

**ADEPT ENGINEERING BOARD
 NATIONAL BRIDGES GROUP**

MEETING NOTES

Venue: Online Video Conference due to Covid 19 Pandemic

Date and Time: 14:00hrs on Tuesday 9 February 2021

Present:

- | | |
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| Kevin Dentith (Chairman) [KD] | Devon County Council |
| Stuart Molyneux (Vice Chairman)[SM] | Salford City Council |
| Andy Willison [AW] | City of York Council |
| Drew Strang [DS] | SCOTS |
| Colin Ferris [CF] | Dept for Infrastructure Northern Ireland |
| Colin Jenkins [CJ] | Warrington Borough Council |
| Julian Haines [JuH] | Wiltshire Council |
| Brian Hill [BH] | Hampshire County Council |
| Keith Harwood [KH] | Hertfordshire County Council |
| Andy Matthews [AM] | WSP |
| Chris Plant (CP) | Staffordshire County Council/Amey |
| Richard Waters [RiW] | Lincolnshire County Council |
| Alastair Swann [AS] | Newcastle City Council |
| Chris Wright [CW] | Herefordshire County Council |
| Abul Tarafder [AT] | Leicester City Council |
| Alan Mclean [AMc] | Surrey County Council |
| Philp Gray (PG) | TfL |
| Jim Hall (JiH) | Denbighshire |
| Clive Woodruff (CWo) | Essex County Council |

ITEM		ACTION
1.	APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS	
1.1	<p>Apologies for Absence Alistair Dore [Secretary] - Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Stuart Heald - Suffolk County Council James Salmon- Bedford Borough Council</p> <p>Dave McKeown - Environment Agency Colin Hall- Network Rail</p>	
2	MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 September 2020	
2.1	Accuracy - agreed	
2.2	<p>Actions/Matters Arising 2.11 Fluoropolymer paint system presentation slides circulated 3.1 Attendance at May meeting corrected 3.2 Dr Panici's scour presentation slides to be circulated 10.1 Abnormal loads - see 9.0 below</p>	AD

3.	SAFETY ITEM	
3.1	<p>AW noted two instances of people slipping on the steel plate over the movement joint at the end of footbridges, needs to be considered on existing and proposed bridges.</p> <p>KD has used checker plate in similar circumstances.</p> <p>KD had problem with timber treads on long walkway now replacing with FRP - job will cost £1.5 million.</p> <p>CWr had slippery bridge report where timber treads had non slip inserts and found the problem to be the person's footwear not the deck of the bridge.</p>	
4.	ADEPT ENGINEERING BOARD – relevant items from recent meeting	
4.1	No report this time.	
5.	UK BRIDGES BOARD	
5.1	No report, no meeting.	
6.	BRIDGE OWNERS FORUM (BOF)	
6.1	<p>KH to circulate notes with links to BOF website</p> <p>AW dissatisfied with accessibility of BOF information</p>	KH
6.2	KD explained that Cam Middleton has funding to update the website - two parts a public section and a members only section.	
6.3	<p>Is it necessary to have three organisations- UKBB, BOF, ADEPT?</p> <p>They serve 3 different functions-</p> <p>UKBB report to UKRLG</p> <p>BOF is more academically orientated and coordinates research.</p> <p>ADEPT represents local authorities.</p>	
6.4	<p>Update from Bill Harvey- recommends not pinning voussoirs back to the arch barrel - but strength of pins considered by most to be insignificant compared to the forces in the arch - Bill needs to explain. May be better to restrain the spandrel with through ties and pattress plates. KD to contact Bill Harvey.</p>	KD
7	NETWORK RAIL ISSUES/LIAISON	
7.1	SM had discussed two topics with Colin Hall of Network Rail: bridge strengthening and possessions.	
7.2	<p>A problem has arisen for TfL where Network Rail have allowed a bridge that was previously assessed at 40 tonnes to deteriorate to between 24 tonnes and 40 tonnes. Who is now responsible for bringing it back up to 40 tonnes? Strengthening of Railtrack Owned Highway Bridges March 1999 (copy to be circulated with minutes) places responsibility for increasing capacity from BE4 pass (24 tons) to 40 tonnes on Local Highways Authority.</p> <p>DS does not think this situation of deterioration since initial assessment is covered and will raise at UKBB</p>	DS

7.3	CP asked for similar question to be raised with CRT if they attend UKBB. Better to liaises with Andy Featherby (CRT technical) rather than Peter Walker (CRT financial) . CP to forward note to KD	CP	
7.4	David Castlo recently appointed to review operation of NR possessions and should be attending the access planning meetings. RiW noted NR should be sending out schedules of advanced disruptive possession dates to enable neighbouring authorities to work together more efficiently. This was done in 2018 for dates in 2019 but nothing has been seen since. Eastern Region are only allowing an 20% increase in the number of possessions as contingency for problems encountered		
7.5	CJ commented that he found NR more proactive with regards level crossing maintenance than bridge maintenance.		
7.6	Warning from AW that conditions in NR agreements could see LA being responsible for the cost of bridge raising if a line is electrified in the future. KD has a signed agreement with NR that there will be no electrification on a main line where Devon CC is building a new footbridge.		
7.7	Discussion of pigeon fouling and netting to NR bridges revealed different approaches across the UK. In England DS believes NR are responsible for the netting but in Scotland the local authority is asked to pay for removal and refitting around maintenance operations. It was suggested that the Environmental Protection Act Sect 79 could be used to force NR to pay if the local authority had cleaned up fouling beneath a NR bridge.		
7.8	CP has been instructed to remove netting due to the distress caused to birds that get caught up in or behind the netting. He will be using spikes instead.		
8. BRIDGE STRIKE PREVENTION GROUP (BSPG)			
8.1	No meetings for 15 months. Ironic given the letter from Peter Hendy being critical of ADEPT lack of attendance. PMN – KD spoke with current chair Mark Wheeler, he is being replaced and the new chair will start up meetings again		
9. ABNORMAL LOADS LIAISON GROUP			
9.1	SH not available - will give presentation at the September meeting of this group and invite Cascade to present. CWo reported that in Essex the regional abnormal loads meeting was coordinated and led by the police.	SH	
10 EUROCODES - Update			
10.1	Report by AM BS8779 The assessment of Masonry Parapets The drafting panel is continuing to work on the document; this is being lead by Peter Clapham. A version is due to be issued August this year for public comment.		

10.2	<p>PD6694-1:2020 Recommendations for the design of Structures subject to traffic loading. This document has been removed from Highways England's Tas as there are a number of typo's in the recent version. This is an important document as it gives guidance to on how to calculate the effects of surcharge on bridge abutments and retaining walls. A competent designer will know where the errors are and the code can continue to be used. It's not known when BSI will issue the corrected version.</p>	
	Discussion Items	
11.	BICS ALTERNATIVE SCHEMES	
11.1	<p>KD asked the group to support three alternative methods of establishing competence alongside the BICS Scheme administered by LANTRA.</p>	
11.2	<p>SCOTS - Uses the BD63 list of competencies excluding those relating to maintenance and testing. Developed by the SCOTS asset management group. Its has a training manual and powerpoint modules. First stage assessment uses a series of photographs of defects. Candidates have to identify the severity and extents correctly - Pass mark is 60% . Second stage is an interview with DS and assessment is made against knowledge, experience and competence levels. The candidate is then given a grading of inspector or senior inspector Vote taken to gauge support - Supported by ADEPT NBG</p>	
11.3	<p>CSS Wales - The system developed in Wales is based on a simplified LANTRA model and the full LANTRA BICS qualification is still accepted. Provides for 2 levels of qualification inspector and senior inspector. There are two parts a theory and practical. In the theory test a mark is given against each competence and for the practical 3 inspections are observed. There is also an assessment interview undertaken by a person from a neighbouring authority. Inspectors will need reaccreditation every five years. Vote taken to gauge support - Supported by ADEPT NBG</p>	
11.4	<p>Devon - The Devon system is a written examination based on the competencies in BD63. The expectations for inspector and senior inspector differ and will demonstrate the different levels of understanding. It is a closed book examination and takes around 9 hours to complete each question is given a mark. The answers are reviewed by a Principal Engineer and certification is given by the Chief Engineer. Candidates need a reference from their manager and to present inspections on three different types of bridges. The aim is to identify any shortcomings in the candidates knowledge and to work on those. Eight have passed to date. Vote taken to gauge support - Supported by ADEPT NBG</p>	
11.5	<p>All alternatives to be made available for use by local authorities throughout UK.</p>	DS/JH/KD
12	CANAL AND RIVER TRUST	
12.1	<p>Report from KH. Hannah Bartram (ADEPT COO) setting up meeting with CRT CEO. ADEPT case is supported by Mark Kemp (Director at Hertfordshire CC). Currently have agreed to pay reasonable costs of CRT</p>	

12.2	<p>but CRT seem unable to provide the information to establish these costs. It is believed that CRT have nearly worked out an hourly rate.</p> <p>Members experience is that there are no problems in dealing with CRT engineering issues. It's the cost that's an issue. Surrey are paying but consider it too much. Hertfordshire are pressing ahead with work without paying the fees demanded but following safe working practice agreed with engineers.</p>	
13	HE /LA BOUNDARY GUIDANCE	
	Final draft is with HE and will be published soon, document in circulation is latest and can be referred to	
14	SUICIDE PREVENTION	
14.1	<p>CP was invited to a meeting led by the public health suicide prevention commissioning officer in Staffordshire. There were around 20 people at the meeting from the care sector, highways and police. Attempted suicides at high profile locations are considered generally to be a cry for help, those at quiet locations are the ones who are serious about taking their own life. Discussed the technical problems of providing a cage or higher parapets which can make rescue more difficult.</p>	
14.2	<p>CWo Commented that Network Rail had been proactive Samaritan signs were accepted but no others</p>	
14.3	<p>KD has wide experience of problems on estuary crossings in Devon. In 2015 Network Rail and Highways England both saw engineering solutions as a last resort, but attitudes are changing. Signs, flowers and other tributes need to be removed as they can attract attention. Need to explain to families why this has been done. 75% of survivors are known to regret their action.</p>	
14.4	<p>KD has raised parapet height to 1.8 M but person intent on suicide parked car on verge and used car to climb over. Devon Fire and Rescue service needed to cut away lower parapet rail to effect rescue. Considering raising still further by using extended inclined posts and strained wires.</p>	
14.5	<p>RW shared slides of a location where 8 suicides had taken place. By increasing the height with a secondary system mounted on the parapet plinth he had reduced this to 0. This system is within the working width of the vehicle parapet and may affect its performance, but it is a balance of risks.</p>	
14.6	<p>CF reported problems of responsibility for suicide in Belfast and showed illustrations of very high solid barriers that some were proposing for bridges. The discussion is continuing. Should we be reactive to problems or proactive and change the standards?</p>	
14.7	<p>Reference documents to be shared: Public Health England Document Highways England Document Any other solutions that work</p>	<p>KD DS ALL</p>
15	FUTURE FUNDING FOR HIGHWAYS	

15.1	Gary Sterrit from UKRLG Asset Management Board needs to be able to justify the funding case for highways within the next six months. This is likely to be based on the state of the nation report by Atkins and will be for a Treasury audience. UKRLG are looking for volunteers for a local authority the task and finish group. KH to send an email for sharing with the group. KD has already volunteered.	KH
15.2	Currently there is no dedicated funding for bridges in the LTP settlement but the indicative settlement is 14% of the overall funding allocated to authorities.	
16	RAC FOUNDATION SURVEY	
16.1	https://www.racfoundation.org/media-centre/small-fall-in-number-of-substandard-road-bridges	
16.2	The headline figure from the RAC indicates that there is a national £596 bn backlog of work to be done on bridges.	
16.3	KD Highlighted concerns that some authorities we're not doing general inspections at the two-yearly intervals and of 211 authorities only 33 we're doing stage one scour assessments and 15 had progressed to stage 2.	
16.4	KD to share more information after UKBB meeting	KD
17	COMMUTED SUMS	
17.1	AMc reported that ADEPT Engineering Group are rewriting the highways commuted sums guidance from 2009. The meeting agreed that it should also incorporate the guidance on commuted sums for bridges dated 2017.	AMc
18	AOB	
18.1	The chairman posed 3 questions: Is the NBG effective? Is it achieving? What should we be doing? Comments by email to KD please	ALL
19	FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS	
19.1	National Bridge Conference - May 2021 to be held virtually.	
20	DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETINGS	
20.1	Tuesday 18 th May 10.30am (note change of time from previous meetings, 2 x 2 hour sessions with half hour lunch break) Tuesday 14 th September 10.30am Meeting closed at 17:45 Hrs	KD