

UK ROADS LIAISON GROUP

UK Roads Liaison Group
CIHT, 119 Britannia Walk
London N1 7JE

info@ciht.org.uk, www.ciht.org.uk
 tel: 0207 336 1555
 fax: 0207 336 1556
 web: www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org
 twitter: www.twitter.com/ukrlg

UKRLG Chairman:

Graham Pendlebury

UKRLG Board Chairmen

Roads: Andrew Murray

Lighting: Dana Skelley

Bridges: Mike Winter

Network Management:

Martin Low

Senior Policy Officer

Justin Ward

email: justin.ward@ciht.org.uk

tel: 0207 336 1584

RLG update

Published on the 1 July, the **National Adaptation Programme (NAP)** sets out what Government, businesses, and society are doing to become more climate ready.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) developed the NAP as a response to the **UK Climate Change Risk Assessment**, which analysed the potential effects of climate change and the risks and opportunities for the UK.

One of the objectives in the plan is to better understand the particular vulnerabilities facing 'local' infrastructure (eg local highways) from extreme weather and long term climate change so as to determine actions to address the risks.

To address the transport policy action of this from 2013 onwards will be to use existing local organisations and networks such as ADEPT, UK Roads Liaison Group, Climate UK and Local Adaptation Advisory Panel to share knowledge and best practice with respect to local highways.

For more details please visit www.gov.uk/government/policies/adapting-to-climate-change/supporting-pages/national-adaptation-programme

Improving resilience north of the border

Transport Scotland has strengthened its approach to managing severe weather incidents on the trunk road network through its new 4G maintenance contracts and Traffic Control Centre, reports Justin Ward.



Traffic Scotland's National Control Centre acts as a hub for monitoring, controlling and informing travellers

Opened this April, Transport Scotland's new National Traffic Control Centre at South Queensferry has large floor to ceiling windows and offers breathtaking views across the Firth of Forth. The location will bear witness to the building of the new Forth Replacement Crossing, a key capital project under way and due for completion in 2016.

Transport Scotland's director of trunk road and bus operations Roy Brannen says the new permanent home for the National Traffic Control Centre is "at the heart of all of our operations going forward". The centre acts as an information hub by pulling in and disseminating information about traffic conditions. "The centre acts as the hub for monitoring, controlling and informing travellers about network conditions and helps to ensure our strategic road network continues to help promote economic growth," he says. "It is vital that Scotland's trunk roads remain safe, efficient and well managed. While they make up around 6% of all roads in Scotland, the network carries around a third of all traffic, and over two thirds of heavy goods vehicles. It is for this reason that over £2.5Bn has been invested in the network since 2007."

Social media is one important way of doing this and the Traffic Scotland has a dedicated social media officer. Traffic Scotland's twitter service has rocketed in the 18 months since it has been operating, with 32,000 followers of the service now receiving regular updates about the network. This demonstrates the new methods by which network

operators communicate and Transport Scotland also makes use of Facebook, Flickr and other social media platforms.

The centre also has an area set aside for traffic data specialist INRIX, which aggregates real time traffic and travel information and then broadcasts updates to the public through commercial radio, the BBC and local governments. These are important means to communicate with the public so that they can make informed decisions about their journeys, Mr Brannen says.

When journeys are compromised – for instance by severe weather incidents – the Centre has a resilience room which brings together key stakeholders to develop a multi-agency response. This means that Transport Scotland can work together with the police, the Met Office and partners in Network Rail and First ScotRail to decide on what is required as conditions change. After a couple of severe winter periods, the agency is very focused in this area.

"2010 was quite hard (in terms of severity of the winter period)," Mr Brannen says. This was one of the reasons, he adds, for the beefing up of the winter service element in the new 4G maintenance contracts. In April Transport Scotland awarded contracts in the North West to Bear and the South West to Scotland Transerv. Transport Scotland is currently in the procurement stage for the maintenance contracts in the east of Scotland (north and south), due to begin operations on 1 April 2014.

The 4G contracts replace 3G contracts and have a



The centre overlooks the Firth of Forth, where the new Forth Replacement Crossing will be built

greater focus on community engagement, collaboration and journey times. Mr Brannen says that they have evolved out of experience. "In terms of winter service operations the new contracts will deliver more patrols across the network," he says. The new contracts also introduce alternative de-icers that work at temperatures below which road salt (sodium chloride) becomes less effective. Modern equipment brought to the contract includes icebreakers from Scandinavia with inverted V-plough and footway snow blowers. There will also be installation of more weather monitoring and sensors – including some on the spreaders themselves.

Over the last couple of years a National Road Maintenance Review has been under way – a collaborative piece of work between Transport Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), and the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS). This review, which explored how all 33 of Scotland's road authorities can work more efficiently, has led to 30 initiatives to drive forward improvement in the maintenance of the local and national road network in Scotland. One key outcome has been the establishment of the Scottish Roads Research Board which coordinates research across Scotland; an area of interest to the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG).

Also as part of the Scottish Roads Review an assessment was made of the economic, social and environmental impacts of further reducing road maintenance spending. This provided compelling evidence of the negative effects such a decision would have on roads users. They estimated that a 40% reduction in roads maintenance budgets over the next 10 years would likely save £2Bn but cost Scotland's road users and communities at least £3Bn. The headline figure since cited from this is: a £1 reduction in road maintenance results in a £1.50 cost to the wider economy and society. The largest quantified impact from that review was vehicle operating costs, ie damage to vehicles from a poorly maintained road network.

The update to the Transport Scotland asset management plan is therefore particularly important and this was recently presented to the Minister. In light of spending constraints it is important to target investment wisely and Mr Brannen says the plan will do this and provide a road map for going forward.

In recent years Transport Scotland has also



"The centre acts as an information hub by pulling in and disseminating information about traffic conditions."

Roy Brannen

introduced a new surface course specification TS2010, developed following problems with the quality and performance of stone mastic asphalt. Where it has been used the improved performance is significant and despite two of the worst winters on record there have reportedly been no potholes on roads with TS2010 specified SMA. Steven Brown from Transport Scotland said that the life of TS2010 was expected to be around 15 years as opposed to five years for traditional SMA type products.

Transport Scotland has 381 traffic cameras that provide information to the Traffic Scotland website. The website sees a spike in use between 3.30pm and 5.30pm, indicating that commuters are pre-planning their journeys home. The camera network is especially useful for planned events such as the T in the Park music festival. It should also help with a number of events in 2014, including the Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup, 50th anniversary celebrations at the Forth Road Bridge and the 'Homecoming Scotland 2014' event. "Transport will be pivotal to the success of all these events," Mr Brannen says. "A dedicated team called TS 2014 has been established within Transport

Scotland to oversee planning and consequence management."

Public consultation and engagement along with sustainability appear to be strong elements to

Transport Scotland's project management approach. The new Forth Crossing – recently named the 'Queensferry Crossing' after a public vote – will relieve pressure from the existing road bridge, which will be kept as a dedicated public transport corridor for use by buses, taxis, cyclists and pedestrians.

"The crossing also features the first 'managed motorway' in Scotland with gantries over the full length of the project which display variable mandatory speed limits enforced by speed cameras.

Winter resilience improves following adoption of UKRLG Guidance

The RAC Foundation report, 'Ploughing On – A review of highway resilience in Winter 2013' concluded that good progress has been made by local highway authorities in winter service operations. Written by Brian Smith, a former director of environment and transport at Cambridgeshire County Council and member of the government commissioned Quarmby Winter Resilience Review in 2010, the review covered both England and Wales.

The report found that, without exception, local authorities are maintaining their level of spending on winter resilience despite general budget cuts. The review found evidence of

cooperation between adjacent and intertwined county, district and parish councils; and that this activity was underpinned by improved consultation with local communities and better communications with the media and the public.

The report highlights where progress has been made and stated that 'the valuable initiative and work of the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG) should be brought under the wing of the UKRLG'.

Many local highway authorities have reviewed salt spread rates, the report says, following the issue of the revised guidance

from the UKRLG, leading to savings in the volumes of salt used, as well as now applying salt at rates that are appropriate to varying circumstances. In practice, some of the salt saved has been redirected into salt bins or salt bags, to support community efforts.

The report also notes that all authorities can look forward to a complete update of Appendix H (dealing with spread rates) of the Well-maintained Highways document, developed by the NWSRG and about to be published by the UKRLG.

For details visit www.racfoundation.org/research/mobility/ploughing-on-report