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## RLG update

- Gaining access to bridge assets to perform inspection and maintenance is becoming increasingly difficult as the asset owners are under pressure to operate their infrastructure 24 hours a day.

This has been recognised through ongoing discussions at the UK Bridges Board.

A new Access Planning working group is being developed with representation from all major asset owners.

This group will discuss access issues relating to railway possessions, road and water space.

The group will also develop good practice guidance and strategies.

Part of this work will involve how different parties communicate with each other most effectively.

This will also look at how the owners of assets can maximise the opportunity to work collaboratively, particularly when there is a limited time period in which to gain access to the network and carry out works.

# Shining a light on traffic sign illumination

How traffic signs are illuminated should not be determined by regulation but follow local risk assessments says the UK Lighting Board member Dave Johnson, who works for Transport for London.



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Decisions on the illumination of traffic signs should follow local risk assessment, according to Dave Johnson



Ways in which the country's highway infrastructure is managed require a fundamental change and this can be achieved through adopting a 'risk based' approach to work. An update to the UKRLG's Code of Practice will, when published, follow that line.

The UK Lighting Board, together with other representative bodies, has been consulting on the revised Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions (TSRGD). We have consistently said that decisions on the illumination of traffic signs should also follow local risk assessment rather than be determined by regulation.

TSRGD 2016 came into effect in April, followed soon after by a Department for Transport circular. This states: 'Previously, many traffic signs were required to be directly illuminated at night when placed within a street lit area, either by internal or external means. These requirements have been significantly relaxed in TSRGD 2016.'

It is not immediately apparent how those significant relaxations have been achieved but the Board was pleased to see them acknowledged and applauds Government in responding so positively.

To amplify the changes TSRGD still calls for certain signs to be internally or externally illuminated. But it

now leaves local authorities to determine precisely how that illumination is to be achieved.

Significantly there is no replication of regulation 18(3) from 2002 which required signs to be lit by a means fitted directly to the sign or its supporting structure, with only limited exceptions on when indirect illumination was permissible.

The effect of this is to enable designers to determine the means of illumination subject to local circumstances and then to deploy conventional sign lights, remote lighting sources such as spot lights on nearby posts or structures, or alternatively to rely on light provided by street lights.

In making those risk based decisions authorities will be obliged to consider how easy it would be to see any given sign in its surroundings and then balance the cost of providing direct sign lighting against the risk of the sign being missed at night. Where authorities decide not to provide a direct sign light, then that will bring cost efficiencies.

Savings would come both from not having to provide and maintain electrical supplies and also from not deploying traffic management for lamp replacements and other electrical maintenance. In short, this will allow authorities to use constrained resources more effectively.



Illustration of a traffic sign from a light source positioned above the sign (top) and a regulatory sign in Granada, lit entirely by street lighting



While the energy consumption for individual sign lights is small estimates place the annual cost of maintaining illuminated signs across Great Britain at close to £100M.

Advice contained in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/2013 is that 'Local authorities should review their current sign system to ensure that they light only those signs which require it for night time visibility or to comply with TSRGD.'

The flexible approach embedded in TSRGD now offers a real opportunity to make a significant impact on costs by removing direct sign lighting in places where local risk assessment justifies it.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is the right approach as Great Britain was previously the only place in the world which regulated as strictly on traffic sign illumination.

In order to provide objective data to underpin local risk based assessments the UK Lighting Board is progressing a research project to provide an evidence base to assist optimised decisions.

*These are the views of the UK Lighting Board and not the Department for Transport.*

## Fresh challenges for new chair of UK Roads

Newly elected chair of the UK Roads Board, James Bailey, outlines how innovation, collaboration, risk and customer focus all represent opportunities for local authorities to embrace.



James Bailey, the new chair of the UK Roads Board, has been closely involved with a review of the UKRLG Codes of Practice, which is bringing several previous codes

into one. The newly amalgamated Code will outline a move to a fully risk based approach to maintaining highways.

James was nominated to the role by ADEPT (the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport) and has chaired the ADEPT/UK Roads Board sub group on Asset Management. He has been a member of the UK Roads Board since 2013.

As well as taking a lead role in helping to shape regional and national infrastructure policies and programmes he is also Staffordshire County Council's commissioner for highways and the built county.

His understanding of the operating environment that local authorities are working under will help to embed the Code into the DNA of operations.

James represents the UK Roads Board on the steering group that is overseeing the work on reviewing the Codes of Practice. He believes the shift to a fully risk based approach will not be a shock but is aware that the move could concern some in the industry.

"We want to make sure the Code is not too regulatory and too strict to comply with but is more about integrated asset management, locally defined service levels and encouraging creativity to get the very best out of limited resources," he says.

"It endorses how many local authorities are already managing their highway asset."

James qualified as a Chartered Civil Engineer and went on to complete an MBA in 2009 with a focus on effective partnerships. He says the public and private sectors need to continue to develop how they work together, adding that "the aim has to be to create an effective operating environment that is able to adapt to change, manage risk and drive down costs, rather than just go for the lowest price".

James also sees innovation as very important and promotes the leadership role for local authorities in creating the right operating environment and managing risk.

How the sector works with customers is also important because public perception and support is vital especially when moving fully to a risk based approach, he says. "This is about influencing public and political perceptions to help drive behaviours and enable effective implementation of highway asset management."

"We need to relate the risk based approach to the way people manage their own homes – you would want to ensure your roof was water tight before re-landscaping the garden. Given resources, you can't do everything, you have to prioritise."

Former chair of the UK Roads Board and chief executive of Infrastructure NI Andrew Murray said about James: "This work on asset management and indeed his input for the Codes of Practice review has been excellent and I expect him to get the same strong support from Board members I received. I wish him well."

*Justin Ward*



Highway maintenance is covered by the UKRLG's newly revised Codes of Practice