

ADEPT ENGINEERING BOARD

NATIONAL BRIDGES GROUP

MEETING NOTES

Venue: Hybrid – In-Person in London & Online

Date and Time: 10:00 on Wednesday 26th February 2025

Present:

Name	Present	Init.	Representing
Keith Harwood		KH	Chair
Helen Rowe	✓	HR	Secretary
Osian Richards	✓	OR	CSS Wales, Chair
Bob Humphreys		BH	CSS Wales
Caroline Haycock	✓	CH	East Mids
Abul Tarafder	✓	AT	East Mids, Chair
Clive Woodruff	✓	CWo	East, Chair
Callum Gillett	✓	CG	East, Sec
Colin Ferris	✓	CF	Infrastructure NI
Kevin McCarron		KM	Infrastructure NI
Aidan McCusker		AMcc	Isle of Man
Alex Holden		AH	Isle of Man
Stuart Molyneux		SM	North West, Chair
Colin Jenkins	✓	CJ	North West, Sec
Donald MacPherson	✓	DM	SCOTS, Chair
Maria Lucey		ML	SCOTS
Alan Mclean	✓	AMcl	South East, Chair
Scott Gregory	✓	SGr	South East, Sec
Rob Causton	✓	RC	South West, Chair
Emma Cockburn		EC	South West, Sec
Maureen Robson		MR	TfL
Sharan Gill		SGi	TfL
Chris Wright	✓	CWr	West Mids, Chair
Chris Plant	✓	CP	West Mids, Sec
Andrew Pierce	✓	AP	Yorks/Humber, Chair
Claire Richardson		CR	Yorks/Humber, Sec
Patrick Smith	✓	PS	North, Chair
Paul Tucker	✓	PT	
Guests			
David Peeling	✓	DP	TRL
Kieran Dodds	✓	KD	National Highways
Alastair Dore	✓	AD	National Highways - HRE
Richard Fish	✓	RF	Independent Consultant
John Bennetts	✓	JB	WSP
Tom Bartley	✓	TB	Mind Foundry
Alastair Soane	✓	AS	CROSS
Emma Shaw	✓	ES	CROSS

ITEM		ACTION
1.	Introductions	
2.	PRESENTATION: WMHI Update for DfT – David Peeling (TRL)	
2.1	Presentation summary – Slides appended for further information. Introduction to background of TRL work to update Well Managed Highway Infrastructure. Presentation followed by whiteboard session for meeting attendees to provide feedback.	
2.2	<p><u>Questions:</u></p> <p>CJ – Is there a possibility the deadline can be extended until the end of March to give chances for members in regions to contribute.</p> <p>DP – we have a deadline with DfT of 31st March. Don't want to compromise quality of work with a tight timescale but will ask DfT for a short extension. Will take into account as much feedback as possible.</p> <p>CJ – Can I send regional members a link to the whiteboard.</p> <p>DP – Helen has put a link in the chat we everyone is welcome to share with members.</p>	
3.	Liaison with Network Rail, Access Planning Group	
3.1	<p>CP update –Last meeting of access planning group discussed Network Rail invoicing. NR looking to change procedures with contact details to be shared. NR looking at levels of insurance being requested. Looking at lower levels for lower risk work. NR about to issue customer guidance booklet – CP to share when received.</p> <p>Acknowledged low headroom structures and charging inconsistent across regions, NR aware and seeking to address. NEST link circulated. All LA's should now have free access. Shows all inspections and examination reports. CP asked others for feedback on ease of use. Collaboration on stats and access is much more positive than previously.</p>	CP ALL
3.2	<p>CP – asked group how do NR contact us for access? Do you approve and do you charge for technical approval?</p> <p>NR – currently no way to have joint technical approval. NR/NH not keen. Joint TAA sign off would be desirable. Should charge as we charge external developers but currently don't.</p> <p>CP – will take back to access planning group.</p> <p>RC – need an agreement in early stage of works for LA to brief requirements and standards. Shared example where NR have not met LA requirements due to late involvement. Need visibility of forward programme.</p> <p>CP – similar experience shared, only involved when trying to book road space.</p> <p>AP – shared example of 2 year delay due to BAPA issues. Currently undertaking work with very limited impact on railway but BAPA £10-15m for £0.5m project which feels unreasonable.</p> <p>CWo – had joint sign off for a scheme in Colchester. BAPA is the main concern. Committing to full BAPA cost with no knowledge of when or if they will invoice for full amount which causes accounting issues. Shared example that NR expressed view if in their land, no need for technical approval.</p> <p>CWr – shared example in Herefordshire. Was able to require joint technical approval. Disconnect between NR designers / consultants and LA criteria. Repeated need for early engagement.</p>	CP

3.3	HR – would like CP to raise issue around invoicing, similar to the issue shared by CW. Need agreed approach. AM – experienced the same. High turnover of personnel makes it difficult to know who to contact. CP – please send examples to be raised at the group.	HR / AM
3.4	HR – Update on behalf of SM. New representative from NR replacing Colin Hall. Julian Steyden is part of UKBB and BOF. Met with Julian which was positive. Julian received invite to future meeting. Cost sharing protocol led by Fred Hartley has stalled whilst waiting for legal view. NEST/ACE discussed. CP – legal challenge is around us of MEXE on small span arches. Higher rating pushes liability onto LA away from CRT. Disputing use of MEXE for this. HR – CRT not part of the agreement. If being added, need to bring up to current standards. The issue with NR should not be extended to CRT.	
4.	Feedback and Liaison with other groups	
4.1	CSS Wales – OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on structural failures – document written. Going to bridges group on 6th March to be ratified. All authorities in Wales will be required to report, including geotechnical assets. Project looking at maintaining Heritage structure, no need to get permission to repair due to agreement. Trying to fast track and looking at training. 	
4.2	SCOTS – DM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abnormal Loads – getting lots of ghost movements clogging up system. BICS – changes gone down well. Need to review options. CS469 (scour management) and CS470 (management of sub standard) updates both noted. HR – to note, CS469 is the theme for the next meeting. 	
4.3	BOF and UKBB - HR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes to be circulated following meeting. 	
5.	Knowledge Sharing and Discussion	ALL
5.1	Asbestos Register – raised by HR, asked what policies for structures other LA have. Anything that may contain asbestos should have annual inspections. Asked if others have policies. CWo mentioned Essex did have a policy. OR suggested trunk road agency have a policy and register. CWr advised don't have a register but it is being built up for major works. Not found any asbestos in any recent bridge schemes. CF advised NI follow GG105, requires a strategy and asbestos management plans but unsure if in place. SG advised have asbestos register, last two jobs with removal of waterproofing have been found to contain asbestos. HR reminded statutory requirement. HR – do we want to come up with guidance as a national group to advise how this should be managed? CH – suggested integrating with Bridgestation. AM – this has come up before and a note produced.	
5.2	HR – request for anyone with knowledge of best practice to circulate. Commuted Sums – AM update. Survey coming shortly to be circulated to survey current approaches to commuted sums to inform next steps for working group. AM is chairing this group.	

<p>5.3</p>	<p>Devolution white paper – HR raised that white paper states that maintenance would resort to the authority. Concern that we are diluting knowledge and resource. Do we, as a group, want to submit a CROSS report or other feedback highlighting the risk of potential unitary movements?</p> <p>AM – Not sure how you would split something like this that really needs to be managed on a county wide basis.</p> <p>CWo – Very early days and uncertain as to what will happen but supported AM view that management needs to stay at county level.</p> <p>AM – Highlighted cases that have gone into unitary authorities before and the issues this has caused – now relying heavily on outsourcing.</p> <p>HR – rather than being passive and waiting, if we write as a national group we have shown we are proactive about it.</p> <p>CG – raised potential alternative solutions.</p> <p>CJ – asked about the first steps following devolution. Scheme lists are running ahead of devolution and a lot of these will be delivered through framework contracts which extend beyond the start of devolution. How this will be dealt with is uncertain.</p> <p>HR – need to ask for guidance. We have examples of why splitting out might not work which we can present.</p> <p>RC – Cornwall is a unitary delivered through CORMAC, working well. Looking at merging with a wider area in the south-west.</p> <p>5.4 Future ADEPT Roles – led by Helen. All agreed to raise objections. Nominations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair – Helen Rowe • Vice-Chair – Rob Causton • Secretary’s (role titles to be discussed) – Callum Gillett and Joanne Saunders. <p>No objections raised. Effective from this meeting.</p> <p>Note – CWo thanked Keith Harwood for his work as chair, HR echoed thanks. HR advised KH will be given gift at Bridges Conference for contributions to ADEPT.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Updates from National Highways and Historic Rail Estate</p> <p>6.1 Kieran Dodds – National Highways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS469 – still understanding implications of CS469. Appears onerous and need to understand costs and challenges. • Asbestos – in the same situation as Local Authorities. • Closing RIS2, interim settlement next year needs re-baselining of plans. RIS3 pushed to 2026/7. • Abnormal loads – big impact from notification changes. Ability to process compromised due to volume. Waiting for guidance to be reversed – back to 30 day period. • Suggested standard agenda items for a NH update. <p>6.2 Alastair Dore – HRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim settlement is less than expected which has created some challenges. • Stakeholder Advisory Forum – 8 structures went through November. • Need to contact local authorities where BE4 pass and CS454 fail. Still requires contact details from all the regions. 	<p>CG / JS</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CG asked whether you are falling CS470 procedures for imposing measures on LA structures. AD confirmed yes and are obtaining approval from the asset owner. 	
7. 7.1 7.2	<p>PRESENTATION: Digital Custodianship and the potential for AI in bridge asset management by John Bennetts and Tom Bartley</p> <p>Presentation summary – Slides appended for further information. Highlighted model / concept for digital understanding of assets. Integrating machine learning and data management into asset management practices.</p> <p><u>Questions:</u></p> <p>CG – with your model, who does the liability / risk sit with? Is it still the asset manager.</p> <p>JB – this is not about replacing people. Its about improving informed decision making. A framework for managing data effectively.</p> <p>TB – also enables effective prioritisation across the stock.</p> <p>RC – are you working with data management systems to obtain data? Currently the local authorities still hold the data? Secondary question on funding.</p> <p>TB – acknowledged a solution needs to be transparent and data is still usable.</p> <p>JB – data always sits with clients, this model is about data being shared and used to train models, but ownership of data stays with asset owner. This technology can help the case for funding.</p> <p>RC – majority of structures are small scale, need to use funding in the most efficient way.</p> <p>HR – point about data transfer and timescales. Data continuity across frameworks. It would only be attractive if the system is accessible in the long term and usable by the local authority. Would also like to see the applicability to smaller structures with lower budgets where data is more incomplete. In general, support the idea, but only as good as the quality of inspections. Need consistent and good quality inspections for the system to be effective.</p> <p>AM – have you run any models with an asset owner?</p> <p>TB – have undertaken some trials and the recent project has looked at the Network Rail scoring system. We are recognising the different needs of different asset owners.</p>	
8. 8.1 8.2	<p>PRESENTATION: Bridge Collapses by Richard Fish</p> <p>Presentation summary – Slides appended for further information. Highlighted increasing risk facing networks with an emphasis on responsibility. Summarised what we can learn from recent and not so recent bridge failures. Promoted Bridge Failures and Lessons Learnt book. Now available at: https://bookstore.emerald.com/bridge-failures-and-lessons-learnt-pb-9781836085591.html</p> <p><u>Questions:</u></p> <p>RC – asked about site supervision. Onus is on the contractor to prove quality. Are you aware of quality issues arising.</p> <p>RF – self certification and decreased supervision is an increasing risk although not aware of failures as a direct result. But this is an extra level of insurance.</p>	
9.	PRESENTATION: CROSS by Alastair Soane and Emma Shaw	

9.1	<p>Presentation summary – summarised partnership between CROSS, BOF, UKBB, the reporting system and issues request for notifications of precursors.</p> <p>www.cross-safety.org/uk/submit-a-report-uk</p>	
9.2	<p>AS summarised Safety Alert on Bridge Strikes by Large Vessels.</p> <p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>CG – temporary works is a higher risk activity but most of this focuses on permanent works. Are we managing temporary works and is this covered by CROSS.</p> <p>RF – it is a risky item and the temporary works forum has been set up to manage this.</p> <p>AS – CROSS are working in partnership with temporary works forum and do cover.</p>	
10.	Upcoming conferences and events	
10.1	Bridges 2025 12-13 March 2025, Coventry	
10.2	Bridges Scotland 2024 27-28 November	
10.3	NCE Bridges in July, CBDG in June	
11.	Minutes of last meeting – 9th October 2024	
11.1	Minutes agreed.	
11.2	Actions – HR ran through completed actions and reminded those outstanding.	
12.	AOB	
12.1	<p>CJ asked for update on BICS. HR advised new scheme is launched, encouragement for inspectors to sign up. Positive feedback and take-up. CG asked if there are any plans to mandate. HR advised no as NH have taken an alternative approach and developed their own scheme. CG – what about authorities that don't have any scheme, do we have a duty to intervene. HR – no, the ADEPT position is you should have a scheme but discretionary, not mandatory. CJ – NW have own bridge scheme but open to amalgamating schemes across region. No interest in working with LANTRA due to fees.</p>	
13.	Future Meetings/ Date of Next Meeting	
13.1	<p>a. Next ADEPT NBG meeting 2nd July 2025</p> <p>b. Next UKBB meeting 10th July 2025</p> <p>c. Next BOF meeting 3rd June 2025</p>	