

Press release: Highways England releases first sections of updated road design manual

Highways England today paved the way for improved road building with the much anticipated release of the first suite of new design standards.

The publication of the first sections of the new 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' (DMRB) will ensure roads are designed, built and maintained to the very highest and safest standards.

Accepted as the cornerstone of the delivery and management of motorway and all-purpose trunk roads across the UK, and a respected document worldwide, the DMRB was first published in 1992.

Highways England, the Government company responsible for maintaining, operating and improving the country's motorways and major A roads, is currently updating it to make it clearer, more consistent and easier to understand and implement. The update puts design requirements at its core and it will also make it easier to incorporate developments in design best practice. This will result in greater efficiency and innovation throughout the lifecycle of the assets, fewer departures from the requirements, and reduced time and associated cost.

Highways England Chief Highway Engineer, Mike Wilson said:

"This is an exciting time for the highways sector as we continue to successfully deliver the record £15bn investment in roads. The updated DMRB documents mark a historic moment for the design of the UK's motorways and major A-roads.

"I would like to thank the Devolved Administrations and our supply chain who have supported this significant review, which will ensure our roads are designed, built and maintained to the very highest, safest standards for the millions of drivers that use these roads every day."

The first four documents of the updated "Design Manual for Roads and Bridges" (DMRB) are:

- Introduction to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
- Requirements for safety risk assessment
- Use of Compressive Membrane Action in Bridge Decks
- Management of Corrugated Steel Buried Structures

Experts at Highways England began the task of updating the complete suite of over 350 documents and associated interim advice notes (IANs) that make up the manual in April 2017 with the review due for completion by March 2020. This is a specific requirement of the Protocol attached to the Highways

England Licence as part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy.

Changes in the updated document include:

- a new structure of the volumes to be aligned to asset life-cycle stages, from appraisal to design up to disposal
- new numbering systems of documents reflecting the relevant asset life-cycle stage and the specific discipline covered by the document
- new style of individual clauses to make a clear distinction between requirements and advisory material
- incorporation of interim advice notes (IANs) into the DMRB as relevant
- consolidation of DMRB 'A' (advisory) documents with related 'D' (design) documents
- introduction of National Application Annexes attached to the DMRB to cover the specific requirements of the Overseeing Organisations

Several leading UK consultants have supported Highways England with the update, and a new set of drafting rules has been used, which follows best practice from national and international standardisation organisations.

The updated DMRB supports Highways England's ["The road to good design"](#) vision.

The DMRB re-drafting is being completed using a revolutionary online authoring tool purposefully built for the refresh of the document. This signals an important move to digital technology and unlocks the potential of digital innovations.

The updated DMRB documents will be released in phases with completion due by March 2020.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.