

ADEPT ENGINEERING BOARD

NATIONAL BRIDGES GROUP

MEETING NOTES

Venue: Online

Date and Time: 10:00 on Wednesday 9th July 2025

Present:

Name	Present	Init.	Representing
Helen Rowe	✓	HR	Chair
Joanne Saunders	✓	JS	Secretary
Rob Causton	✓	RC	Vice Chair, South West, Chair
Callum Gillett		CG	Vice Secretary, East Secretary
Keith Harwood	✓	KH	Independent, Ex Chair
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
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
Maria Lucey	✓	ML	SCOTS
Alan Mclean	✓	AMcl	South East, Chair
Scott Gregory	✓	SGr	South East, Sec
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			
Hamish Harvey	✓	HH	Bill Harvey Associates & Obvis
Kieran Dodds	✓	KD	National Highways
Alistair Dore	✓	AD	National Highways - HRE
Sally Waterfall	✓	SW	Cascade Software
Clare Waterfall	✓	CWa	Cascade Software
Edward Rees	✓	ER	

ITEM		ACTION
1.	Introductions	
2.	<p>PRESENTATION: Cascade Software – Abnormal Loads Management</p> <p>Presentation summary – Slides appended for further information. Introduction to Cascade Software and capability. CW confirmed retaining walls are included as a route restriction but not checked for capacity for each abnormal load.</p>	
3.	<p>PRESENTATION: Masonry Arches – Diagnostic Process</p> <p>Presentation summary – Slides appended for further information.</p>	
4.	<p>Liaison with Network Rail, Access Planning Group</p>	
4.1	<p>CP update provided an overview of the Access Planning Group, part of the UK Bridges Board. The group includes representatives from Highways England, ADEPT, CRT, Network Rail, and Transport for London, working collaboratively to support each other in accessing each other's networks. Chris mentioned that he chairs the group on behalf of ADEPT. The last meeting was held on April 28th, and he highlighted the importance of collaboration among these organisations to facilitate network access. Specific updates:</p>	
4.2	<p>Use of BAPAs (Basic Asset Protection Agreements):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency in the cost of BAPAs for low headroom structures across different regions. Some regions charge for BAPAs, while others do not. • David Castillo from Network Rail is addressing this issue to standardize the cost and ideally make BAPAs for low headroom structures cost-free. 	
4.3	<p>Insurance Levels for BAPAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance levels required for BAPAs vary significantly depending on the scope of work, with higher coverage for major projects and lower for minor works. • Network Rail is concerned about smaller companies without experience accessing the network, influencing their stance on insurance levels. • CP has requested a table of insurance levels, but Network Rail did not share it. Instead, regional heads of Aspro have significant influence over the insurance requirements. 	
4.4	<p>Access to NEST Database:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP emphasised the importance of having access to the NEST database, which holds Network Rail's inspection and assessment information. • This access allows local authorities to view Network Rail's inspections of their assets, facilitating better coordination and planning. 	
4.5	<p>Collaboration and Coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP highlighted the need for better collaboration and coordination between Network Rail's Aspro teams and asset teams. • CP shared an example from Staffordshire where coordination between Network Rail and local authorities led to shared blockades and cost savings. 	
4.6	<p>Regional Meetings:</p>	

<p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p> <p>4.9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP mentioned the importance of inviting Network Rail to regional meetings to discuss ongoing and future projects. CP noted that Network Rail has been proactive in attending meetings and providing presentations on case studies and their systems. <p>Challenges with Multiple Network Rail Regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP discussed the challenges of dealing with multiple Network Rail regions, each with its own head of Aspro, leading to inconsistencies and coordination difficulties. CP emphasised the need for better alignment and communication between different regions and teams. <p>Future Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CP mentioned ongoing discussions with Network Rail to streamline processes, such as creating a single BAPPA for all inspections and works for the year, to improve efficiency and reduce administrative burdens. <p>CP advised that next meeting is on the 15th October. HR asked CP to chase all actions assigned to David on the actions tracker.</p>	<p>Region Chairs</p> <p>CP</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>Feedback and Liaison with other groups</p> <p>CSS Wales – OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSS Wales Meeting – OR advised there hasn't been a recent meeting since the last month, so there are no significant updates from the group. Website for Reporting Structural Failures - The website for reporting structural failures is expected to be up and running imminently. It was supposed to be ready last week but was delayed. The goal is to have it operational before winter to start recording structural failures <p>SCOTS – ML</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scour Assessment Spreadsheet - ML raised a question about the current position of the scour assessment spreadsheet being developed by National Highways. There is increased interest and pressure within their group for better understanding and conducting scour assessments. Authorities in the northern region have always been required to undertake scour assessments, but now there is an increased requirement for authorities further south due to changing rainfall patterns. <p>BOF and UKBB - HR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes from UKBB to be circulated following meeting. BOF Leadership - Cam has stepped away due to illness. Sue Threader will host the next meeting Welsh Government Presentation - Welsh Government presented on how they manage their structures, highlighting similarities and differences with local authorities. They use asset value linked to BCI scores to differentiate the impact of repairs on the network. Humber Bridge Presentation - Humber Bridge is working on a vulnerable person's fence, aiming for a wire rope system. The 	

<p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p>	<p>fence is designed to deter and slow down individuals rather than completely prevent climbing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rose Hips Research Project - David Hester presented on linking bridge inspections to population-based structural health monitoring. The project seeks more data points for testing and acknowledged Devon County Council's assistance. • HS2 Parapets and Crash Testing - HS2 discussed their design and crash testing of parapets. They struggled to find a compliant transition from concrete parapet to metal restraint systems. • MCHW Updates - National Highways provided updates on the MCHW with no new information for the group. <p>No updates provided to HR to update for HRESAF, BSPG</p> <p>Abnormal loads - DVSA to issue guidance to haulage companies regarding 'Stranded HGVs'. When being rescued could be classed as an Abload, therefore 'move to a position of safety' then apply to move.</p>	
<p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p>6. Updates from Working Groups</p> <p>Commuted sums working group – AM updated that there is nothing to report at the moment but preparing a questionnaire which will be circulated for all to complete.</p> <p>CIRIA Bridge Detailing – AM provided an update on the 2001 CIRIA Bridge Detailing Guide being reviewed and updated. The main guide will be in landscape format for better electronic viewing. The updated guide will apply to both the UK and Ireland, with references to DMRB and Irish standards. Current launch date is Jan 2027.</p> <p>CSS/Network Rail Cost sharing protocol – SM provided email updated. Review is being led by Fred Hartley of CRT. Discussion around BE3/4 liabilities and assessment technical processes. KH confirmed this has been raised following previous discussion in the group. Request has been forwarded to Fred Hartley for comment. KH noted that the remit has expanded and all agreed it is becoming a DfT issue. OR offered to join the working group. KH to invite OR to any meetings.</p> <p>PRoW – No update.</p>	<p>SM</p>
<p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>7. Knowledge Sharing and Discussion</p> <p>Moonshot Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR summarised NH conference attended recently. The conference focused on the R&D approach to non-destructive testing (NDT) and emerging technologies. Key takeaway: There is no single solution; the appropriate NDT method must be chosen based on the specific structure and the information needed. Promising developments were noted in Muon tomography and acoustic emission, particularly for post-tensioned (PT) structures and half joints. Several local authorities are now engaging with G scan for their networks, indicating practical interest in these technologies. <p>Future Meeting Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR suggested the meetings will start having specific themes to ensure the topics are relevant and engaging for participants. Polls will be sent out to gather input on what themes participants are interested in. The goal is to have speakers 	

<p>7.3</p>	<p>and presentations that align with these themes, making the meetings more focused and beneficial.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDT (Non-Destructive Testing) is one of the proposed themes. • Participants are encouraged to suggest any topics they would like to see covered in future meetings. • Topics of interest discussed during meeting included management of retaining walls and managing large highway assets. • HR asked all to review the revised terms of reference. <p>RAC Survey – HR summarised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RAC Foundation raised concerns about the reliability of the data received from the survey. • The purpose of the survey is to gather consistent data on local authority structures and their conditions. • The survey has been revised to clarify questions and focus on key themes concerning local authority bridge owners. • The revised survey aims to be more straightforward and ensure consistent data collection • RC added that the findings should benefit the ADEPT NBG to drive future actions. • OR suggested asking about defect priority (perhaps rather than BCI). 	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>8. 8.1</p>	<p>Updates from National Highways and Historic Rail Estate</p> <p>Kieran Dodds – National Highways</p> <p>MCHW Rewrite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rewrite of the Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works (MCHW) is expected to be published by the end of September or early October. <p>CS469 Management of Scour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Highways is finding the CS469 standard onerous, particularly for Type 2 structures in floodplains. They are working on refining the guidance to make it more practical and affordable. <p>Fatigue Prone Structures Standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new standard for fatigue prone structures is being developed with the Welding Institute. Initial application of the draft standard indicated that it was too broad, capturing all metal structures, including new ones. • National Highways is pushing back to refine the standard to focus on the most critical structures. <p>Collaboration with Local Authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Highways is committed to improving collaboration with local authorities, sharing expertise, and supporting each other in managing infrastructure. • Peter Hill from SES is actively engaging with the Department for Transport (DfT) to highlight the needs of local authorities alongside National Highways' needs. <p>Risk Prioritisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Highways is working on improving their risk prioritization process, including the use of Copperleaf for needs prioritisation. 	

8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They aim to incorporate economic impact and network criticality into their risk assessment models. <p>Alistair Dore – HRE</p> <p>Budget Cuts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Railways Estate (HRE) has experienced significant budget cuts, reducing their budget from £33 million last year to half that amount this year. • This has impacted their ability to award new projects, focusing only on emergencies and essential repairs. <p>Bridge Strikes and Repairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRE has been dealing with several bridge strikes recently, including a significant one in Oxfordshire where a parapet was removed. They managed to repair it within two weeks. <p>Major Works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing major works include Riddings Viaduct on the Scots-English border and Millersdale Viaduct in Derbyshire. • They have completed infilling on Station Road in South Fleet. <p>SAF Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another structure in central London has gone through the SAF process and is set to be infilled due to BE4 and BD21 failure problems. <p>Data Sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD plans to send out a spreadsheet with limited information on HRE bridges to local authorities to improve communication and clarity on bridge ownership and responsibilities. • AD requests contact details for local authority bridge engineers to facilitate discussions on liability and maintenance responsibilities for bridges that pass BE4 but fail BD21 assessment. 	ALL
<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p>	<p>Upcoming conferences and events</p> <p>UKBB tomorrow 10th July</p> <p>Bridges Scotland 2025 27th -28th November</p> <p>NCE Bridges next week.</p>	
<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>Minutes of last meeting – 26.02.2025</p> <p>Minutes agreed.</p> <p>Actions – JS/CG to contact individuals on outstanding actions.</p>	JS/CG
<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p> <p>11.2</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>CF asked about public safety risk assessments. CIRIA C768 Section 8 is for people using area around culverts. Question is do LA need to be completing these? Legal advice was to be consistent so...do you carry out public safety risk assessments for all bridges as it appears the risk posed highlighted is long culverts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussion concluded we should focus on hotspots only. <p>Parapet fixings and CIHT document. HR asked for feedback. KH advised that Nicola Head and Hazel McDonald have already given feedback</p>	
<p>12.</p> <p>12.1</p>	<p>Future Meetings/ Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>a. Next ADEPT NBG meeting 8th October 2025 (Online)</p> <p>b. Next UKBB meeting 10th July 2025, 25th September 2025</p>	

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	c. Next BOF meeting 12 th November 2025	
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