



↑ Road renewal activities promise to become more streamlined across the country

Well managed highway code goes live later this month

By the end of October highway authorities must be fully compliant with the UKRLG code of practice 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure' including the need to have adopted a risk based approach to maintenance. Authorities are getting to grips with this and the UKRLG has been supporting them.

Highway authorities will need to show evidence of implementing the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure' code of practice by 28 October this year and having taken their highway policy to their Cabinet for approval.

These were among the points made by the Department for Transport's head of highway maintenance Steve Berry at one of two recent UKRLG workshops, led by SNC Lavalin's Atkins business, to help authorities in the final stages of implementing the code.

Steve told an audience at CIHT's office in London on 28 September that highway authorities are managing a whole portfolio of risks every day, and that the code offers them flexibility and sophistication in how they manage these risks.

"Your highway practice will be tested in court. Consultation must take place."
Steve Berry

He added that he expects all highway authorities to have assessed their risks by now, based on elements such as road condition, accidents, usage and complaints. But a number of discussions with authorities have revealed that some highway teams are not talking to their legal, finance and insurance colleagues.

Reflecting on this point, Steve said: "It is key that authorities talk to colleagues. Your highway practice will be tested in a court so it is vital that consultation with these teams takes place; I cannot stress that enough."

The importance of collaboration with neighbouring authorities is also crucial. There was one unpublished case settled out of court where the judge concluded that an authority was found lacking due to not having intervened when its

neighbouring authority would have done.

The role of documentation and evidence of implementation is also key. If an authority does end up in court, it will want to see published plans and priorities in terms of inspection process and frequency.

Steve recognises that the two year implementation – although appearing at face value as a long period – has actually been challenging for authorities.

The UK has faced difficult weather conditions over recent years including floods, snow and high winds, therefore a resilient network is vital. Steve adds: "We have seen some authorities that do not understand the concept of a resilient network and this is not just about gritting the network." For example, authorities need to consider the impact

UK ROADS LIAISON GROUP

c/o CIHT, 119 Britannia Walk
London N1 7JE
web: ukroadsliaisongroup.org
email: info@ciht.org.uk
tel: 0207 336 1555
twitter: @ukrlg

UKRLG Chair: Graham Pendlebury

UKRLG Board Chairs:
Roads: James Bailey
Lighting: David Denner

Bridges: Liz Kirkham
Network Management: Mark Kemp
Asset Management: Garry Sterritt

Senior Policy Officer:

Justin Ward
email: justin.ward@ciht.org.uk
tel: 0207 336 1584



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↑ Highway networks must be made as resilient as possible to the threat of natural events

of diversionary routes following closures to parts of the strategic road network.

Atkins consultant John Paterson MCIHT noted that “sadly security is also one of the resilience factors that has come to the fore”. The UK Network Management Board is focusing on raising awareness of this; which is important in light of lessons emerging from an inquest into the Westminster Bridge attack last year. Crowded places pose a security threat and authorities need to consider this in managing their networks.

Code of practice report author Andy Warrington provided more detail on the risk based approach. He said: “A road with lots of traffic and which is heavily used might want a two hour response time to fix a defect, but it will be different for the response times when the defect is on a quiet cul-de-sac.”

Andy noted that a lot of work has been focused on developing network hierarchies and collaboration has been carried out in many areas (by the Local Government Technical Advisors Group in Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire).

He said that some ‘A roads’ carry less traffic than unclassified roads, so road classification should not be the starting point of managing highways. Instead, questions should be asked about traffic flow and resilience network issues.

Andy also noted: “We see lots of cyclists in London, so that might be an important factor for usage decisions,” and said that “holding really strong evidence of management strategies will help authorities defend their policies”.

Network use does, however, change over time, so this needs to be reviewed, perhaps on an annual basis, it was said. Some authorities have been bold enough

to put their network hierarchy online and invite the public to suggest changes to it.

The above examples focus on carriageways, but Andy said that for street lighting the hierarchy might work in reverse. As one lighting engineer told him: “I have a lot of ambient lighting on busy streets, so if one street light goes out the effect might be minimal. However, if a light goes out on a cul-de-sac the impact might be much greater.”

A dynamic risk assessment should consider the probability versus the impact, it was noted. Andy suggested a ‘two dimensional’ approach by connecting risk to network hierarchy to look at the defect and map this against the hierarchy category.

Previously a 40mm defect might always have represented an urgent repair, however a two dimensional approach might put this back as a priority if the usage on that part of the network reduced the risk of a defect in the location.

Steve Berry added the Department for Transport has a focus on future thinking and said that digitised inspections and automatic risk based assessments are currently being trialled.

He reminded event participants that data is essential to implementation of the code and should be considered an asset in its own right. The UK Lighting Board recently highlighted this by noting that ensuring data is up to date can be vital to realise efficiency savings. Highway authorities, for example, might like to make sure their asset inventory is updated when they convert to LED streetlights to ensure that the savings are captured.

The UKRLG is looking at highway

Key points to the code of practice

What is the code?

Well-managed Highway Infrastructure is not a statutory document but is often referred to in legal cases, so it is vital that highway authorities consider it when developing their highways policy.

Why was it updated?

Austerity was an important context as some highway authorities were struggling to manage their highway networks based on the old codes (Well-maintained Roads, Management of Highway Structures and Well-lit Highways). The Department for Transport initiated a project led by the UKRLG to develop a new code.

What were the key changes with the code?

Standards was one of the key areas as some authorities said “we like standards” and others said “we know our networks and we want more free range to manage our network”. The UKRLG listened to the sector and made a decision to adopt a risk-based approach.

What were the timescales?

Well-managed Highway Infrastructure was launched on 28 October 2016 and has had a two year phased implementation period and applies across the United Kingdom.



“Classification of roads should not be the starting point of managing highways.”

Andy Warrington

inspector competency and training (building on work put in place for bridge inspectors through the Bridge Inspector Certification Scheme).

Concluding the workshop, Steve Berry said the code of practice is a “living document”, so will be updated when changes occur and that lessons from using the code will also be learnt.

Justin Ward

● A webinar talking about the code of practice will take place on 23 October at 2pm; details are available on the UKRLG website. Listen to a podcast about experiences of implementing the code by visiting the CIHT website.

New chair for Lighting Board



↑ David Denner

David Denner has succeeded Lindsay McGregor as Chairman of the UK Lighting Board. David is a highways technology manager at Welsh Government and leads on decarbonisation projects and LED replacement schemes.

He has worked for a number of local authorities, a major consultant and street lighting contractor and is active within the Institution of Lighting Professionals and the County Surveyors Society Welsh lighting group. “I hope to ensure the lighting industry has a voice in the transportation sector and will continue to build links with clients, contractors and suppliers,” says David.