

National Winter Service Research Group

(NWSRG)

January 2021

1. Nomenclature and Constitution

The Group shall be known as "The National Winter Service Research Group" or the "NWSRG"

The Group shall comprise organisations, individuals and groups that provide a positive contribution to the safety of the travelling public through the provision of winter maintenance services upon the highways of the United Kingdom; namely UK Highway and Roads Authorities, Consultants and Contractors providing the winter service.

Industry Associates to the Group will provide technical expertise and other resources to assist delivery of the Group's aims and objectives.

In 2011 the NWSRG was incorporated as a technical group of the UK Roads Board. The NWSRG is one of a number of technical groups reporting to the UK Roads Board (UKRB).

2. Aims and objectives of the NWSRG

The aims of the NWSRG are:

1. Take a broad view of highway winter service and management standards for carriageways, footways and cycle tracks within the United Kingdom with the aim of prioritising and delivering relevant research on behalf of the Roads Board (or others).
2. To undertake and support research in the field of highway winter service to further improve service delivery to prevent the formation of ice and aid the removal, of ice and snow from the highway network. The aims of the research include the identification and development of efficient and cost-effective winter service methodologies.
3. To ensure that the needs of winter service practitioners are considered when formulating national policy and codes of practice.
4. Publish guidance and best practice, via the UK Roads Board, keeping abreast of recent developments in Legislation, policy, technology and materials, and coordinating with other important national and international initiatives.
5. Maintain, on a national basis, a long-standing research group to further advance the understanding and delivery of effective highway winter service.

3. Financial Administration

The finances of the group will be administered by a legal entity, with audited accounts, with appropriate remuneration that is approved by the Steering Group but under the direct control of the group with two signatories which should include the Chair (or their nominated deputy) and one other Steering Group member.

Research work that is commissioned by the Steering Group will be administered through contractual agreements with Steering Group members or other appropriate third party legal entity.

4. Group Structure and Membership

The NWSRG will be structured to deliver the stated aims and objectives as follows:

- Steering Group
- Technical Advisory Group
- Working Groups
- Membership
- Stakeholders (e.g. Environment Agency, Network Rail)
- Industry Associates
- Technical Consultant
- Research Contractors Steering Group

Membership and Voting Rights

The Steering Group will comprise a maximum of 12 voting members and shall be formed as per the table below.

The Steering Group may co-opt other non-voting persons to the group as it sees fit to assist in discharging its responsibilities.

Steering Group members with voting rights shall hold office for three years and are then eligible for re-election/nomination. Local Highway Authority representatives will be elected by NWSRG Members, and National Authorities shall each nominate a representative who will then be subject to approval by the Steering Group.

Details of the election process and candidates will be sent to NWSRG Members in advance of the elections.

The next National Authority nominations and approvals shall take place in 2021, and Local Authority elections will follow in 2022 (3 members) and then 2023 (4 members).

NWSRG Steering Group Composition			
Organisation	Name	Voting Rights	Position on Steering Group
National Government Representation	Highways England Welsh Government Transport Scotland Transport Northern Ireland Department for Transport	One voting right per National Government	One permanent member from each National Government Organisation
Local Highway Authorities from throughout the United Kingdom*	England – Four representatives Wales – One representative Scotland – One representative Plus one additional representative ADEPT	Each Local Authority representative and ADEPT member will have one voting right*	Local Authority members are nominated and voted upon at any relevant meeting called to set up Steering Group membership. One permanent member representing ADEPT
Main Research Contractor	A Main Research Contractor to be appointed by the Steering Group	No voting rights	One permanent member representing the Main Research Contractor
Secretary	An appropriately qualified individual	No voting rights	Appointed by Steering Group as required
Technical Consultant	An appropriately qualified independent organisation or individual	No voting rights	Appointed by Steering Group

* If posts not taken up then can be opened to other UK local authorities

Purpose & Responsibilities

The Steering Group will manage and provide the leadership, strategic direction and stewardship of the NWSRG on behalf of the UK Roads Board.

The Steering Group will be responsible for:-

- Overall management of the Group
- Financial probity
- Organising and running seminars, workshops etc. when required
- Production of Progress Reports and as required recommendations to the UK Roads Board (Reports at least three times a year)

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- Review and revision of NWSRG Business Plans for presentation and liaison with UK Roads Board
- Publications – authorisation and approval
- Authorisation of representatives to attend and present at events on behalf of the NWSRG.

The Steering Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in March every year.

A minimum of three Steering Group meetings (exc. AGM) and three Technical Advisory Group meetings will be held per annum.

Progress reports will be prepared by the Chair or on his/her behalf, a nominated person, to coincide with Steering Group meetings. These reports will provide an update on research progress, to provide interim findings and to advise Members and Industry Associates of future developments and initiatives.

Position of Chair of NWSRG

The Chair of the NWSRG will be an existing voting member of the Steering Group and will also represent the NWSRG on the UK Roads Board.

Members of the Steering Group that have voting rights shall appoint a Chair.

The Steering Group may wish to appoint a Vice-Chair who should also be an existing voting member of the Steering Group.

Appointments and voting shall be undertaken at the appropriate Steering Group Meeting prior to AGM.

The Chair will manage and administer the functions of the NWSRG or may delegate functions to the Vice Chair or existing voting members of the Steering Group. Amongst other tasks, as requested by the Steering Group, these may include:

- Representing the NWSRG on the UK Roads Board
- Chairing Steering Group and TAG meetings
- Managing contracts let by the group for research and other purposes
- Ensuring that the group conforms with the constitution
- Liaising with the Steering Group Members
- Ensuring a timely response to enquiries made to the group
- Managing a current Business Plan for the group
- Managing a priority list of research projects

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- Preparing progress reports
- Financial management
- Website management
- Liaising with any organisations engaged to support the group.

Technical Advisory Group

Membership

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) will comprise NWSRG Members involved in undertaking highway winter service/maintenance research, as well as Industry Associates.

A minimum of three TAG meetings will be held per annum.

The NWSRG Chair (or a representative) will chair TAG meetings, and the Steering Group members will also normally be in attendance.

There is no specified minimum number of members of the TAG.

Only one delegate per member of the TAG shall attend TAG meetings and the maximum number of TAG members at any TAG meeting shall normally be 25 unless agreed by the Chair or Secretary. This may be extended if the meeting is to be hosted virtually.

Requests for membership of the TAG must be made to the Steering Group for due consideration.

Membership of the TAG will be dependent on the approval of a majority of voting members of the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will periodically review the TAG membership and retain members who attend meetings regularly and make a positive contribution.

Purpose & Responsibilities

The role of the TAG is to provide knowledge, experience, expertise, resources and technical support in their field to the NWSRG.

TAG members with particular interests, experience and/or expertise will be eligible to join Working Groups that are set up from time to time by the Steering Group to oversee research activities in specific topic areas.

Working Groups

The Steering Group will set up Working Groups to oversee research activities in specific service/topic areas, as required.

The Steering Group will provide a scoping brief and appoint a Project Manager for each Working Group from Steering Group members.

Working Group Project Managers will report directly to the Steering Group and provide progress reports at Steering Group and TAG meetings.

There is no specified maximum number of members for Working Groups, but as a minimum there should be one voting member from the Steering Group. It is envisaged that the size of each group will vary. However, in all cases the number of Working Group members will be limited to ensure efficient and practicable working arrangements and the timely production of research deliverables.

The Steering Group will determine Working Group membership, which will typically comprise TAG members that have expressed an interest in that research topic. However, Working Group membership will be extended when appropriate to include other NWSRG Members and/or individuals or organisations external to the NWSRG that have particular experience or expertise in relevant fields.

NWSRG Membership

Membership and Voting Rights

All UK Highway or Roads Authority are eligible to become NWSRG Members on payment of an agreed annual subscription. Consultants, Contractors or other organisations that provide a direct winter service are also eligible to become a Member of the NWSRG on payment of an agreed annual subscription subject to the agreement of the Steering Group.

There is no maximum or minimum number of Members of the NWSRG.

Requests to become a Member must be made to the Steering Group for due consideration.

The final decision concerning Membership will be dependent on the acceptance by a majority of voting members of the Steering Group.

Membership of the NWSRG entitles: -

- Up to two delegates to attend NWSRG meetings, although only one delegate has voting rights.
- Up to two delegates to attend NWSRG Seminars and Workshops free of charge.
- Access to the NWSRG internet website containing all of the latest research findings and reports (password protected).

Industry Associates

Any highway winter service equipment manufacturer, material supplier and/or service supplier is eligible to become an Industry Associate of the NWSRG.

There is no maximum or minimum number of Industry Associates of the NWSRG.

Requests to become an Industry Associate must be made to the Steering Group for due consideration at the AGM. The final decision concerning which will be dependent on the acceptance by a majority of voting members of the Steering Group.

Industry Associates are eligible to join the TAG and Working Groups and are expected to assist the NWSRG in the delivery of its stated aims and objectives. In order to achieve this, when appropriate, Industry Associates are expected to provide technical support, equipment, resources and/or materials to the NWSRG.

Being an Industry Associate of the NWSRG entitles:-

- One delegate to attend NWSRG meetings.
- Up to two delegates to attend NWSRG Seminars and Workshops free of charge.
- Access to the NWSRG internet website containing the most up-to-date research findings and reports (password protected).

In order to ensure the total impartiality, independence and objectivity of NWSRG research, Industry Associates are not entitled to provide direct financial support to the NWSRG beyond any agreed subscription and they do not have NWSRG voting rights.

Secretary

The secretary of the group will be appointed by the Steering Group and will assist with the general organisation and administration which may include:

- Organisation and facilitation of meetings, Seminars and Workshops
- Preparing agendas of meetings in consultation with the Chair
- Preparing and overseeing the taking minutes of meetings and circulating within 5 working days of any said meeting.
- Managing contracts let by the group for research and other purposes
- Ensuring that the group conforms with the constitution
- Liaising with group members, the Steering Group and the TAG
- Ensuring a timely response to enquiries made to the group
- Managing applications for membership of the group

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- Maintaining a current Business Plan for the group
- Maintaining a priority list of research projects
- Liaising with any organisations engaged to support the group ☐ Other tasks as requested by the Steering Group.

Technical Consultant

The Steering Group may procure and or secure advice from an independent Technical Consultant to represent and protect the interests of the Membership.

The Steering Group may draw up a technical brief, job specification and contractual terms and conditions under which the Technical Consultant will be employed. In this case, the Technical Consultant shall be offered an annual contract of engagement, which will be reviewed annually by the Steering Group at the AGM

The choice of Technical Consultant will be based on a combination of both technical ability and price which will represent both value and quality to NWSRG Members.

The Technical Consultant will:-

- Have non-voting membership of the Steering Group.
- Provide technical advice to the Steering Group.
- Assist the Steering Group with coordinating and managing the work of Research Contractors to ensure projects are delivered to time, quality and budget.
- Prepare specifications and scoping briefs for the research activities.
- Review proposals prepared by Research Contractors to ensure that they will fulfil the requirements of their specification, including critically reviewing costs and programme.
- Prepare Working Group scoping briefs and research contracts, when appropriate.
- Review all outputs in terms of test results, research findings, evaluations and conclusions, report contents and presentations produced by Working Groups and Research Contractors and advise the Steering Group on the accuracy and validity of the results and findings of the research.
- Assist in the production and presentation of progress reports to Steering Group and Working Group meetings.
- Assist in the production and presentation of progress reports to the Membership at Seminars and Workshops.
- Undertake tasks associated with raising awareness and the national and international profile of the NWSRG.

Research Contractors

The Steering Group will engage Research Contractors to undertake specific research projects, to provide scientific input and evaluate research findings, and to prepare reports and other research literature.

Research Contractors will prepare proposals in response to specifications for research activities issued by the Steering Group. Proposals will include a methodology, programme and cost estimate informed by the proposed resource input.

Research Contractors will prepare and present progress reports to the Steering Group and TAG meetings and to membership at Seminars and Workshops.

Research Contractors will be guided and directed by the Steering Group and Technical Consultant.

Research Contractors will assist the Technical Consultant in raising the awareness and the national and international profile of the NWSRG.

Research Contractors may be engaged through National Government Framework Contracts.

Research Contractors may be offered a contract of engagement which will be reviewed annually by the Steering group at the AGM.

In addition to the provision of typical Research Contractor activities, a Research Contractor may be contracted to provide additional services, if alternative arrangements have not been made, such as: - Non-voting Membership of the Steering Group.

- Assist the Technical Consultant with the production of project specifications and scoping studies for research activities, when appropriate.
- Assist the Technical Consultant with the production of Working Group scoping briefs and research contracts, when appropriate.
- Membership and Project Managing of Working Groups, as and when appropriate and requested to do so by the Steering Group.
- Tasks associated with raising awareness and the national and international profile of the NWSRG.
- Other tasks as requested by the Steering Group.
- Engage and procure, where necessary, works to specialist Research Contractors.

5. NWSRG Website

The NWSRG website is to be linked to the UK Roads Board website.

All final reports and technical guidance to be freely accessible on an open internet website.

All interim reports, interim results, meeting details, minutes and other relevant information will be hosted on a secure (password protected) internet web site. Creation, maintenance, security and update of this dedicated site may be the responsibility of a Research Contractor or other body appointed by the Steering Group.

Prior to publication, web-site content is to be agreed by the Chair and ratified with the Steering Group at the next available meeting

6. Subscription and Funding

The NWSRG shall be financed from annual subscriptions from its Membership, Associates and other sources of available funding as the Steering Group deems appropriate.

NWSRG Members must pay an annual subscription to retain their membership of the NWSRG.

There is a suggested scale of annual subscription rates that will be reviewed annually by the Steering Group at the AGM. This scale is based on the length of network treated by each Member during routine carriageway precautionary salting operations.

Historically subscription rates have been as follows:

- Up to 250 km : £500 per annum
- 251 - 1250 km : £1,000 per annum
- Greater than 1,250 km : £1,500 per annum

Membership year runs from the 1st April to the 31st March inclusive.

From 1st April 2021, subscription rates will be as follows:

Local Authority:

- Up to 250 km : £500 per annum
- 251 - 1250 km : £1,000 per annum
- Greater than 1,250 km : £1,500 per annum

National Authority:

- Minimum £2,500 per annum

Industry Associates:

- An annual subscription as agreed from time to time by the Steering Group to support the effective operation of the NWSRG.

Membership year runs from the 1st April to the 31st March inclusive and subscription rates shall be reviewed annually.

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Members are also encouraged to make voluntary contributions in line with their annual spend in delivering their winter service.

If a membership payment is not received within three months following request, then membership will be automatically withdrawn and not reinstated until full membership fees have been received with any arrears that may be due.

7. Disputes

In the event of a dispute at either a Working Group or TAG meeting, the issue shall be resolved by the Steering Group.

The constitution may only be changed by the Steering Group and approved by the UK Roads Board.

8. Cessation of NWSRG

The NWSRG will cease if, in the opinion of the Steering Group and approved by the UK Roads Board, it is inappropriate and ineffective to continue running the NWSRG.

Approved by SG on 10th Sept 2020, with minor revision on 22nd Jan 2021

Approved by UKRB on 5th Feb 2021