

MINUTES FROM THE 7th MEETING OF THE ROADS LIAISON GROUP BRIDGES BOARD.

Meeting held at Great Minster House, 14 January 2003.

Present:

David Lynn	CSS/Warwickshire CC (Chair)
Steve Pearson	Derbyshire CC/CSS
Greg Perks	Northumberland CC/CSS
Raymund Johnstone	Scottish Executive
Gerry Hayter	Highways Agency
Brian Bell	Network Rail
Marilyn Waldron	DfT Roads Policy
Frank Paine	LOBEG
Jim Irons	SCOTS
David Yeoell	Westminster City Council
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 from Ronnie Wilson, Ian Holmes and Andrew Cook.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Vehicle Incursions on Railways - Brian Bell pointed out that the minutes suggest that he was actually present at the meeting in October, which was not the case.

Abnormal Loads - Greg Perks was not in fact going to prepare advice on the legal implications of abnormal loads. The action was solely for Andrew Cook.

Bridge assessment standards – the minutes refer to BD16. The correct name for this Advice Note is BA16.

3. Matters Arising

Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order - Brian Bell produced a copy of this Statutory Instrument, which is now in its fifth draft.

This legislation covers the transport of abnormal loads under 150 Tonnes. Mr Bell's main concerns were:

1. There is no provision for private bridge owners to stop an abnormal load crossing one of their bridges if they consider the bridge has insufficient carrying capacity;
2. Where a load is abnormal due to size, the police can decide on a route that can cope with the abnormal size - but the load may also be abnormal in weight and the legislation does not ensure that the police also take this into account when planning the route;
3. The legislation does not cover the issue of abnormal loads on level crossings.

The board expressed its concern as a whole that they have not been consulted on this issue. The consultation period was *supposed* to end on 1 December 2003, but the board would like to see this extended so as they can consider the document and discuss it at the April meeting.

ACTION: Brian Bell will email a copy of the Statutory Instrument to the Secretariat, who will circulate it to all other board members.

Andrew Oldland will ask Margaret Clare to take up this issue with Malcolm Fendick of DfT Vehicle Standards and Engineering, with a view to extending the consultation period and giving the Bridges Board adequate time to formulate their views.

Earth Tremor on 23 September 2002 - John Collins has been in touch with David Mackenzie of SECED, who is now looking into the issue of possible damage to bridges from earth tremors.

4. Vehicle Incursions on Railways

The protocol was ratified by the LGA in September 2002 and is about to be ratified by Network Rail. This paves the way for the publication of the Department for Transport's response to the 19 separate recommendations of the HSE and the Highways Agency working groups.

Marilyn Waldron will shortly be circulating to the working groups (who are to meet later in January) a package consisting of:

- the protocol,

- guidance in the form of a Traffic Advisory Note on second stage risk assessments and on risk mitigation measures,
- guidance on the collection of data by the British Transport Police and local highway authorities. (British Transport Police have been collecting data on bridge incursion incidents in the past, but not in a systematic way. They have now agreed to collect this data on a standard pro-forma, which would then be sent to the highway authority for completion of the relevant section. The form would then be sent to Railway Safety Division, DfT. This arrangement has yet to be formally agreed by LGA and LUL.)

The Secretariat will circulate this package to the Bridges Board (attached).

Marilyn Waldron will be putting up a submission to ministers early in February. She will tell them that all concerned are now working towards a deadline of 28 February (which will be the second anniversary of the crash) for the publication of this work.

DfT economists have arrived at a figure of £32m that can be justified to be spent on measures to prevent bridge incursions (including parallel incursions) in England, Scotland and Wales. This is a one-off figure which is considered sufficient to give Network Rail and highway authorities protection from legal liability.

Although Network Rail's share of these costs has been agreed in the protocol, the point was raised that a methodology is needed to divide costs among highway authorities. Concern was also raised that the money will be distributed to local authorities in such a way that it cannot be "ring-fenced". Ms Waldron appreciated the difficulties but said there was unlikely to be extra money and if there was, it would not be ring fenced.

Brian Bell raised the question of a national unique numbering system for bridges. This had been a recommendation from the Railway Safety inquiry into the Great Heck accident, which had been endorsed by the HSE final report. After discussion it was agreed by the Board that implementation of the recommendation was considered to be impractical due to the differing needs of road and railway administrations.

It has been proposed that workshops about using the risk ranking tools and the risk assessment Guidance be held at Government Offices. Local highway authorities would be invited. The intention is for better-informed local authorities to educate those less so, on methods that can be used to prevent incursions.

5. Bridge Management Sub-group

David Yeoell is now ready to place an advertisement in the *Official Journal of the European Communities* for the appointment of a consultant.

The consultant's brief includes production of a bridge management Code of Practice and a framework for a bridge management system. The aim of the management system is to ensure that various databases used have a common "core" which can produce compatible outputs.

It was agreed that, with progress having been slow up to now, there will be a meeting of the sub-group, to discuss the consultants brief, in the afternoon following the next meeting of the CSS Committee on 30 January at Westminster City Council headquarters. There will be a further meeting of the group in the afternoon following the next meeting of the Bridges Board on 3 April.

Jonathan Skeat, consultant working for DfT on the Esdal project, visited the meeting to give a brief explanation of this project, which involves a computerised system for hauliers to notify bridge owners of abnormal load movements. DfT's intention is to make the Esdal database available to local authorities (that do not already have a database) for recording of their bridge stock as the basis of a bridge management system.

ACTION: David Yeowell will organise a meeting of the sub-group at 3pm on 30 January, at the Archive Centre, Westminster. Chris Hudson will book a room in Great Minster House for a further meeting of the group in the afternoon of 3 April.

David Yeowell will circulate the consultants brief to sub-group members and anyone who is unable to attend the 30 January meeting should send written comments to him before the April meeting of the Bridges Board.

6. Research Projects Identified by the Bridges Board.

At the Roads Liaison Group meeting in October 2002 it was decided that the Code of Practice for Bridge Management would continue to receive financial support from DfT. The bid for a consultant to work alongside the Bridges Board would, on the other hand, be put on ice for the time being. The Masonry Arch project (in association with CIRIA and the Bridge Owners Forum) and the bid for DfT support of the Bridge Owners' Forum will be taken forward as part of the RLG research package. More details will be known shortly.

7. Bridge Performance Indicators

The HA have commissioned this work from WS Atkins because they need to put in place a key performance indicator linked to bridges to meet the requirements and timetable of their Network Strategy Division.

Indicators covering visual condition, safety, availability and the bridge maintenance backlog are proposed. These proposals were discussed with a

group of representatives from UK bridge owners with WS Atkins and the HA following a presentation on 4 October with a view to developing a UK approach.

The proposal for a visual condition indicator is similar to one already proposed by CSS and there was general agreement that this type of indicator would be appropriate for all bridge stock. HA will be using this as an interim indicator pending completion of the project.

DfT are interested in identifying an appropriate indicator for bridge condition that could be used by local authorities (possibly as a Best Value indicator). When this is in place, it could also be used by DfT to identify bridge maintenance funding requirements.

Gerry Hayter said that finding a suitable indicator for allocation of funds would be difficult. The project is only in its early stages and there is some way to go. The HA will reconvene the steering group in due course to consider developments on the project.*

Gerry Hayter said that the use and publication of any indicators across local authority and trunk roads bridge stocks would need to be co-ordinated.

Performance indicators for local authority bridges will be discussed at the next CSS meeting on 30 January. HA will be presenting the work they have done.

* A meeting is now being proposed by HA for 4 April 2003.

8. CIRIA Research Project Specification

Brian Bell has been in contact with CIRIA. If funding is available through the Roads Liaison Group, CIRIA are now ready to proceed with this project. CIRIA met in early January and decided to refine the research proposal that was circulated last year. A cost of between £80k and 100k is anticipated. Brian Bell had originally quoted a cost of £90k to the Roads Liaison Group. Both Railtrack and British Waterways have expressed a willingness to contribute. CIRIA would like as many interested organisations as possible to make a contribution of some sort to the financing of this project because that would give the end product greater credibility.

9. UKCEC/DfT/CSS Meeting on 5 December 2002

The UK Chief Engineers Committee (UKCEC) have been looking at their terms of reference in the light of the existence of the Roads Liaison Group. The Terms of Reference were produced in 1998 and it was felt that some clarification of the UKCEC's role in terms of provision of advice and standard setting was now needed. It was suggested that this be done with reference to

the Sharpe Report, published in 2000, entitled. *Study of Roads Advisory and Standard Setting Functions*.

In general, the Bridges Board are favourable towards the idea of the Highways Agency playing a wider role in these areas.

ACTION: David Lynn will look at the "Summary of Key Findings" on pages 21 and 22 of the report, with a view to identifying any gaps that may exist in the areas of standard setting and advice giving. He will report on this subject to the Roads Liaison group on 4 February.

10. Bridge Owners Forum

The next meeting of the BOF will take place on 11 February 2003. Although the minutes of the last meeting are now on the BOF web-site, certain board members had had trouble accessing the site. Brian Bell will therefore email the minutes to the Secretariat, so that they can be circulated to all board members.

10. Flooding and Bridge Scour

Gerry Hayter said that in the light of flooding in autumn 2000 and again recently it was likely that the frequency of flooding and the number of structures affected by flooding is on the increase. He put two questions to the Board. Firstly, is the current guidance on Flooding and Bridge Scour still appropriate/safe? Secondly, is there a need for a UK-wide approach to scour assessment and management?

In 2001 The Highways Agency did some work to develop a draft advice note on identification and prioritisation of scour susceptible bridges. Some trials of the document were undertaken but further work was put on hold because other work was more pressing at the time.

In 2002 CIRIA produced a handbook on Bridge Scour.

Feedback to the Highways Agency has suggested that some kind of management strategy is needed. The CSS will discuss this at their Committee meeting on 30 January.

ACTION: Board members will prepare comments and this subject will be on the agenda of the 3 April meeting of the Bridges Board.

11. Any Other Business

Brian Bell explained that Railtrack PLC, which had been listed on the stock exchange, was now in the process of being wound up. This process will involve complex legal moves. Railtrack's successor organisation will be known as Network Rail. Mr Bell's e-mail address and letter headings will change to a "Network Rail" address within six months.

12. Date of Next Meeting

This will take place on 3 April in room LG1, Great Minster House

DfT Roads Policy Division
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