

Minutes of the 57th meeting of the UK Bridges Board (UKBB) held at the CIHT on 18 October 2018

Board members in attendance:

Liz Kirkham	(Chair) ADEPT/Gloucestershire County Council
Kevin Dentith	ADEPT/Devon County Council
Richard Fish	BOF
Rob Dean	Network Rail
Bob Humphreys	CSS Wales, Gwynedd Council
Peter Simpson	Canal & River Trust
Hazel McDonald	Transport Scotland
Andrew Strang	SCOTS/Perth and Kinross Council
Satbir Gill	Representing TAG
Jason Hibbert	Welsh Government
Sharan Gill	TfL
Nick Bruges	
Theo Naidoo	CIHT (Secretariat)

1. Welcome

LK welcomed attendees to the meeting, and noted the boards thanks to Graham Cole for his long service and the boards best wishes to Nicola Head

2. Presentation on Bridge Strikes

RD gave a presentation on Network Rail's bridge strike engineering current campaign. It is looking to raise the profile of bridge strikes and improve the situation in multiple ways, including the number of strikes, danger and overall costs. Issues highlighted included increasing number of strikes (average cost per strike of £13,000), skew bridges overturning vehicles and who controls the relevant infrastructure.

Network Rail are working with highways partners, fleet owners and have produced guidance in multiple languages to reduce the issue. However, they are not directly providing headroom information to partners as it can vary due to conditions, road resurfacing and other asset management techniques and therefore information provided directly by Network Rail could lead to overconfidence from road users. They do share information about which bridges are hit most often to encourage action awareness.

Issues with signage, signage on approach, road markings and local authority funding are becoming an increasing issue as replacing signage is a revenue expenditure and local authority revenue budgets are capped. However anecdotally some roads authorities are working around this by upgrading signage which counts as capital expenditure to avoid spending limits.

Reporting and data quality were other important issues as scrapes were underreported yet can have a long-term impact. There have also been shifts in the methods used to collate data which makes normalising over time difficult.

Network Rail said that they have won key court cases allowing them to reclaim the full costs of bridge strikes which they hoped would have an impact on large fleet operators via insurance costs, however the effect on smaller operators were unclear.

Highways England noted that they have far fewer bridge strikes as their stock of structures is newer and generally provides higher headroom. But there is an issue with incorrectly rigged construction vehicles and car transporters, so they would welcome working with Network Rail.

ACTION: Ensure that ADEPT has a representative on the Bridge Strike Liaison Group at the national level, suggested names were Maureen or Philip Gray (both from TfL).

ACTION: Circulate slides and video to board

ACTION: Circulate lessons learnt about court cases and best way to reclaim costs to board

3. Bridge Safety following the Genoa collapse (discussion)

Neil discussed the impact of the Genoa bridge crash on the UK sector including inspection programmes, post-tensioning, DMRB changes and end to end processes. Kevin confirmed that there were no similar construction bridges on local authority roads, but noted that about two thirds of post tensioned bridges had not been inspected within the prescribed timeframe. There were issues with the cost of maintaining large structures for small highways authorities. Compared with Highways England they had less to spend and were more limited by revenue budget spending caps.

Assurance strategies and formal reporting are improving but risk reviews are not being completed so there is a continual focus on real world compliance. Failure to comply with industry standards could lead to legal issues but there is also a need to ensure that standards are realistic with the skills and funding available.

It was mentioned that a national bridges database would be helpful. This has been suggested previously

4. Minutes of last meeting

Amend penultimate paragraph to say 'mugs with slogans'

Amend Item to 'JW to circulate paper on BIM guidance'

Amend Item to 'JW to invite someone from SCOSS to present a meeting

5. Minutes of UKRLG meeting

UKRLG will formally adopt the parapet heights documents with amendments being noted, subject to an accompanying briefing note explaining why it is needed be produced.

6. Well Managed Highways, Code of Practice - Any proposed amendments to the Code of Practice

The board considered bridge inspector certification as an item to be developed and taken forward to the UKRLG board.

7. Update from ADEPT Bridges Group

LK will be stepping down as Chair of the ADEPT Bridges Group. Kevin Dentith will be taking on this role, and will continue attending UKBB. Keith Harwood, of Hertfordshire will also be attending as an ADEPT representative, replacing Graham Cole.

8. Update on research projects

Guidance for the assessment of masonry arch bridges: This will be handed on by Graham Cole to the steering group which includes Matthew Gilbert and others.

- Structures Decision Support Tool: This will be developed by Keith Harwood from Hertfordshire however there are queries over the extent of what it will cover.

ACTION: Share Keith Harwood's contact details with SG

- Provision of Parapet Systems on Local Roads: This will be developed by LK and is in discussion with Atkins, however work has been frozen until the TD19 review is published (part of the DMRB work). There are also ongoing issues over the need for CE marks on masonry parapets and the design of local restraints. Therefore, it means that we will likely not be able to commission the work this financial year.

ACTION: LK to write to Steven about using money saved to do work on the BCI process

- HMEP update: This is being led by Gary Sterritt, and we want to demonstrate the case for investment. TRL are working on a study that will quantify the value of investment. The aim is to have a protocol to improve the case for investment.

LK also noted that there would be an upcoming funding call in the New Year, so bids should be prepared now.

9. DMRB updates including updates to TD19

HE DMRB team have completed 48 documents which have been withdrawn, reformatted and rewritten to date and they are now overseeing, lighting, street standards and others. Internal completion date is for September 2019 and publication for March 2020, but implementation and compliance programs are yet to be developed.

Brexit is an issue as Eurocodes will likely continue to be adopted in design processes and HE are investing in supporting the next generation. However, product standards which are linked into Eurocodes and CE markings potentially throws up issues.

10. Highways England / Local Highway Authority Boundary Code of Practice

After this boards input several extra scenarios have been included and the lighting group have accepted it. LK believes that it is reasonable in terms of bridges however there remain some questions for the engineering board in terms of safety barriers and distance from embankments

ACTION: LK to take this to ADEPT Engineering Board, and then bring to UKRLG with an explanatory document

11. BICS – update from the steering group

The last meeting was focused on reviewing the e-portfolio, eliminating duplication and altering attainment ratings; it will now be taken to an assessor workshop and will be rolled out to all assessors on 7th November. There is ongoing work on modularising the process to have separate paths for specific skills outside core competencies.

There was a discussion over the amount of effort required given only 700 people have registered so far and some amendments will be made to specific sections which are seen as being too onerous or are interpreted as needing skills outside of what is required. In particular over the need to demonstrate experience with structural mechanics for senior inspectors when it is actually knowledge which is required.

The IT systems are still being completed and it was noted that IT issues may have held back registration and Network Rail stated that it was still their intention to take up BICS

ACTION: JW to circulate current uptake figures to the whole board.

12. Parapet Height Protocol Document

This was covered earlier in the meeting

13. BOF update

It was noted the next BOF meeting was not until 6th December so there was nothing further to update

14. AOB

SG noted that the steel bridges working group was creating a survey for steel bridges owners and encouraged the board to circulate it further.

Also discussed was the possibility of improving the visibility of access planning and temporary bridges on the CIHT website. The board has been in discussion with procurement experts at the DfT and progress has been made with content.

Future important dates included Highways UK on the 7th and 8th of November, The ADEPT conference on the 20th/21st November and the Bridges Conference on 14th March 2019

Date of next meeting TBC at a January Date.