

**ADEPT ENGINEERING BOARD
NATIONAL BRIDGES GROUP**
Online Meeting, 1st July 2026 @ 10:30

Name	Present	Init.	Representing
Helen Rowe	✓	HR	NBG Chair
Rob Causton	✓	RC	NBG Vice Chair and South West, Chair
Joanne Saunders	✓	JS	NBG Secretary
Andrew Pierce	✓	AP	NBG Secretary and Yorks/Humber, Chair
Osian Richards	✓	OR	CSS Wales, Chair
Edward Rees	Apologies	ER	CSS Wales, Vice-Chair
Bob Humphreys	Email only	BH	CSS Wales
Colin Ferris	✓	CF	Infrastructure NI
Claire McGeown		CM	Infrastructure NI
Maria Lucey	✓	ML	SCOTS
Caroline Haycock	✓	CH	East Midlands, Chair
Ian Booth	✓	IB	East Midlands, Secretary
Clive Woodruff	Apologies	CWo	East, Chair
Stuart Heald	✓	SH	East, Vice Chair
Neil Darby	✓	ND	East, Secretary
Patrick Smith	✓	PS	North, Chair
Stuart Molyneux		SM	North West, Chair
Colin Jenkins	✓	CJ	North West, Sec
Paul Tucker	✓	PT	South West, Vice Chair
Emma Cockburn	Email only	EC	South West, Secretary
Alan Mclean	✓	AM	South East, Chair
Scott Gregory	✓	SG	South East, Secretary
Maureen Robson	✓	MR	TfL
Sharan Gill		SGi	TfL
Chris Wright	✓	CW	West Midlands, Chair
Chris Plant	✓	CP	West Midlands, Secretary
Claire Richardson	✓	CR	Yorks/Humber, Sec
Guests			
Alan Daines		ADa	Canal & Rivers Trust
Alistair Dore	✓	AD	National Highways - HRE
Jasdeep Bhachu		JB	LoBEG
Kieran Dodds	✓	KD	National Highways
Keith Harwood	✓	KH	Independent, Ex Chair
Mark Heaton	✓ Item 3		Presenter, Lincolnshire County Council
James OConnor	✓ Item 2		Presenter, DfT

Also on circulation: Hannah.Bartram@eastsussex.gov.uk, secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk

ITEM		ACTION
1.	Introductions & Apologies	
1.1	HR welcomed all to the session and introduced the theme of the meeting and presentations Formal apologies were then recorded: • Clive Woodruff (East) • Edward Rees It was noted that the following individuals are on the mailing list, but likely won't attend meetings • Bob Humphries • Emma Cockburn	
2	PRESENTATION: Structures Fund updates from DfT Presenter: James O'Connor - Policy Lead for the Structures Fund at the Department for Transport (DfT)	
2.1	• James shared a slide showing the fund timeline. 15/04/26 Publication 06/05/2026 Level of TAB support confirmed (first time) 01/06/2026 Level of TAB support confirmed (final time) 03/08/2026 Final submission deadline 01/04/2027 Delivery reporting 01/04/2030 Post-delivery monitoring and evaluation 29/04/2026 First chance to apply for TAB support 25/05/2026 Final chance to apply for TAB support 19/06/2026 Deadline to submit voluntary drafts Autumn 2026 Awards announced 31/03/2030 Deadline for funded schemes to complete • All authorities that wanted support from the Technical Advisory Body (TAB) had applied for it and received confirmation. • The deadline for submitting voluntary draft applications for TAB review was 19 June. • The Technical Advisory Body was reviewing those drafts and expected to provide feedback by 10 July. • He said the process was progressing well and there had been strong interest from local highway authorities. Specifically, he reported that: ○ 99 local highway authorities ○ had submitted 111 draft application forms.	
	Questions from the Group Q: HR asked if yesterday's announcements about cuts to funding and whether this will affect the Structures fund. A: James responded to say that the fund is still open and everyone is encouraged to apply. Q: AP asked whether there was anything the National Bridges Group could do to support DfT by passing messages to local authorities or regional groups. A: James' key message was that authorities should focus now on securing stakeholder engagement and understanding consent requirements, as strong delivery planning will be important in what is expected to be a competitive funding round. Q: CJ's question was essentially a request for DfT to provide early visibility of future funding opportunities beyond the current fund, enabling authorities to develop longer-term schemes and engage stakeholders such as Network Rail well in advance. A: DfT has not confirmed any future funding rounds beyond the current Structures Fund. The focus is on the existing fund, which is the mechanism for supporting structural schemes through to March 2030.	

	Q: AP asked whether the DfT had gained a clearer understanding of the scale of structural asset management challenges facing local authorities through the Structures Fund submissions. A: James confirmed that DfT is using the Structures Fund process as an opportunity to quantify the scale of need across local highway authorities, but that the full picture will only emerge once final applications are submitted. The intention is then to use that evidence to improve internal understanding of future structural investment needs. James noted that an early observation from the draft submissions is the volume of lower-value schemes being put forward, in addition to the major high-value schemes anticipated when the fund was developed. DfT intends to analyse the completed submissions to better understand the overall scale and profile of need across local highway authorities.	
3	PRESENTATION: Impact of Drought on the Highway Presenter: Mark Heaton, Project Leader at Lincolnshire County Council	
3.1	Background Mark introduced a five-to-six-year study undertaken by Lincolnshire County Council in partnership with the British Geological Survey (BGS) to understand the root causes of highway failures across Lincolnshire's Fenland road network. The work began after a PhD research project suggested that shrink-swell behaviour of soils may be driving some of the failures, but the study has since expanded and identified additional contributing factors.	
3.2	The Problem Lincolnshire has been experiencing rapid and significant highway failures, including: • Embankment and riverbank slips. • Longitudinal cracking through carriageways. • Road closures caused by deep ground movement. • Progressive deformation of roads in low-lying agricultural areas. Mark stressed that the objective was not simply to repair defects, but to understand why the failures were occurring in the first place. Lincolnshire Context Mark highlighted that Lincolnshire faces particular pressures because: • Vehicle numbers have increased significantly over the last 20 years. • Population growth has exceeded both the East Midlands and national averages. The county has substantial agricultural activity, resulting in heavy use by agricultural and commercial vehicles.	
3.2	Geological Setting He showed the county's superficial geology and explained that much of Lincolnshire's Fenland area consists of: • Alluvium deposits • Peat • Other soft superficial deposits These geology types appear to be closely linked to the observed failures. Climate Change Influence One of the key themes emerging from the research is that: • Historically, shrink-swell behaviour was considered the main explanation. • The study is now finding evidence that warmer temperatures and changing climatic conditions are interacting with the underlying geology and contributing to deterioration. • The research is examining how geological conditions, moisture variation and climate change combine to affect pavement and ground performance. Historic Landscape Development To understand why these conditions exist, the team examined: • Doggerland mapping. • Ancient river systems.	

	• Ice-age extents. • Historic geological evolution.	
3.4	LIDAR Analysis High-resolution LIDAR mapping revealed: • Buried river channels. • Historic watercourses. • Glacial meltwater routes. • Variations in ground conditions not obvious at the surface. These hidden geological features frequently coincide with areas experiencing highway failures.	
3.5	Findings • Highway failures show a strong correlation with underlying geology, particularly alluvium, peat and other compressible soils. • Evidence suggests that compression and settlement of underlying soils may be a significant driver of failure, potentially more influential than shrink-swell effects originally assumed. • Climate factors, including higher temperatures and reduced rainfall, are contributing to drying of soils and increasing susceptibility to movement. • Failures are often initiated several metres below the carriageway and manifest as cracking, deformation, or localised dips at the surface. • Historic maintenance approaches, particularly repeated overlays, can exacerbate the problem by increasing structural weight and driving further compression (and carbon which then drives climate change!)	
3.6	Implications for Highway Authorities • Recurrent failures may not be resolved through surface treatment alone; underlying ground conditions must be understood and addressed. • Authorities should consider the role of historic geology and buried features when diagnosing failures and planning interventions - LIDAR data, geological mapping and ground investigation can provide valuable insight into areas of higher risk. • Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of failures, particularly in areas with compressible soils. • Maintenance strategies should be reviewed to avoid unintentionally increasing loading (e.g. repeated overlays) without addressing root causes.	
3.7	Going Forward • LCC and continuing work with BGS and Live Labs 2 • Snapshot paper for 2025 expected soon	
3.8	Questions from the Group Q: RC asked whether declining aquifer levels and water abstraction for agriculture and public water supply could be contributing to the observed ground movement and highway failures. A: MH agreed that water abstraction is likely to be a contributing factor. He noted that irrigation demands are high within Lincolnshire and that increasing use of reservoirs and water storage can alter natural water movement through the drainage network. This may contribute to the drying and compression of underlying soils identified within the study Q: AP welcomed the wider application of the research beyond highways and structures and asked what practical measures authorities can take to manage the identified risks. He queried whether there are proactive interventions available or whether authorities will need to adapt to managing increasing levels of deterioration. A: MH explained that Lincolnshire has already begun adapting its maintenance approach. This includes assessing existing pavement construction in greater detail, reducing carriageway weight where possible and making greater use of recycling and in-situ treatment techniques. He noted that repeated overlays can increase loading and exacerbate compression-related failures. The emerging	

	approach is therefore to focus on lighter-weight interventions and managing assets with a greater understanding of the underlying ground conditions. Q: CW referred to the construction of the approach roads where soft ground issues were addressed through surcharging and the construction of a reinforced concrete pavement. He suggested that similar approaches may warrant consideration as the research progresses. A: MH agreed that such solutions can be effective but highlighted the scale of the challenge in Lincolnshire, where a large proportion of the 9,000 km network may be affected. He noted that whilst these interventions may be viable on strategic routes, they are unlikely to be practical or affordable for widespread implementation across local authority highway networks Q: ND asked whether geogrids and other reinforcement techniques had been trialled as a means of bridging localised ground movement and extending pavement life. A: MH advised that geogrids have been used within Lincolnshire; however, one of the case study roads presented had already been reinforced with a geogrid and subsequently failed. Note: HR highlighted similar issues being experienced in Kent, where ground movement is affecting both carriageways and structures. She described ongoing problems with bridge abutment rotation, loss of expansion joint movement and bearing damage, noting that previous interventions including geogrids and lightweight fill had not fully resolved the issue. HR reinforced the issues presented today do not just affect Lincolnshire Q: SH asked whether the findings may require authorities to adopt a more holistic approach to network management, including consideration of permanent road closures, reduced service levels and network rationalisation. He also queried whether there is a need to better communicate these challenges to the public. A: MH advised that Lincolnshire is already implementing road closures where necessary for safety reasons and is exploring a range of options including reduced pavement thickness, lower-category construction standards, speed restrictions and weight limits. He noted that stopping-up routes can be challenging due to stakeholder objections but agreed that authorities may need to consider all available asset management options as the issue develops. MH also highlighted the importance of proactive public communication regarding the causes of failures and the rationale behind management decisions.	
4	PRESENTATION: Update to SAVI and a reminder of its utility in safeguarding local authority highway assets. Presenter: Keith Hardwood (Guest Member)	
4.1	What is SAVI? SAVI is a condition-based decision support tool (spreadsheet) used to: • Value structures assets; • Develop five-year forward works programmes; and • Model long-term asset performance under different funding scenarios. The 2026 update primarily reflects changes to the indexation applied within the model, resulting in a slight reduction in asset values compared with the previous year's version.	
4.2	Using SAVI Users complete a front page with basic authority information and budget assumptions. This includes current budgets and longer-term funding assumptions used within the modelling. The tool contains dedicated worksheets for: • Structures inventory data; • Structure element data and condition scores; • Valuation factors;	

	• Deterioration factors; and • Prioritisation criteria.	
4.3	Prioritised Works Programme KH explained that SAVI produces a risk-based prioritised list of structures requiring intervention. Whilst this provides a useful starting point for developing forward works programmes, it should be used alongside engineering judgement. He noted that inspection records do not always keep pace with completed works and that local weighting factors can be adjusted to reflect authority-specific priorities.	
4.4	Long Term Dashboard KH demonstrated the long-term forecasting capabilities within SAVI, including projections of condition, risk and asset performance under different funding scenarios. Examples from Hertfordshire illustrated how the outputs can provide evidence for funding discussions and support long-term asset management planning.	
4.5	Questions from the Group Q: HR asked whether SAVI could be developed within Power BI. A: KH advised that whilst Power BI could potentially be used to present dashboards and outputs, it would not replace the underlying analytical engine. He noted that SAVI undertakes the valuation, deterioration and investment modelling calculations, whereas Power BI is primarily a visualisation and reporting tool. KH added that future enhancements, such as incorporation of carbon metrics, would be beneficial but currently lack dedicated funding. Q: SH noted that Suffolk has used SAVI since 2022 and asked whether the annual depreciation figure could be considered representative of the funding required to maintain a steady-state asset condition. A: KH advised that annual depreciation should not be interpreted directly as the maintenance funding requirement. He explained that SAVI uses a range of condition, deterioration and risk-based measures to support investment decisions, and that longer-term trends and asset performance projections often provide a more meaningful basis for determining appropriate funding levels. Note: OR commented that outputs such as those provided by SAVI should ideally be delivered directly through bridge management systems rather than requiring separate spreadsheet-based analysis. He suggested that authorities should be specifying these capabilities as part of procurement requirements when selecting bridge management software. OR also showed how BridgeStation has a visual display for deterioration mapping after running the SAVI.	
5	Discussion following Presentations	
5.1	Comment: SH reflected on the wider challenges facing local authorities in maintaining existing structures assets. He noted that, while the Structures Fund provides valuable opportunities for capital investment, authorities continue to face increasing maintenance demands, reducing asset capacity and constrained budgets. He highlighted Suffolk's experience of managing a growing number of Special Types General Order (STGO) movements and the increasing need to impose vehicle restrictions on structures. SH questioned how the sector can better communicate to central government the importance of sustained investment in maintaining existing assets, rather than focusing solely on new infrastructure. Response: HR advised that ADEPT and NBG representatives had engaged with DfT during development of the Structures Fund and had highlighted the likelihood that authorities would submit a larger number of smaller-value schemes than originally anticipated. She noted that feedback from the funding round supports this view and reinforces the scale of maintenance need across local highway authorities	

6	Feedback and liaison with other groups	
6A	CSS Wales (OR)	
6A.1	Scour OR reported that a presentation on scour risk had been delivered to CSS Wales, resulting in a workshop being arranged to support authorities that have not yet developed scour management processes.	
6A.2	CSS Wales BICS OR reported that further work is required to develop BICS guidance and supporting resources. This will form part of the ongoing CSS Wales work programme.	
6A.3	Structural Failures Database OR advised that work continues developing a website/database to record structural failures and support industry learning. Progress has been delayed pending IT support, although assistance is expected from computer science apprentices in the coming months.	
6B	SCOTS (ML)	
6B.1	National Survey ML advised that the national bridges survey has now been finalised and issued. The survey covers asset scale, condition, risk, accreditation, workforce capability and funding pressures across authorities. Aggregated results are expected in September/October 2026. ML confirmed that it is non-mandatory but that each LA has been encouraged to respond (data will be anonymised). SCOTS are optimistic for a strong response given the discussions that have built up to this.	
6B.2	Coordinated Bridgeworks in Urban Areas ML advised that work is ongoing to understand how local authorities coordinate bridge works and manage interfaces with other highway projects, particularly within urban areas where overlapping schemes can have significant network impacts. The aim is to identify and share good practice across authorities.	
6C	BOF (HR)	
6C.1	Carbon Management A presentation was provided by Rochester Bridge Trust on its carbon management approach, including work to further develop carbon measurement across both bridge assets and wider organisational activities.	
6C.2	Net Zero Bridges Group An update was provided by the Net Zero Bridges Group, including work relating to carbon assessment approaches and updates to CG300. Relevant presentation material will be made available through the BOF website.	
6C.3	Cam Middleton Attendees reflected on the contribution made by the late Cam Middleton to the bridges community and his involvement with BOF and wider industry groups.	
6C.4	Overloaded Vehicles Study HR reported on ongoing work examining overloaded vehicle movements using weigh-in-motion data. Early findings indicate significant levels of overloading in some locations and highlighted the importance of data quality and calibration.	
6D	UKBB (JS)	
6D.1	Code of Practice Update - Structures & Tunnels updates provided (note also Section 9) - Main points raised: - Carbon tools - CROSS - Gap Analysis - Criticality - Thinking of tunnels as systems, not individual assets - Remember brief is for COP to not be explicit but points being taken away	

6D.2	Research HR notes that there is still no update from UKRLG/DfT to help insight into research lists and funding	
6D.3	Discussion around High/Heavy Load Network - Strategic paper shared by John Lamb (not for consultation as such at this stage) - Discussion followed around checking structures following flood events and feeding back implications/restriction on abnormal loads. - General consensus was that there is not sufficient time for this to be guaranteed and hauliers are to check their routes in advance.	
6D.4	IMHS (note also Section 9) - Two weeks granted for final comments - See e22/26 with deadline of 6 July 2026	
6D.5	<u>Draft Suspension of Service Plan for Highways</u> - Paper produced by John Lamb was briefly discusses - See e20/26, noting deadline for consultation was yesterday	
6D.6	Presentation on Air Cushion Equipment (ACE) Project – Peter Wynn - Commissioned to complete feasibility study/early assessment work for moving large loads e.g. wind farm/power station components Wynns - Abnormal Load Transportation Specialists - Load spreading via air can make a significant difference in terms of forces induced into the structure, but they are looking at controlling air loss. KH commented that Wynns has significant expertise in abnormal load movements and that air-cushion technology has the potential to reduce structural loading through improved load spreading.	
6E	Access Planning Group (CP)	
6E.1	Membership CP reminded members that the Access Planning Group involves DfT and a range of transport providers, rather than being solely focused on Network Rail. He reported that, following organisational changes within Network Rail, David Costello has moved to a new role and Tony Gomez has taken over as the Network Rail representative. The group is seeking to maintain the positive momentum established through previous engagement	
6E.2	EA Exemptions CP reported that the Environment Agency had presented to the group on permitting requirements for works within Main Rivers. Concerns were raised regarding approval timescales, which can extend to around six months in some cases. The group is therefore exploring opportunities to expand the range of standard exemptions available for routine activities and members were invited to suggest additional activities that may be suitable for exemption Action: Members are invited to suggest activities that may be suitable for addition to the Environment Agency's standard exemptions list. The next Access Planning Group meeting is scheduled for 15 October 2026	ALL
6E.3	CRT CP raised concerns regarding Canal & River Trust charging arrangements, noting that authorities are increasingly being asked to meet commercial fees for certain activities, whilst similar costs incurred by local authorities are not always recoverable on a reciprocal basis. The issue remains under discussion. Action: CP to provide HR with supporting correspondence regarding incorrect CRT charges for escalation through established contact inc Hannah Bartram.	CP
6E.4	Network Rail CP advised that discussions continue with Network Rail regarding access planning arrangements, including ongoing efforts to secure consistent application of zero-cost Basic Asset Protection Agreements (BAPAs) and improve access to relevant asset management contacts to support scheme planning and coordination. He noted that progress remains variable between Network Rail regions.	

	CP also reported ongoing engagement with Network Rail regarding access planning and reminded members that feedback remains low (approximately 5%), encouraging greater participation.	
6E.5	Collaboration CP highlighted examples of positive collaboration between local authorities and Network Rail, including joint award-winning projects delivered in Staffordshire. He encouraged greater promotion of collaborative working and noted that organisations such as Network Rail and Canal & River Trust are often unaware of forums such as the UK Bridges Board and Access Planning Group. Discussion followed on opportunities to improve awareness and share good practice more widely across the sector In response to discussion on collaboration and awareness, HR advised that the Bridge Owners Forum LinkedIn page could be used to share examples of good practice and successful collaborative projects. Members were encouraged to forward suitable material for publication.	
6F	HRE SAF (CW – new rep)	
6F.1	JS advised, on behalf of CWo, that the group is currently focused on project delivery activities rather than wider policy matters. Clive will continue to attend meetings and feed back any relevant updates to NBG.	
6.G	Bridge Strike Prevention Group (CH/MR – new reps)	
6G.1	The Problem MR reported that bridge strike numbers remain broadly unchanged, with approximately 1,700 recorded incidents in the last year.	
6G.2	Driver Training and Awareness The group considers that opportunities for improvement through signing alone are becoming increasingly limited and is now focusing more strongly on human factors, driver behaviour and training.	
6G.3	Signage Effectiveness MR noted that whilst signing remains important, observations from the research suggested that height restriction signs can sometimes be less visually dominant than other highway signage. This may contribute to drivers failing to identify bridge strike hazards in time.	
6G.4	Connected Vehicles MR reported discussion on future opportunities associated with connected vehicles and in-cab technology, recognising the potential for digital warnings and vehicle-based interventions to support bridge strike prevention in the future.	
6G.5	ASPRO CP advised that the group continues to promote the use of zero-cost BAPAs and is seeking greater consistency in their application across Network Rail regions. Whilst progress has been made in some areas, implementation remains variable.	
7A	Updates from National Highways	
7A	Updates from National Highways (KD)	
7A.1	CS 455 – Assessment of Concrete Highway Bridges Consultation for a minor refresh is out	
7A.2	CS 472 – Management of Fatigue in Steel Bridges Currently progressing through approvals and is expected to be published during Q3/Q4 2026.	
7A.3	CS 469 – Management of Scour KD reported that the review of CS469 is continuing. He noted that local authority evidence is being used to demonstrate the practical implications of the standard, including examples where its application following storm events could generate substantial inspection obligations and cost.	
7A.4	Bridge joints KD advised that the work being undertaken on bridge joints has now reached a stage where it can be shared more widely. The findings have recently been presented to the Local Roads Research Board (LRRB), with no significant	

	comments received. He indicated that the work is therefore approaching a position where it can be brought to NBS for wider discussion and dissemination. ACTION: AP to pick up with KD about future representation on Bridge Joints	AP
7A.5	Electric HGVs KD advised that National Highways is engaged in discussions with DfT regarding the impact of electric HGVs on structures and the wider road network. Work is being undertaken with vehicle manufacturers to better understand loading implications and identify solutions that avoid the need for large-scale assessment and strengthening programmes.	
7A.6	DBFO Return to National Highways KD reported progress on the programme to bring former DBFO assets back under National Highways management. He advised that five of the eight assets have now transferred successfully and that extensive preparation work has enabled the transition to occur with no noticeable impact on customers or network operations.	
7B	Updates from Historic Railway (AD)	
7B.1	Structures Advisory Forum (SAF) AD provided an overview of the Structures Advisory Forum (SAF), established after the pause on infill and demolition schemes by DfT following the Great Musgrave bridge infill scheme. The forum brings together representatives from Active Travel England, Historic England, ADEPT and other stakeholders to review proposed bridge infill and demolition schemes. AD emphasised that SAF is an advisory body only and does not make final decisions.	
7B.2	Assessment Failures AD advised that HRE will continue to engage with highway authorities where structures fail assessment standards. Discussions will focus on understanding risks, existing mitigation measures and potential future interventions. He confirmed that, where possible, correspondence will be sent directly to bridge managers rather than through wider authority channels.	
7B.3	HRE Funding AD reported that HRE has received an additional £10m of funding for 2026/27, increasing the annual budget to approximately £15m. However, he noted that only a one-year settlement has been confirmed, with longer-term funding arrangements remaining uncertain.	
7B.4	Great British Railways AD advised that it remains widely expected that HRE will ultimately transfer to Great British Railways, although no formal confirmation or implementation timetable has yet been provided	
8	Updates from Working Groups	
8A	Commuted Sums (OR/AM)	
8A.1	No Update this meeting	
8B	PROW (AM)	
8B.1	Public Rights of Way Guidance AM advised that drafting of the Public Rights of Way guidance continues, with contributions now being received from the various authors. The working group will review the draft collectively before wider engagement with the ADEPT Rights of Way Group. He advised that he will be attending the ADEPT Rights of Way Group meeting in the coming weeks to discuss the emerging guidance and future development opportunities. AM noted that the current view is that the document would be better developed as standalone ADEPT guidance, rather than being incorporated directly into the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice update. HR added that the guidance could subsequently be referenced through future updates to the Code of Practice.	
8B.2	PROW or Highway Structure Inspections?	

	Q: OR queried whether guidance exists on allocating inspection responsibilities between PROW officers and bridge engineers for structures of differing complexity. A: AM advised that this issue is being considered within the developing PROW guidance, with inspection requirements likely to be linked to the complexity of the structure and the competency of the inspector. ACTION: CW to provide the legacy Herefordshire guidance relating to Public Rights of Way bridge inspection responsibilities to JS for circulation to the group. The document includes a historic threshold of approximately 25 ft (7.5 m) span used to distinguish between structures managed by PROW teams and those managed by bridge engineers. Comment: HR noted that responsibility for PROW structures in Kent sits with the PROW team, although support is often provided by bridge engineers for more complex assets. She added that some PROW routes are being upgraded to cycle routes, increasing the importance of ensuring appropriate inspection and management arrangements. Comment: PS noted that his authority previously shared responsibility between PROW officers and bridge engineers, but ultimately moved to a model where bridge inspections are undertaken by suitably qualified bridge engineers, recognising the competency requirements associated with structural inspections. Comment: CW noted that a number of PROW structures are privately owned. In these cases, the authority's focus is often on ensuring the safety of the public using the route, rather than taking responsibility for the wider management of the structure itself. Comment: HR highlighted the importance of robust inspection records and queried whether PROW inspections are being recorded consistently enough to demonstrate compliance and provide evidence in the event of an incident?? Comment: SH highlighted the importance of asset management fundamentals, noting that authorities must first establish a reliable inventory of PROW structures before determining inspection requirements and condition management approaches. Comment: SG noted that inspection responsibility should be informed by the consequence of failure and associated risk, rather than purely by span length or structural complexity. The outcome of this discussion was consensus that PROW teams need to consider some basic training and record keeping and AM assured the group that this is being recommended within the proposed guidance. Complexity and Consequence of failure are the other key points for consideration for when to refer to Structures Inspector if possible.	CW
8C	CSS/Railtrack cost sharing protocol/arch assessments (KH)	
8C.1	No updates from this meeting ACTION: JS to arrange a meeting with KH, OR, HR and CP to review legal advice and agree next steps for the CSS/Railtrack Cost Sharing Protocol work.	JS
8D	CIRIA Bridge Detailing Guide (AM/PS)	
8D.1	Scope of Guidance AM advised that the forthcoming sections will cover superstructures in alternative materials, foot and cycle bridges, and miscellaneous details. Discussion noted that some proposed materials, including timber, aluminium and fibre-reinforced polymers, may have limited UK examples available to inform detailed guidance	
8D.2	Existing Structures PS noted that the guide remains focused on new structures and there is currently no intention to include repair details or guidance relating to modifications of existing structures. He observed that such guidance would be valuable to practitioners but is not currently within scope	

8D.3	Membership and Access CF advised that he appeared to have dropped from the project circulation list and was unaware of the most recent steering group meeting. AM agreed to raise this with the project team. Action: AM to contact the CIRIA project team to ensure CF is reinstated on the project distribution list.	AM
8D.4	HR reminded members that there is currently no agreement that authorities contributing to the guide's development will receive a complimentary copy on publication, despite providing industry input to the project	
9	Knowledge sharing and discussion	
9.1	Well Managed Highway Infrastructure COP Update	
9.1.1	HR advised that development of the updated Code of Practice is progressing well, with pens-down currently anticipated by the end of July 2026. Consultation responses are being reviewed through the various working groups and feedback received to date has generally been positive.	
9.1.2	Structures and Tunnels HR reported that work is continuing to improve the treatment of structures and tunnels within the Code of Practice. Particular attention is being given to assets such as swing bridges, lifting bridges and structures with significant mechanical and electrical components, where further guidance is considered necessary.	
9.1.3	Future Integration HR noted that the developing ADEPT Public Rights of Way guidance is not expected to be completed in time for inclusion within the current update. However, the intention is that it can be referenced through future online updates to the Code of Practice once published	
9.1.4	Other Notes SH questioned continued references to the High and Heavy Load Network, noting that the historic network had been withdrawn and querying its relevance to future guidance and planning. HR confirmed that the matter had been discussed at UK Bridges Board and that there had been similar concerns regarding the relevance of the historic network. It was agreed that the paper would not be circulated further by NBG, with the feedback being raised through UK Bridges Board (see also Item 6D.3 above) Members discussed the increasing challenges associated with abnormal load movements and network resilience. It was noted that the historic High and Heavy Load Network no longer reflects modern movement patterns, with major infrastructure, renewable energy and utility projects generating demands in locations not previously associated with heavy load movements. Concerns were raised regarding the resilience and capacity of local authority networks, particularly where structures are expected to accommodate diverted traffic or abnormal loads without corresponding assessment or investment. Members highlighted the value of regional coordination, early engagement and improved planning to support future network resilience.	
9.2	IMHS	
9.2.1	HR reminded that the consultation period has been extended and that comments should be submitted by 6 July 2026. Those unable to access the document circulated under e22/26 were asked to contact JS directly.	
9.3	Other work with DfT	
9.3.1	HR thanked AM and PS for their continued support and input to the discussions with DfT regarding ageing infrastructure and network resilience. HR advised that a second workshop had recently been held with DfT. As part of this work, DfT had challenged the group to consider what information would be required within a national structures database to support resilience planning, investment prioritisation and improved understanding of strategic network risks.	
9.3.2	National Database Proposal	

	Initial work has been undertaken to identify the potential data fields and information that authorities may wish to capture within such a database. HR shared this on the screen and noted that the intention is to improve understanding of asset condition, criticality and network resilience at a national level. HR advised that the proposed national structures database distinguishes between core (green) fields, which would form the minimum dataset, and additional (amber) fields, which could provide further resilience and investment-planning benefits where available. Comments on Fields: OR commented that he believed restrictions should be a 'green' field. CJ suggested need to consider route availability/network criticality as well as maximum load applied historically. MR suggested addition of speed limit as an optional field JS noted that BridgeStation has demonstrated a willingness to respond to user requirements and suggested that, once a common dataset has been agreed for the proposed national structures database, NBG should engage with bridge management system providers to encourage development of standard reporting outputs. This would help simplify data extraction and reduce the burden on authorities by allowing information to be generated directly from existing asset management systems OR suggested that, in the longer term, data exchange should ideally be automated through the use of APIs, allowing bridge management systems to transfer information directly to the national database without requiring manual extraction and submission by authorities. HR explained that the purpose of the proposed national structures database is not to replace local asset management systems, but to provide a consistent national dataset that supports understanding of asset condition, criticality and network resilience. She noted that the intention is to help demonstrate where strategic weaknesses exist within the network, improve understanding of dependencies between local and national routes, and provide a stronger evidence base for future investment and resilience planning discussions with DfT.	
9.4	Next steps from Bd&e magazine team	
9.4.1	See e21/26 If you'd like to receive the e-newsletter, and a free first copy of <i>Bridges Insight</i> magazine, please register here: https://bridgesinsightmedia.com/	
10	Upcoming conferences and events	
10.1	NCE Bridges x (ADEPT NBG + RBT) - ADEPT NBG will have a small network hub - Winners of the Beyond Design competition we have supported will be announced on the day (with judging throughout) - For anyone wishing for a free ticket to NCE Bridges Conference, contact JS ASAP	
10.2	Other Events Helen encouraged all to refer to the BOF website	
11	Minutes & Actions	
11.1	Minutes from last meeting agreed (V1)	
11.2	Actions Tracker Updated - Thank you to all from JS	
12	AOB	
12.1	BBA certification (CF) CF advised that the British Board of Agreement (BBA), which operates the Highway Authorities Product Approval Scheme (HAPAS), had its UKAS accreditation suspended in February 2026. As a result, BBA is currently unable	

	to issue new certified approvals for highway products. Existing certificates remain valid until their expiry date, whilst products with certificates that expired prior to the suspension may still be used, subject to departure from standard processes.	
12.2	Delisting for Demolition (CF) CF asked whether any members had experience of successfully delisting a listed structure. He explained that Belfast City Council is responsible for a Grade II listed reinforced concrete bridge dating from 1910. The structure was listed because of its unusual reinforcement system, which was imported from North America, rather than for its architectural appearance. CF noted that the bridge forms a critical part of Belfast's transport network and queried whether there may be circumstances where delisting could be considered to support future management of the asset. PS noted he has tried and failed previously OR noted a recent presentation on repairing concrete structure and can share Action: OR to share presentation on repairing concrete structures	OR
12.3	Question about Seepage through structure (JS) JS requested feedback from members on managing persistent utility-related water leakage affecting structures, noting an ongoing case involving treated water seepage through a buried masonry culvert that remains unresolved despite utility investigations and repair works. Action: JS and CW to catch up	CW
12.4	FOI (ND) ND reported that several authorities have received FOI requests relating to bridge inspection intervals and risk-based inspection regimes. He invited members to share experiences of responding to similar requests, particularly where information may be difficult to retrieve within the statutory timescales. No one from the group was able to establish where the request had originated from.	
13	Next Meeting	
13.1	CH offered Kier's office for future meeting	

Future Meetings/ Date of Next Meeting	
10 July 2025	ADEPT Engineering Board
16 July 2026	NCE Bridges Conference
16 September 2026	BOF
09 October 2025	ADEPT Engineering Board
Updated 29 October 2026	UKBB
25 November 2026	ADEPT NBG
27 January 2027	BOF