

UK ROADS LIAISON GROUP

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RLG news

Three new guidance documents for local highways authorities are available now from UKRLG.

● *The Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Highway Authority Roads* provides a process to help local highway authorities decide when crash barriers are justified.

● *Departures from Standards: Procedures for Local Highway Authorities* is intended for progressive local highway authorities seeking to work beyond the limits of standards to deliver "more for less".

● *Whole Life Costing for Option Appraisal of Maintenance Schemes for Local Authorities* provides a consistent process for undertaking whole life costing for maintenance option appraisal.

"The sharing of good practice is essential to help deliver the savings required by local authorities," said UK Roads Board member Les Hawker. "These three documents were identified as key to delivering such efficiencies. I also welcome the release on the Transport Advice Portal of 48 good practice documents published by UKRLG."

The three new guidance documents are available on the UK Roads Liaison Group website. Transport Advice Portal can be found at www.tap.iht.org

Good practice for running the electronic highway

The Roads Liaison Group has launched a new Code of Practice for electronic traffic equipment writes Justin Ward. Also in this update: news on RLG's input into guidance to help highway authorities manage their assets and training plans for bridge inspectors.

Management of Electronic Traffic Equipment: A Code of Practice

A new UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) Code of Practice, entitled *Management of Electronic Traffic Equipment* was published in September. This is the first document in the UK which establishes a series of good practice policies and procedures developed by relevant experts on how to effectively manage the maintenance of fixed location electronic traffic control equipment.

The growth of technology in the highways sector has led to improvements in congestion control and a reduction in carbon emissions. Adoption of the recommendations within this code will help local authorities achieve delivery of high quality services, UKRLG says.

This code will become the fourth within the current suite, and will sit alongside *Well-lit Highways*, *Well-maintained Highways* and the *Management of Highway Structures*.

Most authorities in England have started to implement asset management for their highway assets with many benefits, and similar principles should now be applied to the management of electronic traffic equipment.

There is widespread recognition of the value of systematic approaches to management of highway network assets promoted by the existing codes. This fourth code has been developed using a similar approach with the aim of incorporating the stewardship of such systems into the wider highway asset management agenda.

The code is available as free electronic download from the UKRLG's website and hard copies are available from the TSO online bookshop priced at £35.

<http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/>

<http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/bookstore.asp?FO=40152&ProductID=9780115531699&Action=Book>

Objectives

The objectives of this code are to:

- **Encourage the adoption of asset management principles** – to promote an holistic and life cycle approach in decision making for maintenance of electronic traffic equipment
- **Encourage the development and regular review of policies** – once an authority has established an approach for dealing with its maintenance requirements on the basis of this code, it is good practice to review the approach on a regular basis
- **Encourage focus on the needs of users and communities**



RLG has produced new advice on how to get best value out of electronic traffic signs and equipment

- **Encourage the adoption of good practice and a consistent approach** – good practice has been captured from authorities throughout the UK and has been used to inform the code, so that a level of consistency and harmonisation across all authorities can be developed while still allowing flexibility for local variations to be applied as appropriate
- **Promote risk assessment** – the code encourages the assessment of risk in the determination of local technical and operational standards, rectification of defects arising from safety and serviceability inspections and investment opportunities
- **Promote efficiency** – the code shares established good practice to enable authorities to follow proven efficient methods of working, thus making improvements in areas which may not be operating at optimised efficiency levels at present
- **Encourage integration with highway maintenance** – this code seeks to lead authorities to consider the maintenance of electronic traffic equipment in the context of wider asset management and highway maintenance requirements
- **Encourage innovation** – in the effective maintenance of electronic traffic equipment and the development of interaction between various stakeholders from different areas to discuss good practice principles established as a result of such innovation

Scope of the code

Most technologies are covered in the electronic traffic equipment field and the following are dealt with in detail:

- **Traffic signals** – including junctions and shuttle working scenarios under traffic signal control

- **Crossing signals** – including any non motorised traffic controlled by signals, for example pedestrian, Toucan and equestrian crossings
- **Signals other** – including cattle crossings, school crossing and Wigwags as commonly situated outside emergency service stations
- **Interactive signs** – including vehicle activated and timing activated signs
- **Variable message signs** – including dot matrix, Light Emitting Diode (LED) type and standard text prism signs, and signs for car park management systems
- **Road safety cameras** – including red light, average speed and fixed point speed cameras
- **Real time passenger informations systems** – the fixed location elements of the system only (ie the information signs)
- **Traffic monitoring equipment** – including vehicle count sites, classified count sites, traffic flow data collection sites and automatic number plate recognition cameras
- **Rising bollards** – including rising steps and barriers
- **CCTV cameras** – including only fixed location cameras
- **Over-height vehicle detection systems** – including detection control and integrated signs

Implementation of the code

Authorities should review policies and practices at regular intervals in line with the code. Should authorities decide not to implement a particular recommendation, variations should be dealt with as described below.

Once the current practices have been reviewed and are fully understood, authorities should identify any gaps where the current procedure does not reflect the recommendations in this code and that have not been varied by agreed local practices. Areas should be identified which are not covered at all by current practices as well as those that are not covered in sufficient detail.

From this gap analysis, authorities should develop action plans for implementation.

Any variations from the recommendations given in this code should be clearly recorded within the implementation plan and in any appropriate policy or service standard documents, including reasons given for the variation.

The code does not suggest a timescale or specific order of implementation. It is the responsibility of authorities to identify an appropriate timeframe and order in which to implement any new procedures, while giving due consideration to any wider agenda they may need to align with.

The code has been developed by Atkins, under the direction of a steering group chaired by the Department for Transport, with representatives from various UK highway authorities.

Training for bridge inspectors moves ahead



I35-W Bridge collapse in the US highlighted the need for more rigorous inspection

The I35-W bridge collapse in the US in July 2008 brought home the vital role bridge inspections play in preserving and keeping safe vital infrastructure. To help engineers and their clients in future assessments a new training scheme is being jointly developed by the UK Bridges Board and the National Roads Authority of Ireland.

Draft documentation and introductory workshops to present the proposals are due this month (November).

The results of the scheme should be an increase in the quality of bridge inspections resulting both from the training and a new consistency of inspection reporting; reduced cost and less need for reinspection; and a raised profile for bridge inspectors thanks to the introduction of an internationally recognised qualification.

Studies by the ADEPT Bridges Group have identified a lack of consistency in inspection reporting. At the same time the use of asset management plans and decision support tools have created a greater need for more consistent and accurate inspection data. High profile bridge collapses in the US (like I35-W), Canada and China have all also highlighted the importance of rigorous inspection routines.

Phase 1 of this project to create a training scheme for bridge inspections was undertaken by Atkins in 2008 which confirmed the need for the scheme.

Phase 2 began in April 2011 and is being undertaken by a joint Atkins / TRL team with the following objectives:

- To review current knowledge and practices
- To establish the training framework, including the development of the required competency levels and standards for an appropriate inspector hierarchy
- To develop a training manual
- To implement the training and certification system

Draft documentation covering the training framework and associated competence levels and standards will be available this month (November). A series of four workshops are also scheduled at the same time in London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Dublin during which the draft proposals will be presented and the views of the industry collated.

Further work will follow to develop a training manual and website to host the scheme, with implementation expected by late summer 2012.

Phase 2 is being overseen by a steering group from the Department for Transport, the National Roads Authority of Ireland, Transport for London, the Highways Agency, Transport Scotland, the London Bridges Engineering Group and ADEPT.

The steering group has been drawn from the membership of the Bridge Owners' Forum, which provides a technical focus for the UK Bridges Board.

"This is probably the most exciting development to take place in many years," says Transport for London structures manager for tunnels and structures in the A13 DBFO Team and UK Bridges Board member Stephen Pottle. "We will at last have the facility to raise the profile of bridge inspectors, while improving standards and consistency. Better quality inspection data will allow improvements in asset management planning and better value for money."

The work on the training scheme augments the continuing development of good practice in bridge inspections already initiated through the publication of the following key documents:

- *Bridge Condition Indicators*, County Surveyors' Society, 2002 & 2004
- *Management of Highway Structures: A Code of Practice*, UK Roads Liaison Group, 2005
- *Inspection Manual for Highway Structures*, Highways Agency, 2007