

Minutes of UKRLG held on 19 November 2020 held via Microsoft Teams

Stephen Fidler	Department for Transport
Lila Tachtsi	Highways England
Mark Kemp	Hertfordshire County Council representing the UK Network Management Board
Mark Stevens	ADEPT
Darren Thomas	Pembrokeshire representing CSS Wales
Liz Kirkham	Gloucestershire County Council, UK Bridges Board
Garry Sterritt	TfL, representing UK Asset Management Board
Matthew Eglinton	Department for Transport
Andy Falley	Welsh Government
David Denner	Welsh Government, representing UK Lighting and Technology Board
James Bailey	Staffordshire Council representing UK Road Board
Conor Loughrey	Department for Infrastructure, Northern Ireland
John Lamb	Local Government Technical Advisers Group (LGTAG)
Justin Ward	Secretariat

In attendance:

Lindsay McGregor and Toby Tucker, Street Lighting Advisory Service – for item 1 and 2

Gavin James, Department for Transport – for item 3

1) Welcome, introduction and apologies

Stephen welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were recorded for Hugh Gillies.

2) State of Nation Lighting Report

Lindsay McGregor and Toby Tucker presented the work on the State of Nation Lighting Report.

Following the presentation there were a number of questions around why some authorities had not converted to LEDs. But also, the drivers for change for conversions that included forecasts of increased energy costs and column failures - cited as a couple of reasons for this. Other points were made about lighting and how the levels of it should sit within the movement and place function of highways.

David Denner concluded by thanking Lindsay and Toby for the hard work on the project and thanked DfT and Garry Sterritt for the help with delivering the project. David said the topic has generated a lot of interest. David said that the UK Lighting & Technology Board would like to get the report out and raise awareness of this within the ILP Lighting Journal and in Transportation Professional.

Action: State of Nation Lighting Report presentation to be shared with members of the UKRLG – Justin Ward

Action: Justin Ward to work with Lindsay McGregor, Toby Tucker and David Denner for an article on the State of Nation Lighting Report

3) Union Connectivity Review

Gavin James, Deputy Director within the DfT for the Union Connectivity Review presented on the review. Gavin said the review was announced in the summer and was personally commissioned by the Prime Minister. The Chair of Network Rail (formerly the head of Transport for London (notably during the Olympics)) Sir Peter Hendy is leading the review.

The review is looking at the quality and reliability of strategic corridors that cross-borders in the UK: the main focus is on the significant links between the four nations. This will look at current and likely future demand: road, rail, air and sea links. The review is also looking at recommendations where connectivity could be improved, additional elements such as the environmental impacts will be reviewed.

There is a broad review multi-modal looking at the connections between the four nations. Sir Peter Hendy has separately asked for a study into the proposal of constructing a fixed link (tunnel or bridge) between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Gavin noted timeframes, saying there was a call for evidence (launched recently) and Gavin said he would welcome input from the UKRLG. An interim report will be published in January 2021 including the methodology and a high-level summary of what has been contributed to within the call for evidence. A final report will be published in the summer of 2021.

The call for evidence will look at existing growth, and broader strategies, for improving quality of life. The review is looking at both economic focus and quality of life and encompassing the levelling up agenda.

This will look at the following factors: the importance of cross-border transport links to existing growth strategies

The approach to appraisal was mentioned. Andy Falley said that Wales have the Future Generations Act and the Active Travel Act and that means that appraisal differs across devolved administrations. Wales has recently also launched its Transport Strategy. The pan-UK network to replace the Trans European Network (after the UK leaves the EU) was also referenced. Andy noted that given these elements it was important that the review was sensitive to these factors.

Gavin noted that the impact of Covid on future travel patterns will have a potentially big impact; as such a scenario planning approach will be used. Similar to the horizon scanning approach within DfT already.

4) Board updates

UK Network Management Board – Mark Kemp provided an update noting that there was a focus on active travel and the Scottish approach of directing funding

through Sustrans (as this was different in England). Mark noted that the Guidance has been published on security Stephen noted that an article has been published in Transportation Professional and that a letter had been sent to inform the Coroner that the guidance has been published.

Action: Justin Ward, Stephen Fidler, Matthew Eglinton, Hugh Gillies, Andy Falley, and Conor Loughrey to finalise letter to authorities on security guidance - by end November

Mark Kemp also noted 20mphs and speed limits were on the Board's agenda.

UK Bridges Board – Liz Kirkham noted that there are some concerns that authorities are being constrained by some legislation (as highlighted in the minutes). Liz also noted that Jason Hibbert is putting forward a case for equivalent of RAIB for road bridges. Liz concluded by noting that the BICS scheme was running against other bridge inspection schemes, noting that this was undermining the Lantra scheme. Matthew Eglinton noted that the issues from the legislation would be useful to see again. John Lamb said that a light rail accident board has been set-up and noted that there could be important lessons to learn from this (this was set-up following incidents in Sheffield and Croydon).

Action: Matthew Eglinton to consider legislative issues raised by UKBB (<https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/12134/minutes-uk-bridges-board-16-september-2020-v3.pdf>)

UK Roads Board – James Bailey noted a number of elements. Firstly the NWSRG Guidance that was sought for sign-off Section 7 and Section 13 that was put for approval: this was approved by UKRLG.

Action: UKRLG signed off the NWSRG Section 7 and Section 13 Guidance – James Bailey to inform Chris Cranston

James Bailey highlighted an issue of the need for greater engagement with DfT for work led by the sector and Mark Stevens elaborated on this with the work by RAC Foundation.

Action: Matthew Eglinton to work with DfT colleagues to work with the RAC Foundation on their work on condition data

UK Asset Management Board - Garry Sterritt said the last meeting was held in October that had a good level of attendance. Garry noted that they were looking at future of asset valuation, asset management systems, road condition information, and training. A key element was on sustainability and Garry highlighted potential changes to the self-assessment criteria. Garry asked about the State of Nation report and if it could be shared/published. Stephen Fidler advised that for both the State of the Nation Report and the Resilience Review led by John Lamb, as DfT led projects they would need to be formally approved.

Action: Matthew Eglinton to consider suggestions from Asset Management Board for changes to the self-assessment criteria

Action: Garry Sterritt to work with Justin Ward for including content on the UKRLG website on the Asset Management e-learning (static content)

Action: Matthew Eglinton to investigate if the State of Nation report could be published/shared

UK Lighting & Technology Board – David Denner noted that the report (covered earlier) would be very useful for the sector.

Action: State of Nation on Lighting Report was approved for publication – David Denner/Justin Ward to publish on UKRLG website

David Denner added about issues of technology being attached to lighting columns and that this could benefit from legal advice. Conor Loughrey said this was a big issue and they have taken legal advice and the summary was that only if the attached item improved the asset could it be attached. David Denner said that the London Authorities are looking at legal advice on the issue and would reflect on this following that. David added that Streetwise (following UK departure from EU) should be considered EU transition regulations.

5) AOB

Lila Tachtsi said that Highways England had an interview with the Sunday Times recently on bridge condition. With some critical elements in poor and very poor condition this could cause alarm but Lila noted that HE bridges are safe and concluded that the language used by engineers should be evaluated as it could cause unnecessary alarm for external audiences. There was a discussion about the balance of alerting issues to direct attention/funding to them, whilst not causing undue concern.

Stephen Fidler concluded that he would like to focus on 2/3 key things that UKRLG could focus on and that a survey to support this could be useful (from a longer list of suggestions). Stephen added that this should also consider if the Board structure was right for today.

6) Date of next meeting

Dates to be set for 2021.