

NOTE OF THE 12th MEETING OF THE UK BRIDGES BOARD.

Meeting held in room H5, Great Minster House, on 28 April 2004.

Present:

David Lynn	Warwickshire CC/CSS (Chair)
Andrew Cook	Highways Agency
Graham Cole	CSS/Surrey County Council
Ian Holmes	DfT Traffic Management Division
Awtar Jandu	Highways Agency
Brian Bell	Network Rail
Andrew Oldland	DfT Traffic Management Division
Frank Paine	LOBEG
Rod Howe	British Waterways
Edward Bunting	DfT Traffic Management Division
Jim Irons	SCOTS
Raymund Johnstone	Scottish Executive
Greg Perks	CSS/Northumberland CC
Dana Skelley	Transport for London
Steve Pearson	CSS/Derbyshire County Council
Steve Tart	Manchester City Council
Dave Ambrose	WATO
Chris Hudson	DfT (Secretariat)

1. Apologies

These were received from Ronnie Wilson, Jim Moriarty, John Collins, and David Yeoell.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of last meeting

Page 2: Note of October 2003 Meeting - "B36" should read "BD36".

Page 1: Performance Indicators - The unlikelyhood of the work being done by W S Atkins being completed this year is not due to a cashflow problem but to a technical problem.

Graham Cole has replaced Greg Perks as the "secretary" and not the "chairman" of the CSS Bridges Group.

Matters Arising

Abnormal Loads (BB 54/04) - The Bridges Board has now commented on the consultation paper BB 53/04 that was discussed at the February meeting. The consultation period closed on 9 April. The Highways Agency are now looking at responses already received and are waiting for a response from the EU. When this has happened they will convene a working-group and seek Ministerial endorsement. This will cover Level 1 escorting.

Level 2 escorting is still some way off being implemented - this will require further consultation with interested bodies including the Police.

EU Tunnel Directive - this is now to be agreed by the EU Parliament. Implementation is expected within 2 years. Although the Directive does not cover any tunnels on the UK local authority network, UK local authorities may use it as a blueprint.

3. Last Meeting of the Roads Liaison Group - 3 March 2004

Letterheads: The Secretariat have been in touch with the person at the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham who produced a letterhead for the UK Roads Board last year. The idea is to produce similar letterheads for the RLG and the remaining Boards.

4. Bridges Maintenance Backlog

Last year DfT made a commitment to the Transport Select Committee to publish the backlog figure (for England) in highway, bridges and street lighting maintenance. The idea was that this would coincide with the publication of the National Road Maintenance Condition Survey (NRMCS) in April 2004. Unfortunately it has not been possible to meet this date but the results should be published shortly. Steve Tart and Greg Perks have been working with Guy Ellis of DfT Transport Statistics Roads on the backlogs in Strengthening, Maintenance and Functionality. There was some concern that more work needs to be done on "definition" of backlog.

DfT, together with CSS Technical Advisory Group, are taking forward plans to require local authorities to produce asset management plans. Tony McNulty will be addressing a conference on 8 June on this subject.

DfT intend to refine the backlog methodology over the timescale of the 10 year plan. They intend this to include outstanding work on retaining walls; details of this should become available as a result of authorities' work on asset management plans. The introduction of the Code of Practice for Bridge Maintenance will also facilitate the production of accurate figures.

When DfT have responded to the Select Committee the findings will be copied to the Board. David Lynn thanked those, including colleagues representing London, who have contributed to this work to date.

The Scottish Executive have not set a target for Scottish authorities to tackle their maintenance backlogs, but would still find it useful to define the figure. They are looking for a lead from England on calculation of backlog figures.

Backlog figures from Welsh local authorities have been forwarded to DfT Statisticians, although the Welsh Assembly has not made a commitment to publish a backlog figure for Wales.

ACTION: DfT to circulate response to Select Committee to Board Members, when this is available.

5. Traffic Management Bill

This Bill is not politically controversial but has, however, involved a lot of amendments. It is still on track for Royal Assent in late June this year, which would mean implementation early next year. Detailed implications would be debated in the autumn.

In Wales, the Bill will need to be implemented by the Welsh Assembly.

The point was made that, if local authorities are to take on greater powers to control movement of abnormal loads on their network, they would need to be granted more powers in this Bill. The Bill does not currently provide these powers, although they could be introduced under secondary legislation.

6. Research

Research Bids 2004/05: There is unfortunately no further news regarding the progress of the projects submitted for this financial year towards Ministerial approval.

It was pointed out that financial support for the Bridge Owners' Forum is a three year project, the continuation of which will have to be debated again one year from now.

ACTION: DfT to inform Board members of approved research bids for 2004/05 when this information is available.

Performance Indicators: Awtar Jandu presented **BB 55/04** to the group.

W S Atkins will be attending the meeting of the CSS Bridges Group on 26 May, where they will present their findings to date. The group will then consider these and make further comments. Interested parties will then be encouraged to use the new system in order to generate as much relevant

data as possible. Awtar Jandu will report back on progress at the August meeting of the Bridges Board, after having first discussed with David Lynn.

Information collected in the forthcoming trialling exercise will be considered at the next meeting of the Reference Group, scheduled for 9 July. A sample of 13 authorities has been chosen by CSS for the trial. This includes a mixture of urban, rural and metropolitan authorities. Dana Skelly (TfL) has offered to include some London authorities in the trial.

It is expected that, as a result of the trialing exercise, some procedures will need to be fine-tuned.

Action: Awtar Jandu to report on progress at August meeting of Bridges Board.

Bridge Maintenance Code of Practice - W S Atkins, who are producing the Code, have recently held workshops around the country, which were attended by Board members. The general consensus is that the workshops were useful.

Garry Sterritt did, however, point out that the questionnaires sent out by W S Atkins were very poorly responded to. The Code of Practice Steering Group is due to meet at Atkins' Euston Road offices in the afternoon of 28 April and will discuss this matter.

Masonry Arch Bridges - The turnout at the CIRIA hosted workshop was disappointing. A first draft of the results of this project has now been produced. The Steering Group met on 27 April. Certain elements of the draft document will be expanded, while others will be reduced. A second draft should be ready in July and the final draft in October. The project should be wrapped up by the end of the year. CIRIA will produce a priced hard copy of the document, but it will be freely available on the Internet. It was suggested that the Surveyor Conference in March 2005 might be a good event for the launch of the document.

7. Network Rail Agreements

Network Rail now has the money to begin work on road over rail bridges. Local authorities will need to find the money from their maintenance budgets. Network Rail is prepared, however, to look into making retrospective payments to authorities that have done work without support from NR, providing the latter agree with the priority ranking of the work in question.

An assessment and strengthening programme involving 4993 bridges has been identified. 4834 Bridges have been assessed and 4418 assessment reports have been received so far. Brian Bell said that all concerned authorities are now signed up to the programme and that meaningful

discussions are taking place. There is concern that this programme may not be completed within the 10-Year Plan period.

Graham Cole and Tony Norfolk (CSS Bridges Group) met with Richard Graham and Kieran Doherty of Network Rail on 8 March, to discuss outside parties framework agreements. A lot of progress has been made in resolving differences. David Lynn thanked Steve Tart and all the other people that had been involved in this work.

8. Any Other Business

BD21 - Rivet Strength

Network Rail have commissioned new research into rivet strength. An assessment of rivet strength currently forms part of the current BD21 assessment. Network Rail's research results are in draft form at present. The rivet strength standard recommended by the new research is less stringent than the standard in BD21. The results of the research have been shown to representatives of CSS and HA.

HA are reluctant to endorse this research because this may lead to pressure for a change in the requirements of BD21. HA are concerned that they could be held responsible for any adverse effects of this change.

Although local authorities are free to use the research work, Network Rail consider that the endorsement by HA would give it added credibility.

Brian Bell has asked David Lynn to brief the CSS Bridges Group on this issue.

UKCEC Meeting - The Highways Agency is producing a document setting out the function of Technical Project Boards. The Bridges Board would like to see this document when it is available.

ACTION: Highways Agency to circulate document on function of Technical Project Boards when it is available.

There is concern that the British Standard on road restraints needs to be reviewed.

Network Rail could contribute to the funding, but Brian Bell will need to raise this issue at the next meeting of the Bridge Owners' Forum, to see if there is support.

9. Date of Next Meeting

This will take place at 10:30 on **4 August 2004**. As this date coincides with a visit to Oldham by DfT Traffic Management Division, it was proposed that the next meeting be held at Manchester City Council Headquarters. Steve Tart is

willing to host the meeting and will look into the possibility of doing so. He will contact Chris Hudson, as soon as possible, with further details.

DfT Traffic Management Division
3 June 2004