

# **ROADS**

UK ROADS BOARD

Matthew Lugg  
Chair of UK Roads Board  
Department of Highways Transportation and  
Waste Management,  
Leicestershire County Council  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicester LE3 8RJ

Tel: 0116 265 7000  
Mob: 07810 057520  
e-mail: mlugg@leics.gov.uk

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Dear Environment Director/Head of Highway Services

### ***Setting up a new UK Roads Board Advisory Group***

The Department for Transport has awarded a new Pavement Condition Information Systems support contract to TRL/Atkins, providing support for UKPMS and SCANNER and other systems.

The UK Roads Board has reviewed its sub group structure and has formed a new sub group called the Pavement Condition Management Group (PCMG), replacing the former UKPMS steering group and the SCANNER project management group. The new PCMG will be the project steering group for the support contract, ensuring that both UKPMS and SCANNER keep up to date with the needs of local authorities and are better linked to asset management than in the past.

The UK Roads Board has also decided to set up a new advisory Group to be called the Roads Board Advisory Group (RBAG), rather like the SCANNER Implementation Advisory Group (IAG). However, unlike the SCANNER IAG, the new RBAG will have a much broader remit to support all the UK Roads Boards sub groups and act as a sounding board for developments and ideas. The new structure of the UK Roads Board is attached for information at ANNEX A.

The terms of reference of RBAG are being developed and work is ongoing as to the optimum method of using RBAG, however it is envisaged that it will meet about 3 times a year and there will be both attending members and corresponding members.


I am therefore writing to ask for your help in nominating people who can help us make a real difference to the use of transport asset management in local highway authorities, through their knowledge and understanding, and their commitment and dedication. Ideally, the UK Roads Board would like two "attending" representatives from each English region, so that the group reflects both urban and rural experience, and represents both unitary authorities and counties. There is no limit to the number of "corresponding" members.

Those who accept nomination as "attending" members will be expected to commit themselves to attend meetings in person, regularly.

The first meeting will be held early in 2009, probably on 6<sup>th</sup> February.

TRL and Atkins will provide technical and administrative support, and their project manager, Barry Cleave, will be collating replies at TRL. Please would you let him have your nominations, as soon as possible, and in any case by 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Lugg', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Lugg

Chair

Please reply to:

Barry Cleave  
Head of Asset Management  
TRL Limited  
Crowthorne House  
Nine Mile Ride  
Wokingham  
Berkshire  
RG40 3GA  
bcleave@trl.co.uk

## Supporting Papers

### *Pavement Condition Information Systems*

## **Setting up the UK Roads Board Advisory Group**

### **Condition information for asset management**

Information about the condition of the highway asset is an increasingly important element in the local highway authority engineer's planning of how they will manage that asset. At an aggregate level, such information is also of value to national governments in strategic planning and resource allocation. It is vital that engineers have the right tools to enable them to gather and hold the data that they will use to make informed decisions at both the tactical and strategic level.

Pavement information and decision support systems exist to help local authorities deliver their transport objectives, as set out in their Local Transport Plans and Transport Asset Management Plans, as well as their statutory duties as highway authorities. These in turn sit within a national policy framework. Over the next few years, significant changes can be expected in both local government organisation and transport policy. However, local authorities will be asked to continue delivering throughout such change and beyond.

It is important therefore, that local authorities and others in the industry help to identify at an early stage the way in which such systems will be affected by policy changes. This will give users and developers the certainty that they need, and guide sound system development. However, the road maintenance community needs to be aware that a core element of DfT policy is that local authorities should also pursue their own policies, as appropriate to local circumstances.

### **UKPMS**

Information to support decision making on local authority carriageways and footways has long been processed by pavement management systems (PMS). The UK Pavement Management System specification was intended to provide a standard core for such systems and local authorities in England were required to use a UKPMS accredited system to report their Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI). In future BVPI will be replaced by a set of Local Area Agreement National Indicators (LAANI), which includes indicators for the condition of principal road carriageways and of other classified road carriageways, but not unclassified road carriageways or footways.

However, most UKPMS accredited systems provide functionality beyond the core specification which in some cases "work around" it. A strategic review of UKPMS was carried out by the Halcrow Group, which recommended that a fundamentally revised UKPMS be adopted as the prescribed core for PMS in the UK. A follow up evaluation by Dr Mike Ebert established that development of this revised system could not be delivered purely through commercial channels, and that a degree of central funding and direction would continue to be required. However, the future direction does not lie solely with central government and he noted that local authorities should continue to take responsibility for ensuring their own needs are articulated and funded appropriately.

## Survey data

Data about carriageway condition can be derived from a number of sources. For LAANI reporting, local authorities in England are required to undertake SCANNER automated condition surveys on their classified roads. A team led by TRL has recently completed research on how such surveys might be possible on unclassified roads. Data from visual surveys, skid resistance surveys, structural surveys and other sources such as ground penetrating radar can also be used to support decision making.

The initial development phase of SCANNER is now complete, but there is a continuing need to develop and promote its use by local authorities. Where appropriate, this may include promoting its use on unclassified roads.

## Supporting UKPMS and SCANNER

The Department for Transport has awarded a new contract to TRL Limited and Atkins "Support for Local Authority Pavement Information Systems", sometimes referred to as the UKPMS/SCANNER support contract.

The new contract is described in more detail in Newsletter 1 – September 2008, copies are available from the news section of the UKPMS website at [www.ukpms.com](http://www.ukpms.com) (if you are not already on the mailing list for these newsletters and wish to be added please write to [newsletter@ukpms.com](mailto:newsletter@ukpms.com)).

The Department for Transport has stated the main objective of this new contract as being: **"...to support local highway authorities in their use of information technology to deliver their road service."**

Following the award of contract, the UK Roads Board held a strategic workshop in Leicestershire on 29<sup>th</sup> September. This was arranged by Chris Capps, attended by members of the UK Roads Board and invited senior local authority representatives, and facilitated by TRL and Atkins, to consider:

1. What sort of group or groups are needed to guide the new UKPMS and SCANNER support contract (leadership),
2. How they should report to the UK Roads Board and the DfT (governance),
3. How they should relate to or link with other groups (liaison),
4. the wider strategic issues, to think logically about where UKPMS and SCANNER are now, and where they should be going in future (strategic direction and vision).

The UK Roads Board considered the recommendations from the workshop on 21<sup>st</sup> October, and concluded that it should set up two new groups:

A Pavement Condition Management Group which, among other tasks, would be responsible for steering the new contract, and

A UK Roads Board Advisory Group to advise the Roads Board on the issues that matter to local highway authorities and practical implementation of recommendations from the UK Roads Board and its working groups.

## **Pavement Condition Management Group**

The Pavement Condition Management Group met for the first time on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, with representatives from English local authorities, Scotland and Northern Ireland, including the chairs of the Asset Management Group (Lester Willmington) and the Footway and Cycle track Management Group (Kevin Fuller), and helped to determine the arrangements for the Roads Board Advisory Group. The relationship between the new PCMG and the UK Roads Board's other continuing groups is illustrated in Annex A.

## **Roads Board Advisory Group**

The Group (RBAG) will advise the UK Roads Board on the practical implementation of the Roads Board's vision in the context of the UK Roads Board's wider remit, including considering and advising on issues raised by the technical groups.

The Group will contribute to the Roads Board's business plan and agenda, advising on the issues and topics which concern local authorities and their highway and asset management engineers.

The Group will include representatives of local highway authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and representatives of local authority service providers, including survey companies and system developers. (A suggested representation of attending members on the Advisory Group is at Annex B)

In view of the number of local authorities and local authority service providers "corresponding" membership will be encouraged, as well as "attending" membership. Corresponding members will receive agendas and meeting papers and may make written representations to meetings. There is no limit to the number of corresponding members, nor of the types of organisation they may represent.

Both attending and corresponding members will have a role representing their nations or regions and spreading understanding about the potential capabilities of pavement information systems in their authorities, regions and nations.

At the first meeting of the RBAG, each of the groups will present their forward work programmes, so that members know what will be coming up and a detailed work plan can be developed following the first meeting.

In order to dovetail with UK Roads Board meetings, it is likely that RBAG meetings will be held in January, May and September each year. If there is little or no substantive business for a particular meeting, it will either be held "by correspondence", or cancelled.

**Annex A – UK Roads Board schematic arrangement of groups**

