

## Minutes of 63<sup>rd</sup> UK Bridges Board meeting held on 16 September 2020

Liz Kirkham	(Chair) ADEPT/Gloucestershire County Council
Hazel McDonald	Transport Scotland
Richard Fish	Bridge Owners Forum
Andy Featherby (Fred Harley)	Canal & River Trust
Jason Hibbert	Welsh Government
Neil Loudon	Highways England
Keith Harwood	Hertfordshire County Council, BOF
Philip Gray (Nicola Head)	Transport for London
Bob Humphreys	CSS Wales, Gwynedd Council
Colin Hall	Network Rail
Nick Burgess	London Underground
Colin Ferris	Department for Infrastructure Northern Ireland
Andrew Strang	SCOTS/Perth and Kinross Council
Stuart Molyneux	Salford City Council, representing Metropolitan Councils
Kevin Dentith	ADEPT/Devon County Council
Justin Ward	CIHT (Secretariat)

### 1. Welcome, introduction, apologies

Liz welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were recorded for Satbir Gill, Hugh Brooman and Alistair Dore.

### 2. BOF Grand Challenges - presentation from Richard Fish

Richard Fish presented the BOF Grand Challenges. Liz Kirkham noted that Richard Fish had presented this at the UK Roads Liaison Group workshop last week.

**Action: Richard Fish to work with Justin Ward to include BOF Grand Challenges on UKRLG website**

Hazel McDonald asked about coverage of the document in Transportation Professional.

**Action: Justin Ward to include BOF Grand Challenges in Transportation Professional**

### 3. BOF update

Richard Fish gave an update from the last meeting: dealing with Covid was covered and there were a series of external presentations (M4 bridge half-joint problem, a presentation on future bridges (covering bridge failures and climate change and carbon), a presentation from Cam Middleton's colleagues from Cambridge on decarbonising road freight, a presentation that reflected on the implications from Grenfell. Other presentations included one on the maintenance of bridges: corrosion, accessibility, water proofing, hidden elements, expansion joints – on this Richard said that designing out future maintenance issues was a key lesson.

### 4. ADEPT Bridges Group update

Kevin Dentith said that they had a Teams meeting on September 10th with 24 attendees, went very well and this format looks to be with us for the foreseeable future – huge savings in travel costs and officer time not to mention reduced carbon footprint. Other updates included:

Kevin Dentith said that ADEPT have links with network rail via Stuart Molyneux and Colin Hall and have invited two other organisations who we work closely with, Highways England

and Environment Agency. Dave McKeown is the EA link who will be invited to future meetings, Neil is identifying a suitable person from HE.

**Action: Neil Loudon to confirm attendance from Highways England for item on Cross Sector Collaboration**

Technical Presentation – Kevin said they started the meeting with a presentation (as has become customary) – this time it was on Flouropolymer paint systems – and ADEPT ensure these are technical presentations and not a hard sell from a supplier.

BOF complaint about access to minutes and information - Request for easier/better access to BOF information – Keith Harwood will raise at BOF. Richard Fish fully supported helping with the issue.

**Action: Liz Kirkham to raise at next UKRLG the issue of review of legislation taking account of issues raised below:**

Kevin Dentith noted an issue with Network Rail - there is some consternation about the way NR interpret the requirements of BE4 – example came from TfL where a structure previously rated at 40t has been allowed to deteriorate, lateral ties have corroded, and NR advise they can allow a structure to deteriorate until the load capacity reaches the BE4 requirement, in this case 24t. Following this point there was a discussion, Liz Kirkham summarised noting that the UKRLG had noted the 1980 Highways Act was potentially out of date.) NR have since stated that because the bridge meets their statutory duty under the 1968 Transport Act, they have no obligation to maintain these tie bars and keep the bridge rated at 40t. The inference being they could let everything deteriorate to a condition level which would mean the bridge would pass a BE4 assessment only if they wanted. They further state that any repairs to the bridge to reinstate the capacity to 40t would need to be funded by TfL.

Abnormal Loads Liaison Group– some members voiced concern about lack of noticing of abroad movements and that SEDs are either being ignored or organisations are not aware of them.

**Action: Justin Ward to forward meeting details of National Abnormal Loads Liaison Group Planning Meeting [completed]**

**COVID19** Long discussion about how people were getting on working remotely – generally good comments about lack of commuting, better work/life balance but some are feeling isolated and missing the social interaction of office life.

Other updates from Kevin included:

DMRB Review – many unable to view HEs webinars – Neil advised and he is looking into. Those who have viewed it were very complimentary.

BICS – CSS Wales scheme has been adopted and 30 inspectors will soon be certified through it.

Canal & Rivers Trust – We are negotiating with CRT to agree a charging mechanism for local authority works as proposed fees are very high and do not appear to represent actual cost. This is being led by Hannah Bartram COO ADEPT working with Keith Harwood and Kevin Dentith.

Suicide Prevention – new guidance from Samaritans recommending signs such as letter of hope and personal messages/flowers are not attached to bridges as it attracts attention.

HE/LA Boundary – one item raised by South East about responsibility of binder course now we don't use red sand asphalt – Kevin Dentith raised with Mark Maynard who will amend guidance document but they binder course will remain the responsibility of the LHA. Neil Loudon said he was progressing the document.

RAC Foundation Survey – this will be coming out later this month and had been in contact with Kevin Dentith on questions to include (these are the same as last year aside from one additional question on Covid and the impact on efficiency and a question on bridge collapses.

## **5. Any other updates from representative bodies**

Hazel McDonald said that Transport Scotland are almost back to business as usual with maintenance works on the network except no staff are allowed on site unless essential. Two landslides recently (A68 and A83) due to heavy rain have been recovered and no TS staff could attend. Ongoing A83 landslides have triggered an urgent route and options review with the preferred option to be published in December 2020.

Andrew Strang highlighted issues of working within the context of Covid and the experience of recent flooding events in Scotland. Jason Hibbert said that the Welsh Government had started to get some success with BICS getting people through the system, with two Senior Inspectors and one Inspector from the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent. Jason thanked Keith Harwood for SAVI saying it was a very good system that he was using to develop some business cases for investment. These are intended to form the basis of a major asset renewal programme that is being developed for approval. WG is also drafting a Wales Transport Strategy and this will be out for consultation in the next few months. Jason is seeking to include some commentary that all transportation assets need to be identified, their condition determined as well as the risk they present to the public and the level of investment required to keep them safe and serviceable. Jason is also advocating a system similar to RAIB for the highways sector in Wales.

**Action: Jason Hibbert to share the Wales Transport Strategy when issued for consultation so that UKBB and BOF can respond – send to Justin Ward and Richard Fish**

Bob Humphreys noted work was underway. Colin Ferris noted that at the Department for Infrastructure NI is carrying out socially distanced bridge inspection and localised flooding issues have occurred. Work has also been undertaken on bridge condition indicators. Colin Hall said that for Network Rail highlighted the Stonehaven Rail incident with an ongoing RAIB investigation and this is flagging issues of how NR is dealing with climate change and how this will impact on the network going forward. Andy Featherby gave an update on the work of the Canal and River Trust noting the application of risk assessments that are required for attending sites due to Covid. Neil Burgess provided an update on London Underground and Neil said that TfL has undertaken a thorough review for homeworking for staff. Neil noted full service is being provided but income has reduced.

## **6. BICS scheme**

Hazel McDonald noted that the questionnaire questions has been updated.

Hazel noted on the report it would be useful to include the number of people who have passed and not just the percentage pass rate.

Andrew Strang said that the summary report showed that the number of people looked to be limited, adding that including graphs would be helpful. Andrew said that we have 554 registered users but only 57 who have passed. Andrew added that it would be useful to have splits with national authorities, local authorities, and private sector listed.

Hazel said that they are hoping to undertake online assessments and expect that this will increase the number of people being assessed.

**Action: Justin Ward to arrange for BICS survey to be updated and circulated**

## **7. Research projects updates**

Keith Harwood said that the next step for SAVI is to embed the toolkit within software providers.

Hazel McDonald said that PIARC overloaded vehicles work will shortly circulate a survey (due to come out in a few weeks).

Neil Loudon added that through UKBB the issue of increases in vehicle weights and some consultation on this currently by DfT. Neil said that Highways England was looking at a structures inspection improvement programme considering a whole range of elements. The tiger team and moon-shot approach is being used to investigate issues in a different way – Neil said a Tiger Team is looking at post-tensioned bridge inspections that involved a detailed focus and deep dive into the issues. The other element was the moon-shot approach – i.e. where might we want to be in bridge management in 10 years. One example would be self-serviced assets – the idea is to think about how we get there. Neil said that there was a read across to the BOF Grand Challenges for those elements.

Phil Gray gave an update on the Assessment of Masonry Arch Bridges noting good progression over the last few months and a final publication by the end of the year.

## **8. Minutes of UKBB**

The minutes were approved subject to minor corrections.

**Action: Justin Ward to share document from Kevin Dentith on capitalisation of works that has been approved from CIPFA**

Keith Harwood said that the documents on capitalisation are included in the SAVI toolkit.

## **9. Minutes of UKRLG**

The minutes were noted.

## **10. Any other business**

Keith Harwood noted the UKRLG website update noting the minutes were not on the site.

**Action: Justin Ward to publish 2020 minutes online on UKRLG website**

Richard Fish noted upcoming awards.

Hazel McDonald Bridges Conference will be a virtual event later this year. Transport Scotland have set up a Vulnerable Person group covering all transport modes and engagement with Police, Scottish Government Health professionals and Samaritans. Public

Health Scotland have launched Scotland's New Approach to Suicide Prevention and the strapline is "United to Prevent Suicide" which is a significant change to the language used around self-harm.

Andrew Strang said the flood events a couple of months ago meant that a couple of temporary bridges needed installed to get roads open. Andrew asked about the Highways England database on temporary bridges. Neil Loudon said that a web site is being developed to include technical information on suppliers. There will also be a contract let to engage with the five main providers.

Liz Kirkham said that she had experience of recruiting apprentices online and now there are two more apprentices.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

TBC.