

Progress Report

Chairman's Introduction

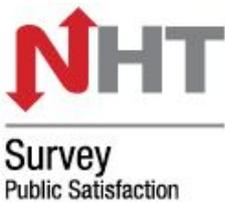
Dear All,

As you may recall we submitted NHT proposals to the government (DfT) for developing our NHT Survey Results, Customers Vs Quality Vs Cost (CQC) comparisons, last summer. This was a contribution to the DfT's ideas for a Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme or 'HMEP'. The programme was a rarity in successfully getting new funding in the spending review in October and development of plans for the four workstreams has been going on since. It was, therefore, very pleasing indeed to see the NHT's CQC ideas have now formally been taken up in the HMEP plans (more of that later).

I trust this will open further doors for really incisive benchmarking to help us all deliver our services better. Naturally the key building block is the NHT survey data. Whilst plans are in place to have a valuable backwards look at CQC data for previous years of the NHT survey, ongoing NHT survey participation is crucial to benefitting from the CQC work that is developing. The other point being when we are modifying and reducing services, is now the time to stop asking the public what they think?

I am cheered with reports that there looks likely to be another strong take up of the survey in 2011, but I do feel a need to urge any wavering authorities out there to participate again! The survey data will count and the NHT will do its utmost to enable your authority to wring the very best use from it.

Peter Radford, Somerset County Council



As we move rapidly towards the deadline (28th April), for Councils to sign up to take part in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey 2011 the response has been very encouraging and it is anticipated that, despite the budget cuts, a good majority of last year's participants, plus at least five Councils new to the survey, will take part this year.

The continuity of measurement against the background of the spending review is important – the size of the cuts is likely to have a significant impact on public perception and restrict the potential for changing processes and practice that might lead to improvements, the 2011 Survey will allow Councils to measure the impact of the cuts. Participation in 2010 gives Authorities a baseline of performance, pre spending cuts, against which to compare their performance going forwards as the cuts start to bite.

The 2011 Survey includes questions that invite the public to identify those areas that are in most need of improvement, this information may prove invaluable in setting future spending priorities, in 2012 and beyond. It will also be useful to measure the change in public priorities pre and post the spending review.

The other important consideration for participation in 2011 is how Customer Perception and the Quality of service provided are affected by the Cost that can be afforded. CQC will help show how these competing measures of overall performance change pre and post spending review as Highways Authorities refocus their spending. We will be unable to do CQC analysis for authorities in 2011 without Customer data.



The Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme was launched by Transport Minister Norman Baker MP at the Highways Term Maintenance Association (HTMA) on Wednesday 6th April 2011.

The Programme is divided into four Workstreams, with each Workstream further sub-divided into Workstream activities. Whilst NHT Network has a potential contribution to make to all four Workstreams, the primary focus of our attention to date has been Group 4, in which we have been asked to be a 'participant organisation'.

Group 4 aims to bring together and consolidate existing benchmarking and performance data that underpins the highway maintenance sector, to provide a consistent and coherent picture of performance and improvement. 'Customer perception and satisfaction with the services we deliver will be a vital component.'

Steve Kent of Chester West & Chester, who is chair of Group 4, is currently in the process of establishing teams / leads for Group 4 Workstreams. The following Workstreams represent clear potential for NHT Network involvement:

- Benchmarking & Measurement
- Cost/Quality/Customer(C/Q/C)

For further information on HMEP see <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/hmep/index.php>



CQC Results for 2010 for all NHT Survey Participants have been published on the CQC website www.cqcnetwork.org (results for Welsh Authorities will be uploaded shortly) and hard copy of the CQC Summary report has been sent to each Authority.

The following levels of reporting are available via the CQC website:

- Authority specific executive summary (single page for each NHT Survey participant)
- Authority specific detailed reports (for each NHT Survey participant) – shows an authority's results in detail and in relation to their peer group
- an Authority Type analysis comparing the results of all Authorities of a certain type on an anonymous basis (each Authority is identified by a PIN)

This reporting is restricted to NHT Survey members only by logon and password. An Authority will only be able to see its own results. If you require access to CQC reporting for your Authority please contact m2i help desk.

Feedback to 2010 results

Reaction to the publication of 2010 CQC results has been very positive. A number of suggestions have been made to improve future outputs, these include the basis for deriving cost ratings, where for instance it has been suggested that Maintenance Costs should be assessed using 'road length' and not 'head count' and that the number of assets (e.g. bridges) is also used.

The necessary work has already been completed to allow cost ratings to be derived using road length or head count and will look at the practicalities of collecting asset information. We are also looking at using NHT mapping facilities to present CQC results on a regional and national basis.

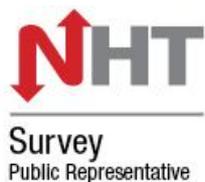
Work is still ongoing on uploading CQC datasets for 2008 and 2009 and we hope to provide reporting to show results and performance trends by Authority over the last three years, before the 2011 NHT Survey results are published.

Developing CQC

It is generally accepted that further work on the CQC model is required and it is hoped that some of the work can be done as part of the HMEP. Although this programme focuses on Highway Maintenance, NHT will extend any revisions to CQC methodology to all service aspects wherever possible.

The current CQC analysis is restricted by the availability of Quality and Cost data, more detailed and more robust analysis would be possible if additional quality and cost data was provided by participating authorities.

More work is also required on how the different levels of CQC performance are achieved and whether there is a correlation between outturn performance and other attributes e.g. procurement route, geography, process and practice.



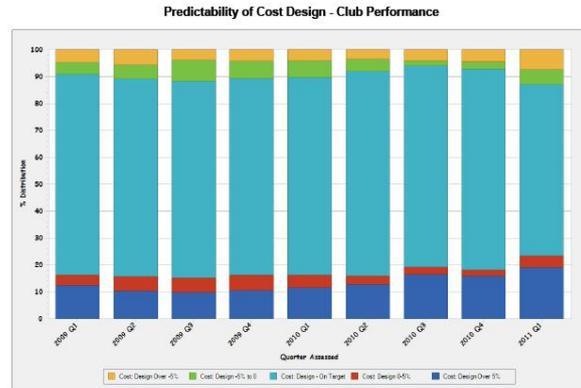
The Public Representative Survey seeks to compare the views of elected members and Ward/Parish Councils with the views of the public. The 2011 Survey will give an interesting insight into how the spending cuts affect the perceptions of these different groups. The survey is conducted electronically and uses the majority of the questions from the Public Satisfaction Survey although some questions, only answerable by an individual, have been removed to make it easier for a group e.g. a Parish Council to answer. Work is underway to improve the reporting outputs from this survey to highlight differences in perception between members, parish/town councils and the public.

The Public Representative survey will be undertaken again in 2011 and a request has been received to carry out this survey at the same time as the Public Satisfaction Survey to ensure that the two sets of results are as comparable as possible. m2i will contact all authorities taking part in the Public Satisfaction Survey in early May to ascertain whether or not they wish to take part.

The results of the Public Representative Survey are not made public.



Led by the Design Division Committee, a great deal of work has been undertaken to improve the reporting available to Club members. This new reporting will be available shortly via the club web site for all members and will enable members to view a high level report of their results as well as offering the ability to drill down for more detailed analysis of project information.



Work is also underway to simplify data capture and new scorecards are being developed that will streamline the entry of time and cost data in particular. Using these new scorecards, actual and variance percentages will be derived automatically for the following; start time, duration, finish time and outturn cost. Reporting will be provided to allow members to analyse their time and cost estimate accuracy performance by any of these variations.

HTMA

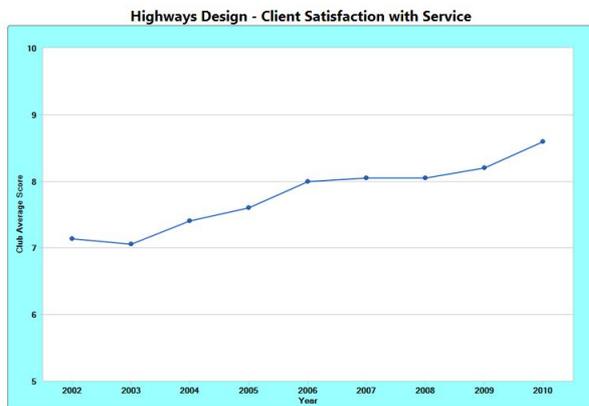
The Club is in discussion with the HTMA Improvement and Efficiency Working Group about possible collaboration. HTMA has a stated objective to define and promote a consistent set of core highways performance indicators within a defined measurement framework, this objective aligns with NHT Benchmarking Club objectives and a strategic partnership is under consideration.

HMEP

The Benchmarking & Measurement Workstream (Group 4, Workstream 1) is of particular interest to the NHT Benchmarking Network, we believe we are well placed to support the measurement of individual contract performance and it is hoped that we will have representation on the project delivery team.

LIFETIME PERFORMANCE

The NHT Benchmarking Network has been collecting performance data for nearly 10 years. Analysis of the data that has been regularly input by members of the Design and Works Divisions during that time clearly demonstrates continuous improvement over the lifetime of the club.



To view the full Lifetime Performance Dashboard for Design and Works please visit the NHT portal site at www.nhtnetwork.org and follow the links to the club websites reporting pages.

NHT in the Regions

If anyone would like further information on regional group activities or to find out how to start up a new regional group, please contact richard.whiting@measure2improve.com

Any Questions?

You will find a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section on the NHT Network web site <http://www.nhtnetwork.org/Content.aspx?36> , but if your query is not covered there please get in touch with Jennie Simons at NHT Network email: info@nhtnetwork.org Tel: 01443 832163

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