

## Notes of the meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Highways On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March in Dining Room B of the House of Commons

### Present:

Sir Christopher Chope OBE MP	Chairman
Viscount Jan Simon	Vice Chairman
Lord Ivon Brabazon	
Baroness Lucy Neville-Rolfe DBE CMG	
Sir Peter Bottomley MP	
Ruth Cadbury MP	

Richard Hayes	IHE
Jonathan Pearson	IHE
Tony Kirby	IHE
David Giles	Eurobitume UK
Rick Green	Hanson/Chairman AIA
Malcolm Simms	MPA/AIA
Samantha Stagg	James Reed PR/AIA
Clive Hall	Hereford CC
Simon van der Byl	MPA/Secretary to APPG(H)

### Introduction

The Chairman introduced Clive Hall, who was then asked to give his presentation straight away, so that Ruth Cadbury MP, who had to leave early, could hear what he had to say. The presentation is attached as an annex to these notes and was followed by an extended question and answer session.

### Q&A

The following key points were raised:

- The factoring in of the needs of cyclists and pedestrians early saves costs later, particularly in regard to the state of the road surfaces, where pothole damage can cause serious injury and compromise safety.
- The seemingly indefinite time taken to repair roads creates delays and has an effect on productivity, apart from other issues such as frustration.
- In the context of productivity, the question was raised about whether the industry could propose ways in which road conditions could be enhanced to improve productivity and save road maintenance money in the long term.
- The apparent success of the Isle of Wight PFI maintenance contract was cited as an example of how the maintenance aspect could be improved.
- There was much discussion about whether the local authority funding system was working properly, or was hindering the allocation of the "right" money to the right projects at the right time.
- The question of whether "safety" also included air quality, when the decisions about priority allocations were concerned.
- In terms of the presentation and the proposal for the Major Road Network management arrangements espoused by Hereford and its neighbours in the Midland Service Improvement Group, the question was raised about what might happen, if one of the signatories reneged on its contract obligations.

- Emphasis was laid upon the need for all journeys to start with a local road or pavement of some sort: this fact of life was well understood by local voters and the state of local roads was a key factor in local government.
- The question was raised about where future funding would originate, if things like road fund licensing and fuel duties declined with the increase of low/zero fossil fuel vehicles. In the case of the MRN, would that funding have to be “new” money?
- The point was made that roads were key assets and had to be managed accordingly: “Asset Management” is now being embraced for that reason and, hopefully, would lead to proper targets being set and appropriately funded.
- There was discussion about whether there should be more flexibility within LA budgets between capital and revenue spending.
- Comment was made about there being plenty of good practice in evidence: the key seemed to be how we link productivity with things like congestion and act accordingly.
- Much reference was made to the huge backlog in maintenance at the local level and questions about how this could be improved.

### **Conclusion**

The Chairman thanked Clive for his presentation and for his comprehensive answers to the barrage of questions. He noted that the concept of the MRN was being discussed with Roads Minister, Jesse Norman MP, and proposed that he should try to get the Minister to attend the next meeting of the Group. The date of that meeting will then be set by the Minister’s availability in the first instance.

Simon van der Byl  
Secretary, APPG Highways  
8 March 2018