

**MINUTES FROM THE 9<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE ROADS LIAISON GROUP BRIDGES BOARD.**

**Meeting held in room H2, Great Minster House, on 24 June 2003.**

**Present:**

David Lynn	Warwickshire CC/CSS (Chair)
Steve Pearson	Derbyshire CC/CSS
Ian Holmes	DfT Roads Policy
Greg Perks	Northumberland CC/CSS
Billy Minto	Scottish Executive
Awtar Jandu	Highways Agency
Alan Dray	Network Rail
Edward Bunting	DfT Roads Policy
Frank Paine	LOBEG
Rod Howe	British Waterways
John Collins	Welsh Assembly
Brian Swan	SCOTS
Ronnie Wilson	DRD(NI)
Steve Tart	Manchester City Council
Andrew Oldland	DfT (Secretariat)
Chris Hudson	DfT (Secretariat)

**1. Apologies**

These were received from Evan Pugh (Ceredigion CC/WATO), David Yeell (LB Westminster), Jim Moriarty (London Underground Limited) and Andrew Cook (DfT). Raymund Johnstone was represented by Billy Minto, Jim Irons by Brian Swan, Gerry Hayter by Awtar Jandu and Brian Bell by Alan Dray.

**2. Minutes of Last Meeting**

Item 4 (Vehicle Incursions) - Ronnie Wilson pointed out that "Northern Ireland Assembly" should in fact read "Northern Ireland Road Service".

Item 5 (Abnormal Loads) - The first action point is incorrect. The Bridges Board were in fact expecting VSE division (of which Ian Corfield is no longer a member) to look into how the concerns expressed by the Bridges Board at the April meeting may be taken into consideration when preparing legislation.

### **3. Matters Arising**

Vehicle Incursions on Railways - Regional workshops have not yet been set up.

Local authorities are still concerned about when the funding contribution from Network Rail will be made available. Network Rail have no money set aside for this purpose in the current year, but are aiming to make this available in the following three years.

The LGA Transport Executive is due to meet this week and will discuss this issue. A member of Network Rail will be present at the meeting.

UKCEC/DfT/CSS Meeting - It is possible that a meeting could be arranged for September 2003. ODPM, DEFRA and the Treasury also have an interest in this matter. There is a prevailing desire to produce more "liveable" streets, that are more relevant to the local community in which they lie. The main area of concern is that local authorities are using Highways Agency standards which are geared towards trunk roads, inappropriately for local roads. The Roads Liaison Group has agreed to look into this matter.

### **4. Performance Indicators**

Awtar Jandu said that W S Atkins foresee no problem in extending the work that they are doing on behalf of the Highways Agency to include local authority owned bridges. The work could be done within the original deadline and the proposed figure of £30k, to be provided by DfT, to cover this extension, would be adequate. AJ said that his only concern was that this extension did not in any way compromise Highways Agency interests. Atkins have said that there should be no adverse effect. In the meantime, a mechanism for the transfer of the money from DfT needs to be worked out.

**ACTION: Ian Holmes to confirm to David Lynn and the Highways Agency that the £30k needed for the extension of the work being done by W S Atkins is available from DfT in 2003/04.**

### **5. Research**

Edward Bunting presented **BB 39**, dealing with DfT's research strategy. He highlighted the proposal made in this paper that the Roads Liaison Group and its Boards repeat the process undergone last year, where possible research projects were identified by the different boards, between the summer and the autumn rounds of meetings, and then discussed at the autumn meetings. Some projects could also be identified by the Bridge Owners' Forum for consideration by the Bridges Board.

Prioritised lists of projects favoured by the Boards would then be submitted to the Roads Liaison Group at its October meeting. If the process were conducted in this manner, the successful projects could then be presented to DfT Ministers before Christmas, with the hope of obtaining ministerial agreement before the start of the new financial year.

The process would involve consulting with local authorities and other interested bodies between the summer and autumn meetings of the boards, as was done last year.

**ACTION: Edward Bunting will look further into this matter and report to the next Roads Liaison Group in July.**

## **6. Bridge Management Sub-group**

The contract for the new Code of Practice for the maintenance of bridges will have to be re-advertised in the OJEC journal. This is because DfT are now to manage the contract instead of Westminster Council. There were 15 expressions of interest following the original advertisement. The aim is to trim down the expressions of interest to about six or eight, depending on quality. A panel of Bridges' board members, including David Yeowell and Edward Bunting will take on this work.

There will be a period of 37 days, where the contract is advertised in OJEC, followed by a period of 40 days, waiting for tenders to arrive. It is possible that a decision could be reached by the next meeting of the Bridges Board.

**ACTION: David Yeowell and Edward Bunting will put together a letter to send to those who expressed interest in the contract for producing the Code of Practice, the first time round, letting them know that their original response will be considered and that they need not submit a new expression of interest.**

W S Atkins are acting as consultants to the Welsh Assembly Government to develop a bridge management system for Wales. The commission is now past its first stage, i.e. finalising a specification. The next stage is to invite tenders for the pilot system.

## **7. Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order**

The Board are concerned about VOSA's policy towards prosecution of HGV operators who overload their vehicles. VOSA see prosecution as a last resort, and have a policy of not prosecuting first offenders. Also, less severe penalties are imposed when overloading is within 30% over permitted weight.

Board members consider this too lenient, as overloaded vehicles can cause serious damage to structures. These can include rutting in the inside lane as well as damage to the structure itself.

Members suggested that HGV operators should be reminded that overloading could invalidate their insurance cover. It was also suggested that vehicle manufacturers should do more to discourage overloading.

## **8. Flooding and Bridge Scour**

Not much progress has been made on this, since it was last on the Bridges Board agenda. The Highways Agency are currently reviewing the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and will be looking at this issue over the next three months.

## **9. Last Meeting of the Bridge Owners' Forum**

Two projects were put forward at this meeting, last month. They are

- Dry Stone Walls
- Management of Old Metal Bridges

For dry stone walls there is no code of practice or standard procedure currently in existence. A fair amount of research work has been done, however, at various universities. This research now needs to be sifted and some sort of management system needs to be developed. It was agreed that TRL would be best placed to take the lead as they have already done work in this area. The BOF consider that a figure of £60k would be necessary, and leave the matter with the Bridges Board for consideration.

The question was raised whether research on dry stone walls would also be appropriate to gravity walls. It was decided that this may not be appropriate as gravity walls have a defined structure whereas dry stone walls do not.

Brian Bell has a CD in German that outlines research work carried out in Germany on the management of older metal bridges. This will be translated and circulated to Forum members. The Forum will consider whether to support similar research work for the UK (building on the German work).

**ACTION - Bridge Owners' forum to send research papers to the Secretariat for distribution to the Bridges Board in time for the October meeting.**

Regarding the funding of the BOF by DfT, the one issue, which remains to be settled, is who should be the recipient of the cheque that DfT provide. It is

most likely that it will go to the Engineering Department at Cambridge University.

**ACTION - DfT to progress this funding**

#### **10. Preparation for Transport Working Group on Safety in Tunnels**

There is a proposed EU Directive which deals with safety issues concerning tunnels on the Trans-European Road Network. There are 4 such tunnels (over 500 metres in length) in England and 3 in Wales. The EU Transport Council will meet in October with a view to endorsing this Directive. If it goes through it should become law in the UK next year and will have implications for road transport. What these implications are, has yet to be finalised, but could involve such things as HGVs having to carry fire extinguishers or emptying their supplementary fuel tank before entering a tunnel on the network.

Anyone expressing interest in this matter should contact Edward Bunting for further information.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

Frank Paine has produced a note concerning Network Rail's load bearing obligations, in which he suggests that legislation needs to be changed and that this could be achieved via the Roads Liaison Group. The note was circulated to those present.

**ACTION: Frank Paine will send his note electronically to the Secretariat, who will place this issue on the agenda of the October meeting of the Bridges Board.**

#### **12. Date of Next Meeting**

This will take place on 3 October 2003, in Room H2, Great Minster House

DfT Roads Policy Division  
26 June 2003