

Minutes of 60th meeting of the UK Bridges Board held at CIHT on the 19 September 2019

Board members in attendance:

Liz Kirkham	(Chair) ADEPT/Gloucestershire County Council
Kevin Dentith	ADEPT/Devon County Council
Nicola Head	Transport for London
Keith Harwood	Hertfordshire County Council, BOF
Bob Humphreys	CSS Wales, Gwynedd Council
Colin Ferris	Department for Infrastructure NI
Richard Fish	BOF
Stuart Molyneux	Metropolitan Councils
Peter Simpson	Canal & River Trust
Brett Archibald (for Hazel McDonald)	Transport Scotland
Andrew Strang	SCOTS/Perth and Kinross Council
Satbir Gill	Representing TAG
Jason Hibbert	Welsh Government
Nick Burgess	London Underground
Neil Loudon	Highways England
Justin Ward	CIHT (Secretariat)

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

Apologies recorded for Hazel MacDonald and Colin Hall and DfT.

2. Rijkswaterstaat bridge renovation project

Keith Harwood provided an introduction to the project and posed a question to the Board if there was an appetite for presentations in a technical area. Kevin Dentith said they are providing more presentations at the ADEPT Bridges Group and supported the proposal. Liz Kirkham summarised that there was an appetite to include technical presentations at the Board, although noting that they wanted to keep a focus on strategic issues.

There was a suggestion that presentations after lunch could be an option. Richard Fish noted that there was a need for the presentations to be relevant to the agendas at the point in time; adding that there was a need to consider the synergies between the UKBB and BOF.

Assessment of Masonry Arch Bridges is due to be published shortly by CIRIA that could be useful for a future presentation.

Neil Loudon touched on the BOF Grand Challenges and highlighted fatigue sensitive steel structures as this is a gap in knowledge.

Liz noted the need for flexibility to ensure the Board managed not to miss emerging issues.

Action: David Ashurst to be invited to the next UKBB meeting

Action: June meeting to focus on presentation Masonry Arch Bridges

3. BOF Grand Challenges

Keith Harwood provided an update on the BOF Grand Challenges. Keith welcomed comments and key facts to provide a broad enough perspective.

Action: UKBB members to provide key facts to support the BOF Grand Challenges document [September/October]

Action: Liz Kirkham to draft an introduction to the BOF Grand Challenges document

Action: Keith Harwood to arrange for Cam Middleton to draft an introduction to the BOF Grand Challenges

Keith added that there were also steps to gain support/endorsement from the document from ADEPT and from UKRLG.

Neil Loudon noted a point on where guidance should sit – for example on the Boundary issues – and that this is an issue that has been discussed with DfT. Liz Kirkham said that this would be dependent on the audience, but also that documents can be signposted from one website to another. Keith Harwood said that people will find them through Google; but noted that it is an issue of raising awareness so that people know that they need to look for the guidance.

Action: Liz Kirkham to work with Richard Fish on seeking sign-off by BOF to UKRLG

Action: Richard Fish to provide an introduction paper for the UKRLG [following the BOF meeting]

Neil Loudon noted that bringing the BOF Grand Challenges to UKRLG might lead to that group wishing to consider a wider piece of work. Liz Kirkham noted this but considered that the Board should still press ahead with the BOF proposal. Liz also noted the Industrial Strategy has a number of Grand Challenges.

Liz Kirkham noted the demographic issue of the average age of the workforce as worth including in the BOF Grand Challenges document.

Action: Justin Ward to look at the demographic issues of the highway sector

Richard Fish noted the 2020 Bridges Conference in March and said that there were plans to showcase Grand Challenges there.

4. Research

Masonry Arch bridges

Bob Humphreys provided an update on the Masonry Arch bridges work and said that this is significantly completed but does still require comments to be addressed. Bob indicated that it was still possible that the work would be completed this autumn, but there was a potential for a slight further delay.

Structures Toolkit

Keith Harwood noted that the toolkit was funded with the support of DfT. The document is going through beta testing currently. The tool does three things: 1) valuation (HAMFIG defined); 2) long-term asset management planning; 3) short-term planning (tells you where you need to spend money in the short-term).

Keith said the toolkit is very helpful for developing programmes of works; and can also arise funding needs over 120 years. Neil Loudon asked how this would be made available. Liz Kirkham asked if it will have annual update of costs, Keith confirmed that it did have indexation of costs. Keith said that the beta testing had picked up areas that could be expanded in future versions. Ongoing development, support and update will require additional funding.

Action: Agreed once finalised will be published on the UKBB website

Action: Justin Ward to work with Keith Harwood to cover the document in Transportation Professional

Action: Keith Harwood to draft research proposal for managing updates to Structures Toolkit

Safety Critical Fixings

Neil Loudon said that he has a draft implementation document to adopt safety critical fixings into Highway England. Neil said that this was all about the implementation of the research work. Kevin Dentith reported that at the last ADEPT Bridges Group it had been suggested that organisations immediately amend current inspection reporting sheets to include identification of safety critical fixings, in advance of any other guidance being provided. Neil referred to the imminent launch of the new Structures Asset Database system for Highways England which is considering what data is to be collected.

Additional funding for the research proposals from the Welsh Government – Jason Hibbert said that for the abnormal loads research proposal raised from Scotland would benefit from additional funding from partners.

Liz Kirkham noted that the Board had the four future research proposals ready and encouraged the need for members to investigate collaborative funding.

Action: Justin Ward to share the UKBB research proposals to UKBB members so that UKBB could identify any part-funding for the proposals

Proposed changes to Construction and Use regulations – Neil Loudon said that there had been a constructive meeting with DfT (and there will be a future meeting in October). Neil added that Highways England is undertaking work looking at loading in terms of Eurocodes. Neil said that the issue affects every bridge owner in the UK, it's not just a Highways England issue.

5. Access planning sub-group

Neil Loudon said that Richard Waters has been struggling to get engagement with Network Rail. Following a discussion, the Board agreed that there was a need to keep a focus on access planning as there were still issues requiring focus. Nicola Head confirmed that a meeting in November was in place so that issues were being looked at.

6. Bridge Strike Prevention Group (BSPG)

Justin Ward relayed that Colin Hall had confirmed that Mark Wheel can be invited to the next UKBB. Liz Kirkham confirmed that the Bridge Strike Prevention Group report to the UK Network Management Board as the issue can be best managed/influenced through that group. Neil Loudon said that two excavators loading had caused damage and there were

three issues last week. Liz confirmed that there would not be a regular attendance at the UKBB of the BSPG, but that the group would still be welcome to provide updates, as this is a matter of significant importance to Bridge owners/managers.

Action: Colin Hall to invite Mark Wheel to the next UKBB to present on the BSPG

7. Highways England/Local Highway Authority Boundary issue

Kevin Dentith provided an update. He will be taking the latest version of the proposals to the ADEPT Engineering board. Neil Loudon said that Highways England was trying to take a pragmatic view to the document. Neil said that he would like to have this published and said that a decision needed to be made on where it was published.

Andrew Strang said that SCOTS was working on a updating a similar type document, working in collaboration with Transport Scotland, that covered bridges and lighting assets. This was more a guidance document as opposed to a Code of Practice. Liz suggested changing the name of the document with Highways England and ADEPT from Code of Practice to Guidance in terms of the title.

8. Parapet Height document

The Board noted that Network Rail had the following action:

Action: Colin Hall to update the Parapet Height Document taking account of the amendments proposed by the UKRLG – minutes 14 November 2018 – item 5:
<http://www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=C6164E0D-F027-43A6-B2C6823471AB9046>

9. Review of DMRB

Neil Loudon said that publication completion deadline was March 2020 and progress to that deadline was going well. Neil thanked members for their support on the update to DMRB; notably from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Neil. Neil updated on the MCHW saying the plan was likely to be in the second Road Investment Strategy might have a commitment to update all the MCHW. There was a discussion on archive material and Liz Kirkham expressed support for having access to such an archive for the bridge community, particularly regarding interim advice notes.

10. Bridge Inspectors Certification Scheme

Liz Kirkham thanked Lantra for sharing a paper updating on BICS.

Kevin Dentith noted that he has developed his own scheme for Devon County Council (as they are a larger authority and have several bridge inspectors). Kevin explained the process in Devon CC and Andrew Strang said the SCOTS also had their own scheme but that their approach was different to the Devon County Council and was more akin to the Lantra scheme.

Satbir asked how a court of law would take account of the evidence of the competency of the inspector in a case should a situation arise. Satbir added that one of the reasons for the Board was to strive for a consistency of approach across the UK and that having different schemes did not do this. Liz said the problem with the BICS scheme was that, whatever was set-out to be achieved, the aims had not been achieved as the take-up was low. Liz

added that Competency Frameworks, developed through the Asset Management Board, suggested a need to review BICS to be adapted to a similar approach to the Competency Framework.

Richard Fish said there were two issues with the Lantra scheme: cost and complexity. Members agreed there are benefits in having a national scheme. The Board agreed that there was a need for competent bridge inspectors. Satbir Gill asked about the potential for national funding.

Action: Liz Kirkham to write to Lantra noting the underlying needs for competent bridge inspectors from the UKBB asking for the Steering Group to consider solution to the issue

11. Minutes of last meeting

These were approved subject to one minor change on page three as proposed by Richard Fish. Andrew Strang thanked Steve Berry for raising the issue of capitalising funding for major (principal) bridge inspections and said he had managed to do this within his own authority.

Matters arising

Justin Ward said that the proposal for investigatory unit for bridge collapses was being put into the CIHT work on Improving Local Highways

Action: Liz Kirkham to raise the State of Nation report to confirm the publication of this at UKRLG

Action: Justin Ward to check with Steve Berry on low-cost sensors as information for UKBB members

Action: Keith Harwood to chase up funding with DfT on the bridge condition indicator guidance document (and also on the Structures Toolkit)

Neil Loudon said that there had been progress on temporary bridges guidance. Liz said that information on this could be useful for a future workshop at the Board.

12. Minutes of UKRLG

Liz Kirkham highlighted the Live Labs and noted the key for dissemination so that people gain an understanding of what is happening on the ground. The Board noted a blog and podcast have been made available for this. <https://www.spreaker.com/user/ciht/adept-live-labs-giles-perkins>

13. Any other business

- **Devon County Council working with Highways England** – Kevin Dentith said that there had been collaborative work focused on BD97
- **Canal & River Trust** – there was an outstanding action that DfT would arrange a liaison meeting between with Defra, CRT and ADEPT. To be raised by Liz Kirkham at UKRLG. Kevin Dentith said that ADEPT was putting forward a proposal to Peter Walker to allow the MoU proposed by the Trust to be agreed with ADEPT members.
- **Future of Bridges – NCE Conference**