atkins) are carrying out Phase 1 of the project. They have completed the email survey of bridge owners' requirements and are reviewing existing decision support tools.

Atkins are in the process of completing the Phase 1 report and are hoping that Phase 1 will finish by the end of November.

John Collins (Welsh Assembly Government) chairs the steering group, but he considers that it would be more appropriate for someone from DfT to chair it.

BOF members also think that they should have an input into the management of the project. John Collins would be content with an arrangement where he could feed back progress on the project to BOF.

13. Any Other Business

Information from Switzerland

The Board have had some feedback from the Federal highways authority in Switzerland. It is a legal requirement there for all states to submit a bridge inventory to the Federal authority, and to submit annual returns to update this.

HA Memorandum of Understanding/Protocol Document

Awtar Jandu reported that the intention of this document is to set out the Highways Agency's relationship with local Highway Authorities. The HA are drafting the agreement with the help of CSS.

The document will be circulated for consultation during the first week in November.

New Performance Indicators

The document circulated by DCLG which lists performance indicators from 2008/09, for local authorities in their Comprehensive Area Agreements (CAA), only has seven transport indicators. The new system replaces the Best Value performance indicators. It was noted that only two of the new indicators were related to highway maintenance, and that both of these measure carriageway condition.

The performance indicators that the UK Bridges Board are proposing cannot be included in any future suite of indicators for CAAs, because the total number of indicators under this system will be significantly fewer than under the Best Value regime.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 20 February 2008.

RLTSF3

30 October 2007