

Minutes of UK Roads Liaison Group held on 2 November 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Stephen Fidler	Department for Transport
Mark Kemp	representing the UK Network Management Board
Mark Stevens	Hertfordshire County Council, representing ADEPT
Ewan Wallace	Aberdeenshire Council, representing SCOTS
Darren Thomas	Pembrokeshire representing CSS Wales
Hazel McDonald	Transport Scotland representing the UK Bridges Board
Garry Sterritt	TfL, representing UK Asset Management Board
Matthew Eglinton ¹	Department for Transport
Andy Falley	Welsh Government
Robert Catherall ²	Department for Transport
David Denner	Welsh Government, representing UK Lighting and Technology Board
Gary Kemp	Department for Transport
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

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

Apologies were submitted in writing from Lila Tachtsi from Highways England and Hugh Gillies from Transport Scotland.

2. Spending Review

Robert Catherall presented an update on funding for local and regional transport from the recent Spending Review. There is a three year plus funding settlement as the cities have a five-year funding settlement outside of London.

Mark Kemp flagged that this is good that there is a level of maintaining the funding and that the contribution of the UK Asset Management Board and ADEPT Asset Management Group in terms of helping to make the case for investment into highways and transport was recognised as supporting evidence provided to the DfT that helped make their case for this funding. The Group noted that many local infrastructure enhancement schemes will need to include bus priority and active travel focus.

John Lamb said that local authorities need to refocus on how we prioritise roads, how we describe mobility and accessibility and reprioritisation of walking and cycling, how we support e-scooters.

Stephen Fidler said that the Department for Transport will now only fund (in England) and through the UK levelling up fund will fund schemes that include bus priority and cycling priority. This applies right across every road and only if an authority can explain why they are not able to provide provision for these with robust justification funding would be provided (i.e. on an exception basis).

¹ Joined from item 3

² Attended for item 2 only

James Bailey asked about the deterioration of the asset and how much the Spending Review has addressed that. Rob Catherall said that on highways maintenance the Asset Management Board's contribution to the evidence base had been very helpful and that there were recognised pressures of inflationary pressures. The impact on the backlog – and risks on bridges and other assets was a risk the Group noted. Conor Loughrey noted the pressures on the resource budget. Mark Stevens noted inflationary pressures and supply-chain pressures. John Lamb noted that the five-year funding for Combined Authorities need to be clear with the evidence base of delivery and collectively work on the monitoring framework for this.

Action: Mark Stevens to share a briefing on inflationary pressures and supply-chain delays that are affecting the industry [completed] ⁱ

3. Research

Matt Eglinton thanked the Board members for their research proposals and said they will be reviewed and prioritised and be submitted for Minister for decision.

Action: Hazel McDonald noted that BOF had discussed prioritisation on 19th October and will be circulated with a two-week turnaround for finalisation.

Action: David Denner to finalise the UK Lighting & Technology Board research proposals

4. UK Asset Management Board Chair

The Group noted Garry Sterritt was due to stand down as Chair of the UK Asset Management Board. Stephen Fidler noted his significant thanks to Garry Sterritt for his leadership on the UK Asset Management.

5. Away Day

Justin apologised for not making further progress on the Away Day. There was a discussion on the focus of the Away Day – to review the Vision, Focus, Outcomes that are sought to be achieved alongside. John Lamb noted wicked issues should be covered and Darren Thomas said that it would be interesting to identify these alongside a focus on climate change and net zero. Hazel McDonald noted that that carbon was a major focus for the sector. Justin Ward noted that issues of carbon and climate should be firmly in sight for the research programme now.

Action: Justin Ward to establish a date within the next two weeks (February and March in 2022).

Action: Proposal for hosting at the PEARL Lab

Action: Justin Ward/John Lamb to share previous highlights for focus for the UKRLG

6. UK Asset Management Board

Garry Sterritt provided an update on the Board's work noting a lot of work was completed for the Spending Review.

Action: Garry Sterritt to share for publication on UKRLG website the slide presentation pack on economic evaluation for highways maintenance used for the Spending Review [completed: [The Case for Investing in Highway Maintenance | CIHT](#)]

7. UK Roads Board

James Bailey noted that the Board was focused on the Away Day and the need for the UKRLG Away Day (noting the purpose and focus for UKRLG). The challenge of climate change and resilience were also highlighted and the constitution of the current Board if this was correct. There were other points on accreditation and the Code of Practice that could be focused on. The coordination with the UK Asset Management Board was also highlighted.

James said the Code of Practice is now six years old, and the question had been asked about a review of this in terms of longer-term implementation and good practice identification.

Winter resilience was highlighted and flagging that salt provision was sufficient but aspects such as vehicle maintenance and the availability of spare parts was highlighted as a concern. Darren Thomas asked about participation from Devolved Administrations across the Boards and it was noted that this was very good across all Board areas.

Action: James Bailey and Justin Ward and Hazel McDonald to work with Matt Eglinton on a survey to review the Code of Practice

8. UK Lighting & Technology Board

David Denner said that the Board was due to secure young professional input into the Board soon. David highlighted that the research programme was being finalised and noted a point about how the COP is updated on the website.

John Lamb noted that the UKRLG has a statutory footing to a degree with the publications that it produces. John congratulated the Board on their work on the State of Lighting with LEDs but asked about where this would go next and the uptake on this (e.g., with PFIs in some places and contractual SPV issues). David Denner responded that it would be great to have full 100% LED lighting (and powered by renewable energy).

There was a discussion on the approach to amending the Code and James Bailey said on previous amendments to the Code have been reviewed and led by the Board and then signed off by UKRLG and that this worked well.

Mark Kemp noted issues of personal security and cycling and asked if we are lighting the right things (particularly with changes in vehicle lighting). David Denner said that it is about the right light, right place and right time is the key thing.

9. UK Bridges Board

Masonry Arch Bridge guidance and Boundary Guidance are both due to be published shortly and covered in Transportation Professional. There was a discussion about cost sharing agreements with highway authorities. There was a discussion about bridges guidance and ownership and updates to the BCI scores (as some authorities are doing different things); as such, a review of these guidance documents would be important.

Action: Hazel McDonald to share the Network Rail Parapet Protocol document for approval with UKRLG for final sign-off.

Action: Hazel McDonald to share Boundary Guidance for UKRLG review for information

Action: Hazel McDonald to share Masonry Arch Bridge Guidance for UKRLG review for information

Finally, Hazel McDonald noted that the case for investment included a contribution from the UK Bridges Board and relative risk and that this was shared with DfT for the Spending Review.

10. UK Network Management Board

Mark Kemp noted that the Board had a presentation on PEARL by Professor Nick Tyler at the meeting. Mark welcomed that the consultation is out currently on Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act and on electric vehicle charging.

Mark Kemp noted on funding, that as in the network management world the revenue pressures are increasing in terms of annual rent on IT systems and the need for a provision in the budget for that.

11. AOB

Conor said that John Irvine due to retire and the Board re-iterated their thanks to John for his contribution in the past to the UKRLG. The Board also confirmed again their thanks to Liz Kirkham for her excellent leadership of the UK Bridges Board and welcomed the updates at the meeting from Hazel McDonald demonstrating that work initiated during Liz Kirkham's time as Chair was soon going to be made widely available and be of benefit to the bridge community.

ⁱ End meeting note:

Supply-chain issues: from a local authority:

Operations Manager, who looks after our supply chain and commercial relationships on how the highways market was looking to him:

1. Status;
 - Average material costs increased in excess of 20% compared to same period last year.
 - Early warning notifications are predicting further cost rises in Q4 and Q1 next year.
 - Timber stocks stabilised but haulage shortages continue to increase lead-in times beyond 8 weeks.
 - Standard stock precast concrete products are subject to increased lead-in times beyond 4 weeks in some cases.
 - Specialist sustainable travel precast concrete product lead-in times are still exceeding 16 weeks.

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- The availability of surface water plastic products is stable for small quantities but subject to increased lead-in times beyond 4 weeks for larger orders.
 - UK supply chain pressures are increasing the sourcing of products overseas adding to cost, time and carbon footprint.
 - Feedback from the supply chain that the lack of certainty on medium-term funding is a barrier to unlocking investment in skilled labour during such difficult times.
 - Early warning from the supply chain that the lack of certainty on medium-term funding is proving a problem for the survival of Tier 2 and Tier 3 contractors.
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2. Effects;
- Increased prices.
 - Increased lead-in times.
 - Reductions in quality of products in plastics and precast concrete.
 - Lack of competitive pricing as supply is being driven by product time constrained availability.
 - Lack of product availability in a supply chain that has previously worked on just-in-time model is substantially increasing non-productive time and subsequently increases prices.
3. Early release of funding will provide the supply chain with the medium-term confidence that they are seeking and enable;
- Early contractor involvement, coordination and communication across all supply chain tiers.
 - Encourage investment in apprentices, permanent recruitment and training.
 - Firm medium-term commitments will enable coordination with the supply chain and assist in balancing demand to reduce reliance on non-UK goods and services.
 - Securing the medium-term future will help to stabilise the supply chain and encourage investment in new sustainable technologies.