

**MINUTES FROM THE 8<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE ROADS LIAISON GROUP BRIDGES BOARD.**

**Meeting held in room LG1, Great Minster House, on 3 April 2003.**

**Present:**

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Steve Pearson     | Derbyshire CC/CSS (Chair) |
| Ian Holmes        | DfT Roads Policy          |
| Greg Perks        | Northumberland CC/CSS     |
| Raymund Johnstone | Scottish Executive        |
| Gerry Hayter      | Highways Agency           |
| Brian Bell        | Network Rail              |
| Marilyn Waldron   | DfT Roads Policy          |
| Frank Paine       | LOBEG                     |
| David Yeoell      | Westminster City Council  |
| John Collins      | Welsh Assembly            |
| Andrew Cook       | DfT VSE                   |
| Ian Corfield      | DfT VSE                   |
| Ronnie Wilson     | DRD(NI)                   |
| Steve Tart        | Manchester City Council   |
| Andrew Oldland    | DfT (Secretariat)         |
| Chris Hudson      | DfT (Secretariat)         |

**1. Apologies**

These were received from David Lynne, Evan Pugh and Jim Irons.

**2. Minutes of Last Meeting**

**3. Matters Arising**

Masonry Arch Project - CIRIA feel that £80k will be enough for this project. They also feel that the project results would have more credibility if it could be shown that support and funding for the project had been received from a number of different sources, including HA. Brian Bell stated that Network Rail could make some funding available for the project.

DfT reported that they were still awaiting official confirmation for funding for the Bridges board research projects, but that this should be received by mid-April.

Some staff changes had taken place in RP3. David Lamberti is the new Head of Division. Edward Bunting has joined RP3; he will act as project manager for the RLG projects.

#### **4. Vehicle Incursions on Railways**

Work outstanding includes traffic advisory work (including production of a leaflet) and the production of a proforma which will record future accidents involving vehicles on railways. The latter work will be co-ordinated by Railway Safety and the police.

No progress has been made yet with the regional workshops mentioned at the last meeting of the Board. This has been due to staff changes in DfT Roads Policy Division.

Implementation of schemes may be dictated by Network Rail's budgeting profiles that envisage the majority of expenditure being in 2004/5. Local authorities will need to keep this under review at local level. Highway Authorities are unlikely to receive new money for this exercise and so will be expected to fund schemes by re-prioritising their programmes.

TfL has been represented on the Vehicle Incursion working group, but TfL has not yet made finance available to London boroughs for vehicle incursion work.

The working group decided on a voluntary protocol rather than a statutory duty on local authorities to take measures against vehicle incursions. This situation will be formally reviewed in 2006 after the voluntary arrangements have been given a chance to take effect. In addition to this, DfT have been tasked, in the HSE report, to monitor progress annually.

Railway Safety will also be examining vehicle incursion incidents and including these in their annual report.

The Northern Ireland assembly are still trying to get the Northern Ireland railway authorities to agree to the protocol. London Underground also still need to give their agreement.

#### **5. Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order**

Some bridges board members expressed concern that this proposed legislation is basically flawed as it does not *prevent* the haulier from using unsuitable bridges. Action can only be taken after the fact. The concern of private bridge owners is that an increase in abnormal load traffic would increase their maintenance responsibility, although the increase can not be quantified.

There is concern that weight restrictions should be treated with the same degree of importance as is given to speed restrictions.

Ian Corfield pointed out that it was simply not in the haulier's interest to take heavy loads across unsuitable bridges. The consequences that this could have in terms of insurance, damage to the vehicle in question etc make it a pointless risk.

It was also pointed out that, in order to affect primary legislation, by including a clause reflecting the concerns of bridge owners, DfT would have to be able to cite examples of incidents that led to this concern. This would not be possible as no statistics exist on this subject and there are no real examples of past incidents.

Current primary legislation on this issue is common throughout the UK. But future legislation may be the responsibility of devolved administrations.

**ACTION - the Bridges Board to produce a note for Ian Corfield (VSE) setting out the changes that they would like introduced in a future review of the Abnormal Loads legislation, and the case for making these changes.**

**ACTION: Ian Corfield will consider these issues at the next review of this legislation.**

## **6. Bridge Management Sub-group**

Expressions of interest are due back with David Yeowell by 9 April 2003. There has been an encouraging amount of interest shown to date. A meeting has been arranged later in the month to discuss how to publish this work.

A project brief has been produced. Part of the brief is to provide a framework within which devolved administrations can work.

The meeting due to take place in the afternoon following the Bridges Board will need to decide upon who is to be the contracting party. If the Department for Transport funds the project, it will have to be them. DfT would need to speak to their procurement division, who, in turn, would have to be involved at every stage in the process. Management of the technical aspects of the project would nevertheless remain with the sub-group.

W S Atkins are acting as consultants to the Welsh Assembly Government to develop a bridge management system for Wales. John Collins will provide information to the Bridge Management sub-group about this work.

**ACTION: John Collins to provide this information**

## **7. Flooding and Bridge Scour.**

The Highways Agency will set up a Technical Project Board to consider this issue. The HA have a standing list of organisations who will be consulted..

CSS also wish this issue to be taken forward.

**ACTION: HA to set up Technical Project Board**

## **8. Bridge Performance Indicators**

WS Atkins have stated that they would need an extra £30k in order to extend the scope of their existing contract with the Highways Agency to include local authorities. This is the "modest sum" mentioned by David Lynn at the Roads Liaison Group meeting of 4 February 2003 (see note of meeting).

The extra work need not necessarily form part of the current HA contract due for completion in April 2004 but could be programmed to suit funding availability after that date. HA will consult their procurement division to see if the HA contract could be extended. Whilst there was not complete support for funding to be provided through the DfT route there was sufficient to merit the project being submitted for funding in the 2004/5 bidding round and to indicate a positive outcome.

If an indicator is to be proposed for the 2004/05 Best Value suite, it must be finalised in time for the 2004/05 Best Value consultation paper which is published in Autumn 2003.

**ACTION: The CSS meeting in May 2003 will discuss this issue and it will be placed on the agenda of the 24 June Bridges Board.  
HA will consult their procurement division to see if the HA bridge performance indicators contract could be extended to include the additional local authority work.**

## **9. UKCEC/DfT/CSS Meeting on 5 December 2002**

The next meeting between these bodies has been put back due to staff changes. No clear way forward has been decided upon as yet, but co-operation has been good up to now and the general feeling is one of optimism.

## **10. Bridge Owners Forum - Report of last meeting**

The main issues discussed were funding of the BOF and the representation of British Waterways and London Underground Ltd on the Bridges Board (covered by this agenda). It was still not clear as to whether or not DfT funding of the Bridges Board had been confirmed.

Three sub-groups have been set up to take forward three different projects, which are as follows:

- The assessment of masonry retaining walls (Ronnie Wilson);
- Guidance on Non-destructive testing and monitoring (Brian Bell);
- Management of older metal bridges (Graham Cole);

### **11. Representation of British Waterways and London Underground Ltd on the Bridges Board**

The Board was generally in favour of this and these two bodies will therefore be invited to put forward members of the Board. There was some concern expressed that to do this would mean that the Bridges Board would have the same representation as the Bridge Owners' Forum. However, this was not seen as a major problem because the remits of the Bridges Board and the Bridge Owners' Forum are different.

The Bridges Board therefore agreed to invite permanent representatives from British Waterways and London Waterways Ltd. The decision will need to be ratified by the RLG. David Lynn will then issue letters of invitation.

**ACTION: David Lynn to raise this issue for ratification at RLG in May, and, if ratification is given, to invite BW and LUL to put forward members for the Bridges Board**

TfL is represented on the Bridges Board via LOBEG, but there is a standing invitation to TfL to send a representative to the Board.

### **12. Any Other Business**

### **13. Date of Next Meeting**

This will take place on 24 June 2003, in Room H2, Great Minster House

DfT Roads Policy Division  
22 May 2003