

UK Roads Board Meeting 02 March 2023 – held on Microsoft Teams

Attendance

Present:

James Bailey (Chair)
Amanda Richards
Carol Valentine
Sueanne Sandford
Andy Pickett
Rana Ilgaz
Gary Kemp (late arrival)
Donald Morrison
Ian Hawthorn
Mark McPeak
Arash Khojinian
Kyle Fairbairn (Secretariat)

Representing:

Staffordshire County Council, representing ADEPT
Surrey County Council, representing Road Condition Management Group (RCMG)
Kent County Council, representing National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG)
Monmouthshire County Council representing CSS Wales (in place of Jason Jenkins)
Footways & Cycle track Management Group (FCMG)
Transport for London (TfL)
Department for Transport (DfT)
Transport Scotland
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Infrastructure Northern Ireland
National Highways
CIHT

Attendance:

1) Introduction, apologies

Apologies recorded for Jason Jenkins.

Introductions were made by the group, including new members.

2) CoP (code of practice) Survey Results (AR)

Amanda gave an overview from the national code of practice (CoP) survey, last updated in 2016. This survey looked to find out what are the priority areas to be updated with relevant issues. Survey respondents included practitioners from across the sector.

Key takeaways:

- 48 responses received.
- Lack of skills, competences and training were highlighted as areas of priority for the sector and CoP update.
- Need for better guidance on climate change and resilience.

Climate change:

Climate change objectives and biodiversity are key areas for future review. The guidance is out of date with current Climate Change emergency and associated targets.

Priorities for UKRB research & guidance: facilitating active travel, foot ways and cycleways, human capital, carbon reduction and modelling/budgeting and connected technology.

- Living Streets Report

Amanda gave an overview, but pointed to key recommendation of the document and how there was alignment with the priorities of the UK Roads Board and the results of the CoP survey.

Andy Pickett raised the point that footways and cycleways are always pitched in relation to risk and liabilities of them, rather than the positives of implementing these.

Amanda indicated that it often comes down to budgets, meaning that risk is the main priority when taking this into account.

Ian Hawthorn said that footways are often underfunded and seen as the poor cousin to roads.

Rana raised that TfL (Transport for London) have developed a carbon literacy pathway, a one-day course.

Carol raised that there needs to be pointers to carbon calculators in the CoP.

Amanda said that a steer from DfT (Department for Transport) is needed so that everyone is using consistent carbon measurement.

James highlighted an initiative being led by Future Highways Research Group (FHRG) with 5 English Local Authorities to develop a highways sector standard Carbon Calculator tool.

James also made reference to the newly established UKABC (UK Adaptation, Biodiversity and Climate) Board and put a call out to UKRB members to promote this within their organisations and seek enthusiastic volunteers from across the UK to join.

James outlined the actions for the CoP survey: UKRLG will need to consider the broader survey results and develop a plan of action. Resource allocation will be key to scale and timeframes. Options may include UKRLG employing consultants to carry out a review of the full document priority areas/themes;

using research budget to support Board owned updates; and/or utilising the wider UKRLG network e.g. ADEPT, LGTAG, LCRIG, etc.

Action: Justin to share detailed CoP results with Andy Pickett.

3) UKRLG Update (JB)

- UKABC board

Creation of UKABC board, and call to action on membership for this board. There also needs to be thought about how the actions of each of the other UKRLG boards to make sure that there is not a duplication of efforts.

Rana raised the point of getting an overall view of carbon reduction from different local authority areas throughout the UK, and how to collaborate on these efforts.

Andy raised that work is ongoing with FCMG to collaborate with other complimentary organisations such as LGTAG (Local Government Technical Advisors Group) and ADEPT.

Arash happy to share National Highways targets and measures for carbon reduction with the group.

Action: Group to share membership of the UKABC board to their organisations.

Action: James to raise at UKRLG about how all the other organisations in the field, such as ADEPT; LGTAG, fit into the picture with UKRLG and compliment its work.

- Research

James outlined that the UKRLG subgroups had prioritised their 3 top priority areas of research focus. All were supported in principle by UKRLG, DfT are now asking the route to procurement and if consultants etc are needed for each piece of research. Once agreed, DfT would be able to look to facilitate the funding.

Top 3 priority themes:

- Congestion: Promulgating best practice
- Accessibility: Footways and Cycleways
- Efficiency: Pavement Condition

Carol raised that it must now be a priority for the group to come together and unlock this funding.

Arash happy to support via National Highways on research procurement route.

Ian asked how each of the priority research themes were decided, Amanda answered that these were based and aligned with UKRLG strategic themes.

Action: Group to identify the lead local authority for each of the research priorities (allowing DfT to release funding and procure through local authority framework) to be shared with DfT via UKRLG next week.

Action: Amanda to share original research priorities with the group for reference.

Action: Amanda to gather names of local authorities to put against each of the research themes.

4) UKRB Minutes (JB)

Actions from the last UKRB meeting agreed as completed.

5) Subgroup Updates

- **National Winter Service Research Group (CV)**

Carol outlined the changes to the NWSRG and what its purpose has been up until now. The reasons for restructure include: independence, financial security, increasing membership, focused leadership, collaborative idea generation between technical and steering group, increased opportunity to join UKRLG boards.

There is a new group added to the NWSRG structure too, the associates group, which includes manufacturers.

Funding to run the group looks good for the short-medium term. But additional funding is needed for research.

Future activity includes confirming business plan, presenting, and attending relevant conferences, research projects and scoping for future activity.

Action: Rana to share details of Asset Management team member from TfL to Mark McPeak.

- **Road Condition Management Group (AR)**

There is now a 6th UKPMS provider. Road conditions England was published, and that the condition is broadly static. Scotland reported a similar picture as broadly static for the last 16 years. The technologies that are used to analyse road condition are increasingly fragmented.

- **Footways & Cycle track Management Group (AP)**

Andy notified the board that Gary Neill had stepped down as chair of the FCMG group; Andy is filling in as interim chair.

A meeting is put in for March 14, with topics to be discussed likely to include implications of e- scooters on maintenance, review of provisions for Active Travel Infrastructure in WMH, engagement with LCRIG, ADEPT, LGTAG, TfL work on e-scooters.

- **Asset Management (DM)**

Donald gave a brief update on the asset management boards last meeting, with many similar discussion points on road maintenance survey and new data standards. There were also updates from other subgroups such as the bridges board, and mention of the up-and-coming decarbonisation toolkit release.

6) CE markings after Brexit and the deadline of 2024/connect autonomous vehicles (RI)

Rana raised to the group about what their views are in the changing standards for CE markings, and the impact of connected autonomous vehicles impact on maintenance. Rana also raised the update of standards such as the VRS standard subject to new, more intelligent, vehicles penetrating the market.

Action: Rana to arrange a speaker on connected autonomous vehicles as a future agenda item.

7) Format and Dates of Next UKRB Meetings (JB/KF)

Arrange an in-person meeting for around afternoon on 6 June, with a hybrid option. Hosted at TfL office.

8) Any Other Business

Kyle announced that this will be his last UKRB meeting as he will be leaving CIHT (Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation). UKRB Members thanked Kyle for his support and wished him well in his future role.