

Newsletter 9 May 2009

PCIS – HAMFIG liaison

A large part of the PCIS support contract involves liaison and cooperation with other groups and bodies interested in Asset management. One such body is HAMFIG [**H**ighways **A**sset **M**anagement **F**inancial **I**nformation **G**roup]. This is a National Group concerned with the financial aspect of highways asset management in England, Scotland and Wales. The HAMFIG website is hosted by Leicestershire County Council (<http://www.leics.gov.uk/amp>). We asked the chairman of HAMFIG, Robert Biggs of Derbyshire County Council to write a few words for us outlining its aims and activities.

We are pleased to present Robert's contribution here. It is an informative piece which sets out the goals and activities of HAMFIG which, as you can see, are closely aligned with those of the PCIS contract. We look forward to liaising closely with Robert and his HAMFIG colleagues throughout the duration of the PCIS contract.

HAMFIG – Chairman Robert Biggs, Derbyshire

'Following a number of national initiatives the CSS/TAG Highways Asset Management Group asked two groups – the Midlands Service Improvement Group and the South Eastern Regional Group who were both promoting methodologies relating to Highways Asset Valuation – to get together to see if there was a possibility of prompting guidance relating to highways asset valuation on a more national basis.

From this initiative HAMFIG [Highways Asset Management Financial Information Group] was born. However from its inception the MSIG and SE Groups were joined by practitioners from Wales, Scotland and other English Authorities and supported by the DfT and CIPFA. From early meetings representatives have also been co-opted from the Bridges and Structures and Street Lighting interest groups.

Discussion held in 2007 between CSS, TAG, DfT and HM Treasury led to an approach to CIPFA concerning the accountancy rules relating to Highways Asset Valuation. CIPFA's resulting report "Local Authority Transport Infrastructure Assets: Review of Accounting, Management and Finance Mechanisms" was published in June 2008. It subsequently received a formal government response via the Chief Secretary of State to the Treasury, Yvette Copper, on the 26th January 2009. Government's response is extremely positive in raising the profile for highways asset management by local highway authorities.

Pavement Condition Information Systems

(Including support for UKPMS, Visual Surveys & SCANNER)



A year earlier government had announced a special fund for highway authorities in England, which subsequently amounted to £32millions aimed at promoting Highways Asset Management. Nearly all of the English Local Highway Authorities have submitted a bid for Part 1 funding with over 50% also bidding for the Part 2 funding. DfT have now allocated both the Part 1 and Part 2 funds which it is expected will be of considerable help in raising the profile of highways asset management in England.

HAMFIG has over a period of time become the group providing technical information on the CIPFA project to redefine the Financial SORP's to develop the Transport Infrastructure Assets Code within which the Highways Assets will be incorporated.

Recently HAMFIG has held a number of seminars and workshops nationally in order to brief authorities on progress and also to raise the profile of the financial aspects. More seminars are planned. These seminars have also been used to establish consultation pipelines with Regional Groups and/or local highways authorities.

Government is encouraging a very tight timetable to bring the technical and financial information together. With current proposals authorities will need to establish their asset management procedures, if they have not already done so, and associated processes by the end of March 2010 to enable a "trial year" to be established for 2010/11. Should that prove successful the standard requirements will be introduced from 2011/12 in accordance with the "Whole of Government Accounting" procedures.

CIPFA, with support from HAMFIG, hope to be able to issue a major consultation document in July 2009 setting down a series of proposals. The following 3 months will be spent seeking views and suggestions from local highway authorities. The consultation document will be issued to all local highway authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

However highway authorities should be aware that the Audit Commission has already issued guidance to Auditors via KLOE 3.2 [Key Lines of Enquiry] dealing with initial enquires relating to Highways Asset Management for the current round of audits.

All consultation documents will either be hosted on the HAMFIG web-site or hyperlinked where necessary. Documents will also be available via the CIPFA web-site for CIPFA members. HAMFIG/CIPFA will also submit progress reports to UK Roads Board via the Highways Asset Management Group and provide input to Roads Board Advisory Group.

Further reports will be made to the Newsletter.'



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Retroreflectivity measurement accreditation

For the measurement of retroreflectivity current standards (TD26) specify that systems undertaking monitoring at traffic speed should be accredited. However, there is currently no formal accreditation process in place. TRL have been contracted by the Highways Agency to develop an appropriate accreditation scheme. As a key part of this process we wish to consult with both practitioners (the road marking monitoring industry) and users.

Volunteers are requested to complete a questionnaire which will shortly be issued. Participants should have responsibility for maintaining road markings within their Local Authority and have experience in commissioning traffic-speed retroreflectivity surveys. This questionnaire will help the project team gain a clearer understanding of what kind of work is carried out within local authorities and the perceived level of quality of retroreflectivity data provided by the road marking monitoring industry. This questionnaire will also provide an opportunity for input on how you think accreditation should be structured.

If you would like to be considered for inclusion in this questionnaire please send an email containing your name and contact details with the subject "HSM Questionnaire" to survey_response@ukpms.com before 12th June 2009.

Contact details

You are welcome to pass a copy of this bulletin on to anyone else who may be interested in the subject.

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