

ACTION POINTS FROM THE 4th MEETING OF THE ROADS LIAISON GROUP BRIDGES BOARD.

Meeting held at Great Minster House, 18 April 2002.

Present:

Steve Pearson Derbyshire CC/CSS (Chair)

Ian Holmes DTLR
Andrew Cook DTLR
Marilyn Waldron DTLR
Gerry Hayter Highways Agency
Sibdas Chakrabarti Highways Agency
Amrit Ghose Highways Agency

Ronnie Wilson DRD Northern Ireland
John Collins National Assembly for Wales
Raymund Johnstone Scottish Executive
Evan Pugh Welsh Association of Technical Officers
Greg Perks CSS
Brian Bell Railtrack
Frank Paine LOBEG
David Yeoell LOTAG
Jim Irons SCOTS
Steve Tart LOTAG

Secretariat: Andrew Oldland, Chris Hudson

Apologies were received from David Lynn

1. Minutes of Last Meeting

Section 3 – amend to read “David Lynn proposed David Yeoell as Chairman, and this was agreed by the Board.”

Section 6: Brian Bell was under the impression that DTLR were to contact Geoff Mason regarding the Circular Roads giving guidance on weak bridges.

Section 7, last paragraph: change "David Lynn asked Brian Bell to thank" to "David Lynn thanked".

2. Matters Arising

Brian Bell has had talks with the Highways Agency regarding Rivet shear research, and have agreed a way forward, the result of which may be a

change to the bridge assessment codes. Railtrack are providing guidance which will be circulated to interested parties. While Railtrack are prepared to do this research for their own purposes, they are happy to welcome anyone who wants to join them and contribute towards costs of research. When Railtrack carry out their own assessments, they see no reason why they should not use the revised assessment standards resulting from their own research.

John Collins expressed concern at the progress made with the project on evaluation of Stage 2 Assessments. He was under the impression that this was going ahead, but was told that it is at the stage where the Highways Agency are looking into the *possibility* of its' being included as part of another Highways Agency project.

3. Vehicle Incursions on Railways

Reports were published on 25 February this year. All of the 19 recommendations in the Reports were accepted by the Secretary of State. Three working groups have now been set up to take the work forward. The Secretary of State wants reports from the working groups by July this year. The target date for implementation of the safety measures is February next year.

The working groups will need to consider protocol between local highway authorities and rail authorities. TRL will be approached for guidance on detailed risk assessments.

It will also be necessary for the working groups to ensure that they have accurate data on the number and frequency of incursions taking place.

The Highways Agency is taking forward a calibration exercise on Road/Rail incursion risks. This builds on an existing CSS document. The Highways Agency's model will be circulated for comment and could be made available to the working groups.

Concern was expressed about the parameters of the working groups, particularly from members representing the Scottish and Welsh assemblies. It was the opinion of certain members, that the territorial assemblies needed to be represented on all the working groups and that one Risk Ranking Tool should be developed which would be owned by all. Marilyn Waldron welcomed any applications from the territorial assemblies to join the different working groups.

4. Non-Highway Authority Bridge Owners

This issue was brought up at the February meeting of the Roads Liaison Group (See minutes of meeting for further details).

5. Eurocodes

Sibdas Chakrabarti and Amrit Ghose gave a presentation on the introduction of Eurocodes that will, by the end of this decade, have replaced British Standards for design of highway structures. At present 15 out of a total of 58 Eurocodes have been published. Eurocodes are published in English, so the translation aspect will not affect this country. It was pointed out that by around 2004 DTLR would have no option but to accept Eurocodes as parallel standards. British Standards will be withdrawn after 2008.

The Eurocode documents will be available in the UK within 18 months. A period of 12 months will be required for calibration of the new standards before British standards can be withdrawn. The Highways Agency will produce a set of design standards from the new Eurocode standards. These will be used in procurement. The Highways Agency are inviting all interested parties to contribute at an early stage. Feedback from other organisations is welcomed in the introduction of Eurocodes. The European Commission will monitor the introduction of Eurocodes.

The Highways Agency currently have a contract with WS Atkins, who are looking at the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges to highlight features which are contradictory to what is proposed by Eurocodes and those which are not covered by them. Only relevant features, not covered by Eurocodes will be retained.

The European Commission would be the body responsible for Eurocodes.

There is currently a Highways Agency web-site which gives information on progress. It is not generally accessible, but Board members should contact Amrit Ghose, if they want access.

Concern was expressed that if contributions to the development of Eurocodes were to be made by organisations represented on the Board, funds would have to be set aside.

6. Research

All research bids by all of the RLG Boards have been successful for 2002/03. For 2003/04 research bids, prioritised requirements should be ready by the end of July. Board members should therefore produce ideas for projects and return them to the secretariat within two weeks. The Secretariat will then circulate a list of the projects asking members to give them priority rating. This list will be discussed at the July meeting of the Bridges Board.

The bids for research funding with the Highways Agency are separate from those of DTLR(c). The Highways Agency will consider research into rivet shear.

Research into arch bridges is something that the Bridge Owners' Forum would like to take forward. Bridges Board members will decide whether to make a funding contribution to this research.

Brian Bell pointed out that with current assessment standards, some "healthy" bridges are failing their assessments.

ACTION: Board members to produce ideas for possible research within two weeks. Secretariat to compile list and circulate among board members.

7. Sub-group for production of Code of Practice and Management System

The Board approved the name, terms of reference and main tasks of the sub-group, as proposed by David Yeoell. The Board is happy for the sub-group to go ahead with its work schedule. In the meantime any board members, not yet involved will be welcome to join, particularly those from organisations that are not yet included.

The working group will now have to set and prove its budget requirements.

ACTION: David Yeoell to let Ian Holmes know as soon as possible how much this work is going to cost.

8. Bridge Performance Indicators

As a result of meetings of the Roads Performance Indicators Group during 2001, DTLR (in conjunction with Bridges Board members) will consider ways in which bridge performance indicators fit in with the wider requirement for transport indicators, as identified by the Performance Indicators Group.

The Highways Agency have produced a consultant's brief for the development of bridge performance indicators for its network (BB16). WS Atkins have now been appointed as consultants. HA will be holding a meeting on 20 May with interested parties to determine the best way to take the work forward.

Railtrack already have performance indicators as a result of their agreement with the Rail Regulator. Railtrack recognise that the indicators could be improved.

9. Funding for Capital Allocations for Bridges

More than 70 local authorities responded to Ian Holmes' consultation, regarding how bridge strengthening and maintenance should be funded in 2003/04. Almost all authorities said that they would like to have their

allocations broken down, giving details of how DTLR arrived at the eventual allocation.

David Yeowell suggested that funding to allow authorities to carry out bridge inspection (for condition data which could be used in an inventory) should be capitalised.

10. New Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions Circular

There is a proposal in the Circular Roads of the above to bring British weight restrictions on bridges in line with European stipulations. This would mean that 17 tonne restrictions would be raised to 18 tonnes and 25 tonnes to 26. While this has been proposed for the purpose of protecting bridges from unsuitable loads, there is concern that it could have the opposite effect and actually put unacceptable axle weight on certain bridges. It was agreed that the Bridges Board would prepare advice to local authorities that would be included in the Circular Roads, urging them to be cautious when imposing weight restrictions.

ACTION: Greg Perks and Brian Bell to draft advice to local authorities.

11. Asset Preservation Indicators

The Board agreed that work on asset preservation indicators needs to be drawn together into a model. The Highways Agency are taking forward a review of the model that they have.

The Board recognises the need for a proper asset register, which the National Audit Office can audit. John Collins suggested that this might be a good opportunity to compile an asset register that was compatible with Resource Accounting (due to be introduced by local authorities in 2005-06).

ACTION: Bridges Board members to let the Highways Agency have their comments on the HA model.

12. Any Other Business

It was suggested that the Bridge Owners' Forum, currently reviewing its own funding methods, should be funded by DTLR. Ian Holmes said that it was unlikely that anything could be done this year. The matter will be looked into after BOF members have invoiced for the next round of costs.

The issue of local authorities wanting end-of-year flexibility in the use of their LTP allocations was raised. DTLR stated that under the Single Capital Pot, allocations will be issued in the form of Basic Credit Allocation which has no end-of-year flexibility. DTLR were not aware that there was a great desire for this flexibility.

13. Date of Next Meeting

This will be held on at 10:30 on 3 July, in Room H3, Great Minster House. So far, apologies have been received from David Yeowell.

DTLR Roads Policy Division
22 April 2002