

Minutes of UKRLG held on 20 April 2021 held via Microsoft Teams

Stephen Fidler	Department for Transport
Jason Glasson (for 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:

Neil Gibson – ADEPT (item 1 and 2)

Hannah Bartram – ADEPT (item 1 and 2)

Richard Marshall – Highways England (item 3)

1) Welcome, introduction and apologies

Stephen welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were recorded for Lila Tachtsi.

2) Live Labs 2

Neil Gibson outlined a proposal for Live Labs 2 to focus on bringing the decarbonisation of local and regional highways to reality in the UK; adding that the Government's announcement of meeting 78% carbon reduction by 2035 is a huge challenge.

The Group was given a background context to the Live Labs programme, both in terms of the approach undertaken and the rigour given to realising benefits from the programme. The communication, marketing, and awareness of Live Labs has been a strong component of the programme to make sure this is as robust as possible. The Live Labs 2 proposal is focusing on trialling different methods, and on identifying willing participants on baselining carbon measurement. Neil outlined how the Live Labs 2 programme might progress.

The Group gave views on the proposal and following a discussion, members highlighted the need to engage authorities that might not have normally been involved, perhaps via a partnering to share capacity and intellect. The Group outlined their support for the idea endorsing this aligned well with climate objectives

required. There were ideas of scoping out in terms of engagement with other organisations such as Highways England. There was a view that activities that accord to the aims of the study that are probably worth considering how to input their knowledge into the programme.

Highways England are developing a plan for carbon, i.e. net zero construction plan, demonstrator projects and said that the ideas aligned with the Live Labs 2 programme and HE approach to carbon going forward.

It was agreed that the project needed to ensure that it was representative of authorities across the UK. There is a need to avoid duplication and build on existing knowledge, activities, and efforts: to build on what is already underway. Stephen Fidler concluded with the following actions:

Action: Neil Gibson and Hannah Bartram to work with Highways England to explore what they are doing regarding carbon and if this work can be coordinated into the Live Labs 2 proposal

Action: Neil Gibson and Hannah Bartram to explore more about reaching out to hard-to-reach authorities

Action: Neil Gibson and Hannah Bartram to explore in the proposal how to embed this in the future – in terms of 1) making a stronger link with Live Labs and UKRLG that ensure the relevant learnings fit within UKRLG 2) consider developing a product in the scope in terms of additional material to help authorities embed the learnings

Action: Justin Ward to consider for UKRLG - do we have an issue of how carbon is captured? How is this embedded within the work or should a different structure be sought?

Action: Stephen Fidler and Matthew Eglinton to consider opportunities to fund the programme working in collaboration with Devolved Administrations and Highways England.

Mark Kemp highlighted that he is leading on directing sustainability within his authority, his view is that this should be everyone's responsibility. Mark concluded that there might be merit for some sustainability event at some point in the end.

Neil added that Live Labs was looking to get a real time dynamic to the learnings that come out of the programme, therefore creating an internet of connected knowledge.

3) Historic Railway Estate

Matt Eglinton introduced this item noting the future of where these assets sit is currently under consideration. Richard Marshall from Highways England joined the meeting at this point saying that Highways England were playing an enabling role to transfer the responsibilities for ownership with supportive arrangements aligned to this.

Liz Kirkham said that these are an asset but the historic nature of these posed a balance of the costs of maintaining them as opposed to removing them. The burden on maintaining them for authorities does pose a difficulty. Stephen Fidler added that creative policy solutions could be implemented if there were ways of connecting historic infrastructure to cycling infrastructure for commuting and allocating resources accordingly.

4) EV charging

Darren Thomas said he was getting more enquires about on-street EV charging, including solution such as pop-up chargers and charging through streetlighting columns. Darren said that the LGA transport spokesperson said that there was an issue of trailing cables in addition to an APSE query circulating on this issue.

David Denner highlighted guidance, see here: <https://shop.theiet.org/code-of-practice-for-electric-vehicle-charging-equipment-installation-4th-edition>

David said that this was on the best practice for the technology. Mark Kemp said that within Hertfordshire they are looking at the issue and noted some policies are developing on this with examples in Oxfordshire CC in how to deal with residential on-street charging. Mark said that the way technology is developing with battery capacity and requirements of charging is progressing.

Mark Stevens said that the Highways Action Section 162¹ has a clause on the issue of placing wires across the footway. Mark said that in Suffolk he put in place a policy to address this and considering infrastructure that might have a limited time-span. Connor Loughrey said that this is coming onto the agenda in terms of planning requirements and parking standards (for new development and re-development).

Action: Mark Kemp to explore with UK Network Management Board in terms of charging infrastructure

5) Board updates

UK Asset Management Board – Garry Sterritt said that the Board is providing analysis on the case for funding local highways for the next spending review period. Garry said that this is following the public value framework that is used by HM Treasury. Garry said that challenge is time constraints to move the project forward. Garry said the Asset Management assessment toolkit will be available for use soon.

Action: Garry Sterritt and Justin Ward to add the Asset Management assessment toolkit to the UKRLG website

UK Bridges Board – Liz Kirkham said that the Board had raised the issue of a carbon management toolkit adding that this just made the case for the need for consistency. Liz raised an issue of the assessment programme – by Network Rail – that ranked bridges as passing or failing (conducted 20 years ago) has led to, under

¹ Section 162 (ropes across highway) Makes it an offence to place a rope or wire across a highway so as to cause a danger.

a cost-sharing agreement, local authorities now being asked to help fund necessary repairs. The Group took note of this funding pressure being added. Liz then asked the question on future funding research through UKRLG and this item was picked up at the end of the meeting (see AOB).

Liz said they have finished the Highways England/Local Authorities Boundary Issue agreement has been reached which is very positive. Jason Glasson asked about the publication of the Boundary Issue document. Liz suggested UKRLG could be the host for the document but would need to clarify who might maintain them going forward. Mark Kemp said that ADEPT is looking for a way for local authorities to work on cost-sharing with the Canal & River Trust and that this is making progress.

UK Roads Board – James Bailey said that Chris Cranston is stepping down as Chair of the NWRSG. James said that the DfT Road Condition Review remains an interesting topic but with the balance of supporting new technologies being weighted against forward standardisation and consistency. James added there were issues of road condition and risks with increased active travel use and proposals being explored in terms of connecting research with Highways England. The concluding update point flagged up issues of drainage that need to be taken forward but that this was a challenging item to come up with a collective response to this issue.

Action: James Bailey to contact Matthew Eglinton on road condition issues in terms of input from the Board expertise to DfT on this

UK Lighting & Technology Board – David Denner said that the State of Nation report has been well received across the lighting sector. David said that benchmarking progress for this was being considered currently. David said that there are reports from across the world in terms of impacts on health and biodiversity were considered at the last meeting through a presentation from LightAware.

UK Network Management Board – Mark Kemp said that the last meeting was very helpful looking at 20mph and implementation of emergency active travel schemes.

6) UKRLG minutes

The notes were recorded as accurate.

Action: Future actions to have an action tracker report

7) AOB

Future funding – Stephen Fidler noted that allocating budgets for research going forward could be worth exploring.

Action: Matthew Eglinton and Justin Ward to explore budgeting for the future for research for UKRLG (perhaps via discussion with Board Chairs)

8) Date of next meeting

Action: Justin Ward to extend meeting time by an additional 30 minutes