

MINUTES FROM THE 6th MEETING OF THE ROADS LIAISON GROUP BRIDGES BOARD.

Meeting held at Great Minster House, 3 October 2002.

Present:

Steve Pearson	Derbyshire CC/CSS (Chair)
Greg Perks	CSS
Raymund Johnstone	Scottish Executive
Andrew Cook	DfT VSE
Gerry Hayter	Highways Agency
Ronnie Wilson	DRD(NI)
Frank Paine	LOBEG
Jim Irons	SCOTS
John Collins	Welsh Assembly
Evan Pugh	Ceredigion CC
Steve Tart	Manchester City Council
Andrew Oldland	DfT (Secretariat)
Chris Hudson	DfT (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

These were received by David Lynn, David Yeoell and Ian Holmes.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Vehicle Incursions on Railways - Brian Bell pointed out that Railtrack had not yet agreed to a 50/50 split in costs. They have written to DfT Ministers on this subject and are still awaiting a reply. Railtrack are looking to DfT for clarification of the implications of the 50/50 split before agreeing to this arrangement.

Esdel Workshop – David Lynn is to contact David Yeoell for an update on progress

Research - the minutes recorded that HA were reluctant to assess research related to local authorities. Gerry Hayter said that HA would be willing to respond to such requests from the Bridges Board.

3. Matters Arising

The Highways Agency will be holding a meeting to discuss Bridge Performance Indicators on 4 October.

4. Bridge Management Sub-group

It was agreed that Steve Pearson will contact David Yeoell in order to arrange a meeting to discuss progress of the Group and recent developments in Europe in the field of Bridge management and maintenance. It is possible that the EU may propose a Europe-wide system, and provide funding for development of this. The Group need to be fully aware of this in order to avoid duplication in the field of research.

Action – Steve Pearson to contact David Yeoell to arrange this meeting

Brian Bell (Railtrack) has indicated that he would like to join the bridge management Sub-Group. Andrew Cook (DfT) stated that he would wish to attend this group and that it may be possible to provide some staff resources from the ESDAL project to assist in the group's work.

The Bridges Board have been informed that David Yeoell has agreed the brief for the work on the bridge management system (although no consultant has yet been appointed).

It was suggested that, in future, the Bridge Management Sub-group meet directly after the Bridges Board. This suggestion will be put to David Yeoell on his return from leave.

Gerry Hayter suggested that a consultant be taken on in order to project manage the work of the sub-group recognising that sub-group members had limited resources and work pressures in their organisations. This could be done, as with the Roads Board, by means of a call-off contract.

5. Abnormal Loads

Andrew Cook presented BB36 on the progress of the ESDEL project. Funding has been approved by the Treasury. Progress has been slower than expected but is now improving. A meeting of the project board is due to take place later in October. Both CSS and the Highways Agency are now represented on the Board. The number of stakeholders on the board need to be limited so it was hoped that the Bridges Board, sub-group would act as an additional focal point on bridge aspects.

The Bridges Board envisage that the Bridge management sub-group could act as a link between the Bridges Board and the ESDEL project board. This could be useful for channelling information.

A contractor will be chosen to carry out the main body of the work on the abnormal loads system. Andrew Cook is recruiting consultants for a management team, to manage the project and who will review project bids.

Andrew Cook pointed out that the ESDEL system was not expected to be compulsory but would be a preferable alternative to the existing system, regarding the transportation of abnormal loads. It would give bridge owners a lot more control over which routes hauliers use, while at the same time benefiting hauliers.

It is planned that the ESDEL system will include, as part of its "on line" facility, a methodology to assess the carrying capacity of bridges, including Arch bridges. Some Bridges Board members queried whether the system could use previous assessment results. It has been established that further research is needed on masonry arch bridges; there needs to be a link between this and the ESDEL project.

There are concerns about gaps in current legislation regarding the transportation of abnormal loads. For instance, highway authorities are required to ensure that their roads and bridges are capable of accommodating "normal traffic", but it is unclear as to how this is defined, or whether this includes loads up to 150 Tonnes.

Brian Bell was particularly concerned about the issue of liability. He would like the existing statutory instrument, which provides a derogation from the Construction and Use Regulations, to be reviewed. He is concerned that the new AIL system could result in private bridge owners facing additional expenses for bridge strengthening.

If this were the case he would be in favour of Government funding to assist private bridge owners.

The Board's other concern was the lack of AIL capacity on level crossings.

It was agreed that Greg Perks would put together a paper on the gaps in legislation and that this would be circulated at the next meeting of the Bridges Board. In the meantime, concerns about this issue should be addressed directly to DfT (VSE5). Andrew Cook will provide a briefing note highlighting the current legal position and this will be circulated to the Board.

Action – Greg Perks to produce a paper as described above

Action - Andrew Cook to produce a briefing note highlighting legal position

6. Research - Prioritisation of Projects 2003/04 (BB30)

It was pointed out that the section of BB30 dealing with the Bridge Owners' Forum does not touch on the relationship between the BOF and the Bridges Board. Gerry Hayter will revise the paragraph to take on board the BOF's role as a sub-group to the Bridges Board.

The Bridges Board's research bids will be presented to the RLG at their next meeting. These will be the bids for funding of the Bridge Owners' Forum and for research into masonry arch bridges. The Bridges Board also intend to raise at the RLG the possibility of funding for a consultant to manage bridge research projects identified by the Bridge Owners' Forum. This would be in addition to funding for consultants to take on a project management role for the Bridges Board sub-group activities.

Gerry Hayter will contact Campbell Middleton (BOF chairman) in order to get a cost figure for the proposed funding of the Bridge Owners' Forum. This figure will form part of the Bridges Board's bid for research in 2003/04, to be presented to the Roads Liaison Group at its next meeting.

Action – Gerry Hayter to obtain correct cost figure for funding of BOF

7. Reports from the Bridge Owners' Forum

The Bridges Board will quote a figure of £90k as being required to fund the CIRIA project on Masonry and Brick Arch Bridges. If this funding bid is approved by DfT, this will place the onus on CIRIA to provide the remainder of the funding.

The issue was raised about whether the documents BD16 and BD21 (part of the Departmental manual for Roads and Bridges) should be reviewed as part of the CIRIA project.

The CIRIA steering group have still not agreed the specification for the research project. Review of BD16 and BD21 could be included in the CIRIA project brief. The Bridges Board would be in favour of this being included, and can make appropriate representations to CIRIA.

8. Requirement for Repair Work to Bridges after the Earth Tremor on 23 September

It was agreed that the tremor was not of a sufficient magnitude to have caused damage to bridges in England. John Collins will, however, contact SECED who have researched into this issue, looking at comparisons in countries where earthquakes present a more serious threat.

Action – John Collins to take this forward.

9. Any Other Business

Bridge Owners' Forum

The Bridge Owners' Forum are now content with their Terms of Reference.

Brian Bell will arrange with Campbell Middleton to circulate the minutes of BOF meetings to members of the Bridges Board, in future. There will also be a report on progress of the BOF at future Bridges Board meetings. However, the Board agreed that it would not be appropriate for Campbell Middleton to attend Bridges Board meetings.

Action – Brian Bell to make appropriate arrangements with Campbell Middleton

Vehicle Incursions

Chris Hudson will ask Marilyn Waldron at DfT for an update on the general state of play, regarding vehicle incursions on railways.

Action – Secretariat to include this on next Bridges Board agenda

10. Date of Next Meeting

A list of Roads Liaison Group and Boards meetings for 2003 has now been circulated to the Roads Liaison Group and members of all boards, except the Traffic Management Board. The next meeting of the Bridges Board will be on 14 January, in Room H3 Great Minster House, at 10:30 am.

DfT Roads Policy Division
November 2002