

Minutes of the 35th meeting of the UK Bridges Board held at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation on 15 June 2011

In attendance:

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| Mike Winter | ADEPT, Dorset County Council (Chairman) |
| Graham Bessant | London Underground |
| Brian Bell | Network Rail |
| Graeme Brown | Roads Service Northern Ireland |
| Rod Howe | British Waterways |
| Liz Kirkham | ADEPT/Gloucestershire County Council |
| Neil Garton Jones | CSS Wales |
| Neil Loudon | Highways Agency |
| Satbir Gil | LOTAG/London Borough of Hounslow |
| Stuart Molyneux | Metropolitan Councils |
| Andy Phillips | Welsh Assembly Government |
| Bill Valentine | Transport Scotland |
| Paul Williams | LOBEG/London Borough of Brent |
| Justin Ward | CIHT (Secretariat) |

Apologies were received from Stephen Pottle, Graham Cole, Steve Berry, Andy Bailey, David Yeoll, Bob Flintcroft and David Mackenzie.

1. Notes of last meeting and matters arising

The notes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

The Board noted that all the actions had been completed, but a few points were clarified:

- The funding note on European Funding had been completed by Neil Loudon. The Board discussed ERANET and found that only the Highways Agency had been involved in this European research fund. Brian Bell said that Network Rail was involved with the European Rail Research Council and cited projects that have their own websites such as www.sustainablebridges.net which have past research reports on them.
- The Board noted that the SCOSS letter had been sent.
Action: Justin Ward to send a copy of the SCOSS letter to UK Bridges Board members [completed]
- The Board discussed scour.
Action: Neil Loudon to circulate 2nd draft of Highways Agency research project on scour
- Paul Williams noted that the Transport Advice Portal had a number of LOBEG documents loaded onto the site attributed to the UK Roads Liaison Group but without any acknowledgement of LOBEG.
Action: Paul Williams/LOBEG to contact CIHT to ensure that acknowledgement is given to LOBEG on the relevant UKRLG documents on TAP
- Mike Winter said that Keith Ross's protocol asked for the dimensions data by bridge owners to be checked in the ESDAL system. The Board discussed the issue of data on ESDAL and confirmed that if signage identifies the height of bridges then this data should also be loaded

onto the ESDAL system. The Board noted that the company 'Bridge Clear' had incurred the cost of verifying the sign data for use in their commercially available bridge database. The Board said that the letter that had been sent to Chief Executives in England on appropriate signing of bridges should be picked up by the Traffic Management Office within Local Authorities.

The only outstanding action was on the issue of the extent of responsibility for highway assets at the interface between local authority networks and that of the Highways Agency, particularly adjacent to bridges (eg safety barriers). Mike Winter said that he was awaiting a response from Andrew Jones of the Highways Agency on this matter. Mike explained that the scope of responsibility as defined in some Highways Agency contracts did not always align with the views of adjacent local authorities. Bill Valentine said that Scotland had dealt with the same issue within Scotland and that Transport Scotland had worked with SCOTS to identify clear boundaries for generic situations on the network.

2. UK Roads Liaison Group meeting

Mike provided a brief summary of the meeting, noting that Andrew Murray was the new Chairman for the Roads Board. Mike also said that the Group had had further discussions on risk based prioritisation of highway maintenance budgets.

The Board discussed the issue that was raised at the UKRLG on reviewing the Codes in light of the current fiscal environment. Mike gave a summary of the case law that was presented to the UKRLG members that concluded that resourcing should not be seen as a reason to lower service standards below that of the Codes. The Board agreed that the Highway Structures Code would be unlikely to require a review of service standards. However, the Board agreed that Well-maintained Highways was more specific in terms of service standards and that considering a revision in light of the current economic climate did make sense.

Action: Justin Ward to circulate the case law that was presented at the last UKRLG meeting

3. Code of Practice Updates

The UK Bridges Board agreed that the current process of Complementary Guidance updates published separately, but alongside, the Original Code was becoming a bit unwieldy and the Board welcomed a review of the presentation of the Codes of Practice to make them more integrated.

The Board agreed to hold on the publication on the new paragraph - within the Complementary Guidance - on the Assessment of Fire Damaged Structures (compiled in response to the fire on the M1 and the structure damage associated with that incident). The Board agreed that publication should be delayed until there is more clear guidance in response to the fire on the M1.

Action: Delay publication of update on the new paragraph and publish a more detailed updated guidance following the review of the fire on the M1

4. Research

Mike Winter presented his paper on the current situation of UK Bridges Board research. The Board discussed the progress with each research project.

Action: Mike Winter to send a copy of the proposal for research project on concealed parts to Brian Bell

Action: Graham Cole to review and revise as necessary the proposal for research project on concealed parts with a view to it being proposed to UKRLG for funding

5. Highways Maintenance Efficiency Program

The Board noted that Graham Cole – through ADEPT – was working on reviewing highway authorities progress with the implementation of the Structures Code of Practice (COP). The Board noted that ADEPT had put a bid into the HMEP program to help assist highway authorities with the implementation of the Structures COP through the development of generic policies that authorities could adopt.

6. Highways Agency takeover of British Rail Board Residuary

Neil Loudon explained that the BRBR staff would remain at their current location and just be part of the Highways Agency now.

7. Post M1 Fire Review

Neil Loudon gave a presentation on the Highways Agency's work following the fire on the M1. Neil said that the Agency was currently waiting for a response from the Minister to the report they had submitted following the incident. The Board agreed that they would wait till the Minister had responded to the report before taking forward any further work on the issue. Brian Bell gave a presentation on the effects of fire.

8. British Waterways

Rod Howe said that work was underway to change the organisation to a charitable status and founding trustees had now been appointed. It was confirmed that the change to charitable status would not apply in Scotland.

9. ADEPT & Network Rail Liaison

Paul Williams presented an update on the minutes of the last meeting.

10. ADEPT & British Waterways Liaison

Rod Howe said there had been no meeting since the last UK Bridges Board meeting.

11. National Bridge Stock Condition

Mike Winter presented a paper on a proposal to collect and collate data to highlight the condition of the UK Bridge Stock. Mike explained that across a range of highway assets (roads, lighting and bridges) it was important to be able to get a picture of how the situation is nationally and that this understanding would help make the case for funding if the condition of the assets deteriorates.

The Board agreed that using the Bridge Condition Indicator would be a good starting point for producing the report with a view to seeking support from DfT statisticians in due course.

Action: Mike Winter to inform UKRLG of the proposed data collection exercise and the development of a National Bridge Stock Condition report and explore support from DfT statisticians.

12. Eurocodes

The Board supported the proposal for Peter Clapham to be the conduit to the UK Bridges Board on Eurocode issues. The Board clarified that this role would not be as a helpdesk for Eurocode issues but more on the future development and feedback on the use of Eurocodes.

13. UK Bridges Board Business Plan

The Board agreed that they needed to review their business plan in light of the current Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period.

Action: Mike Winter and Stephen Pottle to propose revisions to the UK Bridges Board Business Plan and Justin Ward to circulate to members to request feedback on those proposals.

14. Bridge Owners Forum

The Board agreed that without DfT at the meeting it was difficult to agree a way forward with a decision on BOF's role and potential funding support.

Action: Mike Winter to arrange to meet with Steve Berry and Cam Middleton to discuss future role of BOF.

15. Media Briefing Sheets

The Board agreed to provide final comments to Justin Ward within two weeks of the meeting and that, after this period, the media sheets could be taken as agreed.

Action: Mike Winter to ask Keith Ross to produce a media briefing sheet on bridge strikes.

Action: Mike Winter to finalise the briefing sheets on vehicle incursions and large span bridges for future sign off by the Board.

Action: Justin Ward to publish agreed media briefing sheets on the UK Bridges Board website.

16. Conferences and Courses

The AGM of Concrete Bridges is to be held on the 6th and 7th of July.

17. Regional meetings

The Board agreed to hold their June/July 2012 meeting in Scotland.

18. Communications

The Board noted that Transportation Professional was adopting a regional focus for 2011. The Board noted that work was underway to develop a new website for UKRLG.

19. Any other business

The Board agreed to add the SCOSS bi-annual report to a future meeting.

The Board agreed to identify a representative to sit on a DfT steering group on regional funding allocation.