

Minutes of the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), held on 18th March 2009 at the Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT)

Present:

John Dowie	DfT RLTD (Chair)
Jim Barton	Transport Scotland
Paul Foskett	DfT RLTP - RLMP
Andrew Jones	Highways Agency
Matthew Lugg	UK Roads Board
Richard Morgan	Welsh Assembly Government
Andrew Murray	DRD Northern Ireland
Spencer Palmer (substituting for Richard Buckley)	DfT TM
Greg Perks	UK Bridges Board
Derek Turner	UK Network Management Board
Mary Lewis	IHT
Justin Ward	IHT (Secretariat)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies were received from Dana Skelley, Peter Brown and Richard Buckley.

2. Note of last meeting and matter arising

a) Note of last meeting

The notes of the last meeting were agreed

b) Matters arising

Item 2.7 HA position on HELG

The Group discussed briefly the item from the previous minutes and Andrew Jones noted the action was completed.

<p>Action: Justin Ward to circulate Highways Efficiency Liaison Group note from Andrew Jones</p>

Item 4. Commuted Sums

The Group agreed that the guidance on commuted sums was useful but was more suitably positioned under the branding banner of CSS (and other groups such as TAG/SCOTS/CSS Wales)

<p>Action: Agreed to publication of Commuted Sums Guidance under external CSS and similar branding. DfT/Edward Bunting to liaise with Matthew Lugg. Matthew Lugg to discuss with TAG and national groupings.</p>

Item 5. Consolidating existing Maintenance Guidance

It was noted that the specification of this project had now been agreed and that DfT will shortly putting in place a contractor through the DfT Framework contracts.

Item 3.1/3.2/3.3/3.4/3.6 – Governance and Business Plans

John Dowie noted that all these items would be wrapped up current Agenda item on Governance (see item 5 below)

All the other matters noted under matters arising had been addressed.

3. Ratifications of changes in Chairmanship

John Dowie explained the recent re-organisation within the Department for Transportation means that RLTP (Nick Bisson) is no longer responsible for road maintenance; the work is transferring to Regional and Local Transport Delivery which he would be heading up. The Group congratulated John Dowie on his new position as Director of RLTD and supported his appointment as Chairman of the UKRLG.

The Group briefly discussed governance issues and Mary Lewis noted that there were inconsistencies with the current Terms of Reference for the UK Roads Liaison Group and associated boards and the Group agreed that work needed to be undertaken to establish workable arrangements for the appointment of Board Chairmen, and for succession planning, within the Terms of Reference.

[Derek Turner and Greg Perks briefly left the room at the discussion on ratification of Chairmanship]

The Group agreed to ratify the nominations for both Greg Perks as Chairman of the UK Bridges Board and Derek Turner as Chairman of the UK Network Management Board.

<p>Action: IHT to review the Terms of Reference (taking account of term limits and the recommendations from the Wiggington Review) for the UKRLG and associated boards. Once complete, UKRLG would then review the future Chairmanship of all the Boards.</p>
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4. Winter Maintenance

John Dowie introduced the item on winter maintenance – paper UKRLG 02/09 - explaining that the experience in February 2009, after the initial disruption, had exposed the limited depth of salt stocks across the United Kingdom and that the view of Ministers was that a review should be carried out to inform the next winter period. As a result, the Secretary of State has asked the UKRLG to lead the review; and report back in July 2009. John Dowie noted that this was a huge opportunity to influence practice but was also a significant challenge.

John Dowie noted that there was already an internal review of the process by Central Government – through the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Committee – and that this would be an important input for the UKRLG review.

Derek Turner noted that there were limitations to the extent that the existing re-stocking arrangements could be altered for the next winter period (the Highways

Agency are already underway with re-stocking and will largely have completed this by August to be ready for October). The Group agreed that changes to stocking levels would principally be for 10/11, but that changes to administrative arrangements and/or guidance could be considered for introduction in 09/10.

The Group agreed that taking account of what happened in London was important, but should not be the sole focus for the review and should be considered proportionately. John Dowie noted that there were two reports relevant to London:

- 1) Review by Greater London Authority
(<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport/snow-report-0309.pdf>)
- 2) London Resilience Network

Andrew Murray noted that Northern Ireland had been less affected by the recent adverse weather and had a distinct supply chain so would not need to be represented on the review. Jim Barton noted that Scotland should be involved on the review (but not necessarily part of the steering group) as Scotland's salt supply was more integrated with that in the rest of Great Britain. Richard Morgan noted that Wales would like to be part of the Steering Group as they had been directly affected by the 08/09 salt supply issues.

The Group agreed that Transport for London should be included on the review and that the London Boroughs might also want to be included. The Group agreed that LoTAG provided a good mechanism for the London Boroughs to be represented.

Matthew Lugg noted that membership from Counties should include one which had experienced significant difficulties (perhaps Gloucestershire) and one which had not (eg Durham).

A representative with experience of the impact of the issue on public transport (buses) would be necessary, perhaps by appointing a representative from one of the urban unitary authorities, or alternatively directly from a PTE.

The Group agreed that the private sector should be respondents to the review but not part of the Steering Group.

The Group agreed that a consultancy (possibly with a senior person brought into a role as 'chairman') would be most suitable to lead the review – given support arrangements and workload for the review in such a short space of time.

- Action:** John Dowie to circulate specification round the UKRLG to seek input/views.
- Action:** John Dowie to finalise the membership of the review group, in liaison with relevant members of UKRLG.
- Action:** John Dowie to look at either DfT or HA framework and liaise with Matthew Lugg and Derek Turner on selecting a contractor.

5. Governance

a) Governance

The Group agreed the proposals – Paper UKRLG 01/09 - from Mary Lewis on Governance and asked that these were developed further to implementation.

- Action:** Justin Ward and Mary Lewis to develop Governance issues further

b) Business Planning

Following discussion it was agreed that the UKRLG sets the strategic direction for the Boards and that a business plan for the UKRLG would be useful in providing an important strategic focus, assist with research prioritisation and provide a sound overarching business planning structure; however, the Group did note that a balance needed to be struck between bottom up and top down planning. The Group agreed that a well timed process that linked to Board annual reports and research would work well.

Action: Justin Ward and Mary Lewis to further develop the draft UKRLG Business Plan

The Group agreed that it was useful for the minutes of all the Boards to be circulated with the UKRLG papers and that members should have the opportunity to comment on specific items, but not make routine reports on activities. The Group agreed that Board Chairs should have the opportunity to raise any substantive issue as an Agenda item.

The Group approved the Business Plans, but recommended:

- a) The UK Roads Boards includes task owners
- b) All Boards adopt the UK Network Management approach of listing the membership for their particular board within their business plan

Action: Greg Perks to re-draft the Bridges Board Business Plan and once completed this will be considered 'approved' by the UKRLG

6. Research

John Dowie presented the Atkins Research – Paper UKRLG 03/09 - and circulated the UKRLG current research program, noting that the DfT research program was fully committed for 2009/10. The Group discussed the possible role of the UKRLG being more an enabler and disseminator of research (as opposed to a commissioner of research).

The Group agreed that future sponsorship for research should fulfil the strategic aims as established through the business planning process and endeavour to establish collaborative funding where possible. The Group also stated that taking account of existing research – both within the United Kingdom and internationally – was very important and that there was no point in 're-inventing the wheel and paying for it'.

The group agreed that the process should:

- a) Identify gaps and research needs
- b) Identify what research has already been undertaken
- c) Explore other funding partnership opportunities

The Group noted that there were opportunities for Euro Funding and the European Research Areas Network (ERAN) that might assist with collaborative research

opportunities and provide better overall value for money. Greg Perks noted that there was a lot of research on bridges through TRB and ASHTO in the United States.

John Dowie noted that further consideration needed to be given to how the UKRLG could develop into more of an enabling function for research

Action: Edward Bunting to circulate current UKRLG research program spend profiles.
Action: John Dowie to clarify the spend on 'Local Authority Asset funding through commuted sums' and if there will be an additional cost for publication
Action: Edward Bunting to circulate specification on 'Code of Practice for Traffic Management Systems' as requested by Matthew Lugg
Action: Justin Ward and Mary Lewis to build research into the business planning process and establish how this would work in practice.
Action: Edward Bunting to commission a further note from Atkins on how UKRLG might best develop a role as an 'enabler/disseminator' of research

7. Brief reports from the Boards

The Group noted the updates from the Boards as circulated.

8. Transport Asset Management

Matthew Lugg presented the paper – Paper UKRLG 04/09 – stating that the Roads Board is developing guidance with CIPFA on Asset Management; but noting that this was a cross-cutting issue and therefore required input from across UKRLG. The Group agreed that the Bridges Board had this covered through work with CSS but that links to the UK Network Management Board and UK Lighting Board needed to be checked.

Action: Matthew Lugg to contact Derek Turner to establish the position in regard to CIPFA Asset management guidance for UKNMB asset base.
Action: Matthew Lugg to check the position with Dana Skelley to establish the position in regard to CIPFA Asset management guidance for UKLB asset base.
Action: Derek Turner to check how Highways Agency was inputting directly to this work.

9. Communication

The group agreed that the UK Lighting Board would make a suitable first board for more detailed coverage in Transportation Professional in the May edition. John Dowie clarified the sign-off approach in that the Board chair sign-off content relevant to their particular board and John Dowie has an over-arching editorial role on the content.

The group agreed that substantive changes to the Codes of Practice must be signed-off by the UKRLG but that smaller changes can be agreed by the relevant Board chairman and be published by the secretariat.

The group agreed that in the short term the UKRLG website should be updated to an 'accurate' picture of what it does and who is involved with it and that longer term IHT provide a proposal for DfT to consider on a more fundamental change to how this could support the UKRLG: the group agreed that the profile of UKRLG is very important and that the website can provide an excellent resource for raising the profile.

Action: Justin Ward to circulate schedule for Transportation Professional and the IHT annual plan for content

Action: Justin Ward to work with appropriate Board chairman to sign-off and publish amendments to the Codes of Practice.

Action: Justin Ward to put in place short-term updates for the UKRLG website to ensure accuracy

Action: Justin Ward and Mary Lewis to develop a longer term vision for the UKRLG website for consideration by the Department for Transport

10. Dates of next meeting

The next meeting dates will be agreed in consultation with UKRLG members.