

Progress Report

Chairman's Introduction

There is a note below that shows that an amazing number of reports were downloaded from the 2011 NHT survey results website in the first week. This equates to an average of nearly 300 per authority in the survey. It has often been said that organisations which take time to focus on performance are the ones most likely to improve. Obvious perhaps, but this unprecedented level of interest in the NHT Survey data, I believe, bodes well.

The successful NHT/HMEP Public Satisfaction Conference on the 10th October was pleased to learn from the very creditable results achieved by some authorities. Thank you to those councils for quickly stepping up to talk about what they had done! One thing was striking, enquiries of all the participants who had made strong progress in the survey revealed, without fail, something significant and/or new had been done to drive efficiency and performance. In each case the public appears to have responded with improved views. Do have a look at the presentations now on the website.

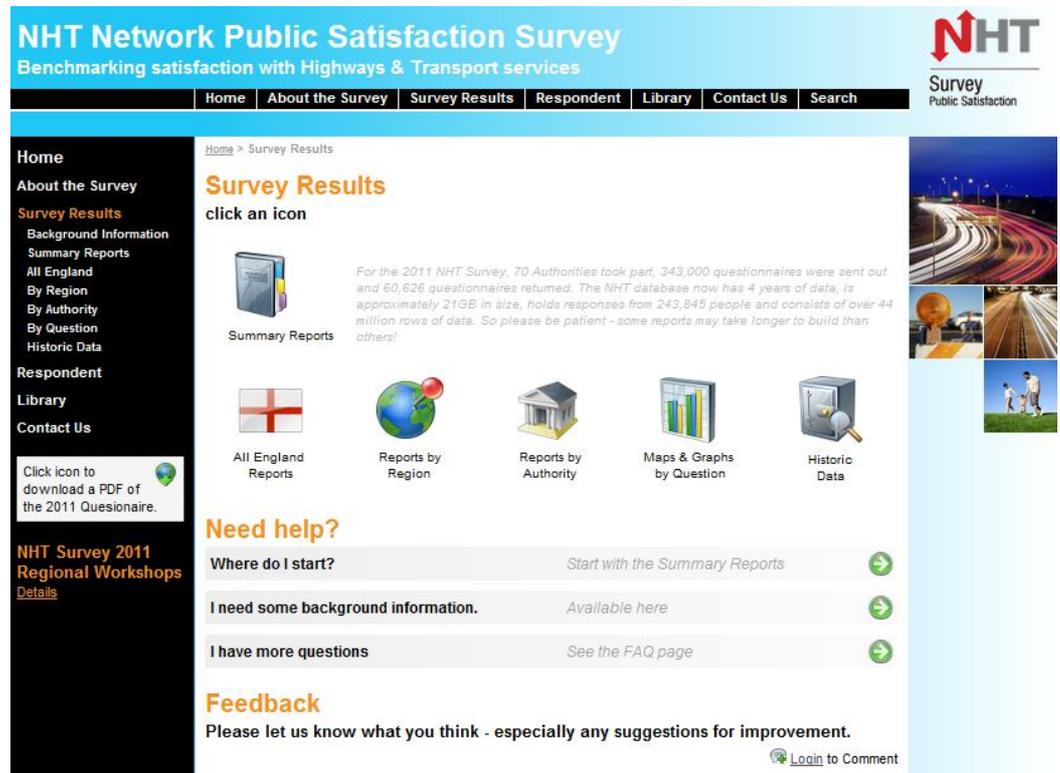
Thank you too to the DfT for its support of the conference and sponsorship of the NHT Competition. There must be value in encouraging everyone in the industry to think outside the box to help deliver the step change in efficiency we need. The competition entries certainly did that and congratulations again to the winners.

NHT continues to support the HMEP with work to look at how future NHT Surveys might help with added public feedback on highway maintenance. The NHT is also refining its proposals on the Customers, Quality and Cost (CQC) analysis to assist HMEP too.

Of course we have all been learning from the last three bad winters and probably all hope we don't have to reinvest that learning quite so much in the coming season! However can I just refer NHT Survey participants to the mapping of their "winter gritting and snow clearance" results as these just might help in the understanding of local problems (I nearly said hot-spots!) and what operationally might be done to address them this winter.

Peter Radford, Somerset County Council

Wow, what a reaction! In the first week of the NHT Survey results being released over **20,000** individual reports had been downloaded from the new-look web site! As this report goes public that figure has risen to nearly 30,000.



The table below gives some overall statistics on participation, sample size and response rates, comparing the figures over the four years of the survey.

Survey Statistics	2008	2009	2010	2011
No of Authorities	33	76	95	70
Total Surveys Issued	148,500	371,026	479,300	325,200
Total Responses Received	27682	69,310	81,614	60,626
Average Sample Size	4500	4,882	5,045	5,028
Average No of Responses	839	912	859	886
Average Response Rate*	19.0%	18.7%	17.0%	17.6%

Given the levels of participation it is not altogether surprising that the NHT Survey database is now very large with over 87.2 million records.

Whilst the results show that expectations have continued to fall slightly across the board, nationally the three most important areas for the public remain: 'Condition of Highways', 'Good pavements & footpaths' and 'Safer Roads', with Safer Roads now the most important, whereas previously it was road condition.

Although the performance is mixed for 2011, the figures show that levels of satisfaction have increased across the board since 2008 with the exception of 'Highway Condition', with which the public remains least satisfied, and which is an area on which they place high levels of importance.

The full Executive Summary can be downloaded via the following link:
<http://nhtsurvey.econtrack.co.uk/Documents/Document.ashx?1862>

NHT Survey Workshops

In order to help personnel at participating authorities to get the maximum benefit from their survey data, we have organised a number of regional workshops and would encourage you to attend to find out more about the results. If you would like to host your own workshop please get in touch.

Current dates:

Monday 14th November – Hampshire County Council, Winchester

Wednesday 16th November – Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset – **FULLY SUBSCRIBED***

Tuesday 22nd November – Cheshire West & Chester Council, Chester

Wednesday 23rd November – Derbyshire County Council, Matlock

Thursday 24th November – Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge

Tuesday 29th November – m2i's offices, Swallow Court, Tiverton

*A further workshop has been organised at m2i's offices just off J27 of the M5 on 29th November 2011

For full details and to download a booking form for your chosen workshop

<http://nhtsurvey.econtrack.co.uk/Content.aspx?3273>



On the 10th October over 80 delegates attended the NHT/HMEP conference at One Great George Street, London to hear from leading figures in the industry and to share good practice with authorities who have impressed the public with year on year improvements to specific services resulting in a higher Public Satisfaction Survey score this year.



This year's theme was 'Improving Public Satisfaction with Highway Maintenance'. The key note address was given by **John Dowie**, Director for Local Transport, Department for Transport (DfT). The key messages that John gave in relation to HMEP were:

- HMEP was originally set up for two years with £6M funding. The time period has now been extended.
- HMEP needs to be owned by the industry - senior leaders need to take up this challenge and drive the co-ordination and management of changes and sharing of good practice
- The importance of changing the 'them and us' mentality between public sector clients and private suppliers in order to work more efficiently and effectively across the sector.
- The strengths of the sector must be identified and built on and best practice shared and exploited wherever it is found.
- The industry must identify and provide the products, tools and services that it wants.
- It is vital that the programme is all inclusive reaching out to those that are not performing so well and ensuring that they are included and can share and benefit from the learning and good practice sharing by better performers.



A lively response to John's address was given, on behalf of the industry, by **Martin Duffy** Director of Happold Consulting. Amongst many other achievements Martin is a board member of the Operational Delivery Workstream and Assurance Workstream of the DfT Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme.

The Key points from Martin's presentation included:

- The days of non-cashable savings and Gershon efficiencies are behind us – HMEP is looking for real evidence of cashable savings.
- The public should understand what HMEP is all about. This needs to be done by promotion and management of media. Not spin, but proper communications management so that the public know the positives.
- HMEP wants to present ideas and solutions in a way that communicates intent and purpose rather than being prescriptive about how things should be done. Ideas and solutions should be transferrable and constantly challenged in order to find better ways of doing things.
- Tender assessment and procurement need to be boiled down to two things: how much will it cost and how proficient are they at doing the job – just as you would if you were employing someone to work on your own house. Do the other assessments too, but the focus needs to shift to assessing these two aspects as a priority for decision-making. Need to stop relying on what suppliers say they can do (anyone can write anything in bids), and start taking more notice and attaching value to what they actually do (recommendation and previous performance rather than spin and great-looking tenders).



Peter Radford, Somerset County Council and Chair of the NHT Strategy & Support Group provided an overview of good practice and talked about some of the highlights from the 2011 NHT Public Satisfaction Survey

Buckinghamshire – 1st most improved County Council

57.77 Improvement for Highway Maintenance (HM) Indicators
All but 2 of 17 HM Indicators improved including:

- +6.45 for winter maintenance and
- +6.44 for horticultural maintenance

Cambridgeshire – 2nd most improved County Council

54.61 Improvement for HM Indicators. All but 2 of 17 HM Indicators improved including: +7.66 for winter maintenance

Bedford Borough Council – 2nd most improve Unitary Council

78.28 Pts improvement for HM Indicators. All 17 HM Indicators improved including +6.95 for condition of roads +4.76 for speed of repair +7.93 for winter maintenance
Shared MAC contract with Central Bedfordshire £5m repair programme. Condition driven, but influenced by local opinion. Busiest footways tackled first. Programme published and feedback invited. Highways Helpdesk request tracking

Peter went on to talk about the NHT's involvement with HMEP. He said that the NHT's projects offer the HMEP Initiative:

- Momentum
- Communication channels
- A sophisticated website
- Good practice gathering and dissemination
- Existing regional and national benchmarking groups
- Existing work on Cost Vs Quality Vs Customer comparisons (**CQC**)

More details about the work of HMEP can be found on their website:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/topics/local-authorities/hmep/work-groups/group1.php>

There were many more examples in Peter's presentation of Councils that have managed to show improvements in Public Satisfaction year on year and we are creating case studies which will be available on the web site shortly.

Case Study presentations arising from the results of the 2011 survey were then given by **Kelvin Packer**, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) and **Paul Tysoe**, Northamptonshire County Council.

B&NES were the first most improved Unitary Council:

105.51 Pts improvement for HM Indicators

All 17 HM Indicators improved including

+6.17 for condition of roads

+7.93 for winter maintenance

Kelvin described some of the changes and re-structuring that had taken place in B&NES: They established three key priorities, headed by 'putting the customer first'. The implementation of a 'Lean' review, establishment of a 'Leaders of Change Programme' and team management development. He stressed the importance of measuring performance internally and comparing performance with others (the NHT Survey). The following are some of the activities highlighted in Kelvin's presentation:

Customer Feedback	- 35% to 100%
Efficient Working	- £5m extra investment delivered within existing resource
Good Media Coverage	- top of the National league table for pothole repair (cycle touring club) -Lighting Work – The Daily Mail / The Guardian - Extra staff trained to do media interviews
A Learning Culture	- See what others do well and develop it

Northamptonshire County Council was the third most improved County Council in this year's survey. But they bucked the trend by being the only County Council showing an improvement in public satisfaction with condition of roads and speed of repair.

47.18 Improvement for HM Indicators

All but 2 of 17 HM Indicators improved including

+2.5 for condition of roads and

+4.25 for speed of repair

Paul described the chronic situation that had led them to establish a new way of working and the benefits that have been achieved which include:

- A substantial increase in permanent/semi-permanent repairs which now make up nearly **90%** of all repairs carried out

- Doing more whilst on site – achieved a **9%** increase in defects repaired over and above what was initially identified.
- A reduction in public reported defects of **-23%** for carriageway potholes.
- An early indication of a reduction in claims against the Council for incidents caused by poor road surfaces of **-48%**
- Reduction in CO₂ emissions through a more effective planning of work has led to less miles travelled and resulted in a **£22,000** reduction in fuel usage
- Positive feedback has increased.

Following lunch, further presentations were given by **Will Britain** of Blackpool Borough Council on Asset Management, **David Walters** of Staffordshire County Council on improving Community relations and **Ben Marshall** of Ipsos MORI showing how more use can be made of the survey data.

All of the presentations may be viewed or downloaded via the following link:
<http://nhtsurvey.econtrack.co.uk/Content.aspx?2895>

The NHT/HMEP Competition

“Identifying, Delivering and Proving a significant efficiency/service improvement in any area of highway maintenance”

This year’s competition, run jointly with HMEP, was won by John Gates of Norfolk County Council, with his entry 'The use of Augmented Reality Technology in Highways Operations'

Thirteen entries were received and these were shortlisted to six by the NHT Strategy & Support Group members. Final judging was undertaken by Mostaque Ahmed, Head of Regional and Local Major Projects, Department for Transport (DfT), Trish Johnson, Chair of ICE (Southwest), and Martin Duffy, Director, Happold Consulting. The judges faced a difficult decision and it was in close contest with the runner-up: Stephen Knott from Staffordshire County Council that John's entry was chosen in first place. An interview with John by HMEP can be viewed on the NHT survey web site or by clicking the following link <http://nhtsurvey.econtrack.co.uk/Content.aspx?3275>

To view John’s entry and the other five short-listed entries please follow the link:
<http://nhtsurvey.econtrack.co.uk/Content.aspx?3276>



CQC Network
 Customers, Quality, Cost

The CQC Reports have been of particular interest to HMEP and it is likely that further development will be funded through the HMEP programme.



Survey
 Public Representative

The NHT Public Representative Survey is underway with a number of Councils taking part to gain the views of their Councillors and Parish Councils. The results are compared with the Public Satisfaction survey results but are not made public.



Benchmarking

At the NHT/HMEP Conference Teresa Jolley of Mouchel, Chair of the NHT Performance Benchmarking Network (NHTPBN), provided some background to the original Highway Works and Highways Design clubs and went on to say that one of the major factors in the decision to merge the two clubs is that the distinction between Design and Works no longer fits how the sector must work.

There is now a need for:

- more collaborative working,
- partnering arrangements between local authorities and their suppliers
- economic pressures causing us to take greater interest in the long-term lifecycle costs of managing the Local highway network

the spotlight for managing performance is shifting from 'how well we can perform independently' to 'how well we can work together' for the ultimate aim of improving service delivery to the public.

Teresa went on to say: "the one thing that has stood out and has inspired me is the incredible passion, commitment and enthusiasm of your committee to the concept that benchmarking performance and sharing good practice for the benefit of the public is the right thing to do. Also inspiring is the dedication and commitment of measure2improve to support the needs of the committee and deliver what is required. We also now have the added value of Public Satisfaction Data.

As I became familiar with the detailed discussions of just how the KPI's should be calculated, how the information should be reported, how we overcome the distinct differences in terms of commercial sensitivity between public and private sector, how we actually share good practice and learn from it, etc, I became more confused! Like I'm sure you have too, I have questioned on several occasions – are you sure we need to go to all this trouble? The answer is a resounding and emphatic YES. You can't manage what you can't monitor, and it is essential that we learn from each other and demonstrate improvement in service delivery to the public."

The NHTPBN will Support the whole-team, Local Authority (Client)-led approach to managing and improving service delivery to the public by sharing performance data between all service providers (whether public or private) for each Local Authority member. Reporting will be for the alliance i.e. against the client name so that no private contractor or consultant organisation's data is made public.

For more information about the NHTPBN please visit www.nhtbenchmarking.org

NHT in the Regions



The SWHSIG are looking forward to welcoming Matthew Lugg, Director of Environment and Transport, Leicestershire County Council to their next meeting on 16th November. Matthew is the HMEP Workstream Group Leader for Operational Service Delivery.

A presentation was given by the NHT to the Eastern Highways Alliance (EHA) at their last meeting in October. The Members of the EHA are considering whether to create a NHT regional group.

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

www.nhtnetwork.org