

NOTE OF THE 11th MEETING OF THE UK BRIDGES BOARD.

Meeting held in rooms 8A/B, Ashdown House, on 4 February 2004.

Present:

David Lynn	Warwickshire CC/CSS (Chair)
John Collins	Welsh Assembly
Graham Cole	CSS/Surrey County Council
Jim Moriarty	London Underground Ltd
Awtar Jandu	Highways Agency
Brian Bell	Network Rail
Andrew Oldland	DfT Traffic Management Division
Frank Paine	LOBEG
Rod Howe	British Waterways
David Yeoell	Westminster City Council
Jim Irons	SCOTS
Raymund Johnstone	Scottish Executive
Greg Perks	CSS/Northumberland CC
Dana Skelley	Transport for London
Ronnie Wilson	DRD(NI)
Steve Tart	Manchester City Council
Dave Ambrose	WATO
Chris Hudson	DfT (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

These were received from Steve Pearson, Andrew Cook, Ian Holmes and Edward Bunting.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of last meeting

8. Bridge Performance Indicators - It is unlikely that all the work commissioned by DfT Central under the HA contract will be done in this financial year due to a cashflow problem. Andrew Oldland is arranging for £15k to be transferred to HA this year, with the expectation that another £15k will be transferred in the next financial year. He will liaise with Awtar Jandu about this.

Mike Young would like to trial proposed indicators with a mixture of local authorities (unitary/rural/metropolitan). If Board members know of any authorities that would like to participate, they should contact Mike Young direct.

Some Board members were of the view that a performance indicator should not be introduced on local authority roads until the whole "package" of indicators being developed by Atkins is ready. This could take up to five years. Other Board members agreed with DfT's view that an indicator should be introduced without delay, even if it needs further refining as more work is completed by Atkins.

12. Any Other Business - first line should read "B36" and not "B236".

12. Any Other Business - The planned presentation on the Cost 345 Programme has been cancelled. The Highways Agency feels that there is no new message to give to industry. Information from working groups will however be available later in the year and it is hoped to produce this in the form of a CD rom. The Bridge Owners' Forum will discuss this matter further and should have a copy of the CD rom when it is ready.

Matters Arising

David Lynn welcomed Graham Cole and Dave Ambrose as new members of the Bridges Board. Graham has replaced Greg Perks as chairman of the CSS Bridges Group and Dave has replaced Evan Pugh as the Board's WATO representative.

Brian Bell raised concerns about the programme for assessment and strengthening of Network Rail bridges. He felt that it may not be completed until 2020, not 2010 as originally thought. Network Rail have still had difficulty in obtaining necessary funding from authorities. In some cases this has been due to the authority not being able to determine a figure for financial liability, due to assessments being delayed. The programme for Scotland and Wales is subject to more delays than in England.

The view of some local authorities is that the delay in carrying out assessments is due to the funding contributions from Network Rail not being forthcoming. However, TfL say that they have fully funded their assessments but work is still being delayed.

The Board wish DfT to act as arbitrator in this matter, and to convene a meeting of all parties concerned.

Action - DfT to consider this.

3. Last Meeting of the Roads Liaison Group - 29 October 2003

A copy of the note of this meeting is available on the Roads Liaison Group web-site.

The subject of asset management plans was raised at the last meeting. DfT plan to make a presentation on this issue at the next RLG meeting.

Action: DfT to arrange a presentation on Asset Management Plans at the next meeting of the RLG.

4. Bridge Maintenance Backlog

The board agreed that the most important issue to be resolved was the definition of "backlog". DfT statisticians are currently producing a figure by projecting data derived from a sample of local authorities originally chosen by CSS.

DfT would like to have the endorsement of the Roads Liaison Group and its related boards for this backlog figure, and the corresponding figures for carriageways and lighting, before they publish the figures in their report to the Transport Select Committee. As the deadline for the report is April 2004, it will be necessary for Board members to give their input before their next meeting at the end of April.

ACTION: DfT to solicit Board members views in time to meet April deadline.

5. Research Update

There has been no Ministerial decision as yet following on from the research package that was put together at the last meeting of the Roads Liaison Group. Both of the projects put forward by the Bridges Board were included in the package. DfT will check as to whether funding for the Bridge Owners' Forum in 2004/05 was included.

Masonry and Brick Arch Bridges - A workshop is due to take place at CIRIA headquarters on 5 February.

The view was expressed that while CIRIA should be free to publish the results of this project under their own name, they should not be able to profit from it. It was felt that the final document should be freely available on the Internet. The Board endorsed this view.

ACTION: DfT will further advise on this.

Dry Stone Retaining Walls - A number of people have expressed an interest in being part of the steering group for this project.

Bridges Code of Practice - W S Atkins have now embarked upon a 12 month programme to produce a Code of Practice for bridge management and maintenance as well as a Framework document for bridge management. A website will be set up and questionnaires will be distributed. All information will be made available to interested parties. The aim is to produce the Framework first.

The Board were in favour of links between the Code of Practice and performance indicators for local authority bridges. There should also be a link between the Code and the Esdal (abnormal loads notification) system.

The question was raised as to how the Code of Practice should be published. Should it be a web document or a paper one or both? How should it be promoted/launched?

There is also the issue of profit and income to be considered. It was suggested that profits from the Code could pay back public money invested in its production.

It was suggested that if the Code and the Framework are published by the Roads Liaison Group/Related Boards, this would raise public awareness of the existence of these bodies. Could not all the Codes of Practice (roads, lighting & bridges) about to be produced/revised be brought together under RLG auspices? The Board endorsed this idea.

It was also suggested that it might be a good idea to make the Code a British Standard, or part of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges on the grounds that this would ensure its longevity and also ensure timely updates.

ACTION: David Lynn will report the Board's views to the Roads Liaison Group, at their next meeting.

6. Proposed changes in legislation that could affect highway bridges

The Board agreed that, in future, they should be kept up-to-date regarding any changes in legislation concerning bridges. They would like to be included in discussions before the Consultation Document is issued.

Code of Practice on Self-Escorting of Abnormal Loads and Abnormal Vehicles
The Board discussed the consultation document **BB 53/04** submitted by Andrew Cook. It was decided that while the Bridges Board will produce their own response to the consultation, individual members should respond separately on behalf of the organisations that they represent.

ACTION: Bridges Board members should give their comments on the Code of Practice to Brian Bell who will liaise with David Lynn in order to produce a response to the consultation on behalf of the Board.

DfT will ask Andrew Cook to add TfL (Street Management and Underground) and LOBEG to the consultation list for the Code of Practice.

7. Network Rail Agreements

Concern was expressed over a number of issues relating to agreements between Highway Authorities and Network Rail for work done on Bridges over railways owned by the latter. It is felt that in certain areas of work the agreements are heavily biased in favour of Network Rail and that this leads to protracted negotiations, delays etc.

Network Rail stated that one of the main problems, the need for Network Rail to approve variations to the road passing over the bridge, is due to requirements laid down by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). HSE approval is required, and sometimes this is the cause of the delay.

Local authorities are also objecting the clause which requires them to indemnify Network Rail up to an unlimited amount.

Discussions will continue and this matter will be picked up at the CSS Rail Group meeting on 7 April.

ACTION: Steve Tart will raise this issue with Network Rail at the next CSS/Network Rail Meeting on 7 April 2004.

8. Any Other Business

It was requested that the Traffic Management Bill be placed on the agenda of the next Bridges Board.

Three conferences of interest to Board members will be taking place in the near future. These are:

"Bridges 2004" to be held at the Commonwealth Conference Centre on 9 March 2004, organised by *Surveyor* magazine.

"Asset Management" to be held at Surrey University on 24 and 25 March, organised by IQPC.

CSS Conference on Asset Management to be held on 8 June.

13. Date of Next Meeting

This will take place at 10:30 on **28 April 2004** in room H5, Great Minster House, London.

DfT Traffic Management Division
23 February 2004