

## Newsletter 17 May 2010

### **PCIS Regional Seminars – Autumn 2010**

Following the very successful PCIS regional seminars last year, reported in the September and November newsletters, we are provisionally planning the second series for later this year, probably in October and November.

These PCIS seminars will be for local authority users of pavement condition information systems and their service providers. As with last year's seminars, there will be no fee for attendance.

We asked for comments and suggestions in the last Newsletter (February) but have only received a few. We have identified a number of the topics where UKPMS, SCANNER and other related PCIS have changed this year for the regional seminars. These include:

- Using UKPMS, SCANNER and CVI for carriageway asset financial reporting
- Using the new Footway Network Survey
- Using SCANNER and CVI data for scheme identification and treatment selection, etc (getting more from the data)

We may also include a session to discuss the changes planned for UKPMS next year (in 2011), which will form the basis of this year's development and Annual Health Check.

The Highways Asset Management Financial Information Group (HAMFIG) and the Footway and Cycletrack Management Group (FCMG) have agreed to support the events, and will help us find knowledgeable and experienced speakers.

We would welcome offers from local authorities or their service providers to contribute to one of the sessions on using SCANNER and CVI for scheme identification and treatment selection (getting more from the data) following the very well received presentations at last year's PCIS regional seminars.

If you would like to volunteer, or to suggest someone, please contact Stuart McRobbie [smcrobbie@trl.co.uk](mailto:smcrobbie@trl.co.uk) (01344 77 0942).

We anticipate holding 4 seminars. These will cover similar areas to those held last year, but not necessarily in the same locations. Last year we held events in Newcastle, Manchester, Bristol and London.

If you would like to attend one of the seminars, please would you send your contact details to us at [ukpms@trl.co.uk](mailto:ukpms@trl.co.uk), indicating where would be most convenient for you – south east; south west; north east or north west?

## *Transport Infrastructure Assets Code of Practice*

In 2006 HM Treasury and the Department for Transport commissioned CIPFA to carry out a review of accounting, management and finance mechanisms for local authority transport infrastructure assets. Following consultation, the final review report was issued in 2008, and the Government's response, which accepted the review's findings and recommendations, was published in January 2009.

To support implementation, the Government asked CIPFA to produce a new Code that would deliver robust, consistent financial information to support transport asset management, financial management and reporting. The final version is now available to purchase - in both book and CD-ROM format. Further information about obtaining copies is on the CIPFA website at: <http://www.cipfa.org.uk/pt/infrastructure/index.cfm>

This year there have been changes in UKPMS to enable depreciation to be calculated for carriageways. These are explained in UKPMS Technical Note 46 (on the PCIS website), the guidance document for Developers to implement these requirements in UKPMS systems. We also plan to produce a simpler document explaining the calculations and report for users.

These changes were included in the 2009 Annual Health Check, and two developers (WDM and Yotta) successfully completed the optional test 11 to produce financial information to support asset management reports. The other three UKPMS developers (Exor, Pitney Bowes and Symology) have indicated their willingness to add the requirements during the year, using the interim accreditation arrangement.

The accreditation status of all UKPMS systems is published on the UKPMS website at <http://www.pcis.org.uk/index.php?p=25/80/0> and we will update the information through the year.

There are likely to be further developments in the requirements for financial information to support asset management in future years and we are working with HAMFIG to establish the requirements for this year and next, which will be introduced through the Annual Health Check.

## *UK Roads Board*

The UK Roads Board met at the IHT in London on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and the minutes from the meeting have been published on the UK Roads Board website at <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/roads/minutes.htm>.

## *Roads Board Advisory Group*

The RBAG met in Birmingham on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010. As well as regular items on the progress of the PCIS support contract, and a round-up of the work of the UK Roads Board and the various technical groups (PCMG, FCMG, AMG, and HAFIG) the topics presented and discussed included:

- "Funding in a tight climate" With anticipated cuts in central government funding and reductions in local authority capital borrowing over the next 3-5 years, **Matthew Lugg** spoke about what we need to do to maintain the road network.



- Updating the Codes of Practice 'Well-maintained Highways'. **Lila Tachtsi** explained the process for producing complementary guidance for the codes of practice, and some of the recent changes.
- Recent research on deterioration modelling. **Matthew Byrne** of Nottingham University presented a new approach to modelling the deterioration of carriageways.
- The Traffic Speed Deflectometer. **Les Hawker** announced the setting up of a new task group and potential study of the application of the TSD on local roads requiring local authority involvement.

Copies of all the presentations have been published on the PCIS website at <http://www.pcis.org.uk/index.php?p=6/8/0/list,0,87> and the notes from the meeting will be posted soon.

## **Pavement Condition Management Group**

The PCMG met in London on 20<sup>th</sup> May. The main topics for discussion were:

- The requirements for changes in UKPMS in 2010 and 2011, in the light of the decisions on implementing the review of UKPMS core functionality (reported in the February Newsletter)
- The arrangements for the PCIS Regional Seminars
- Progress of the PCIS support contract and the contract deliverables and funding requirements for the next 12 months.

## **Reporting National Indicators NI168 and NI169**

Several local authorities have asked about the requirements for data and processing to produce National Indicators (in England).

None of the four national governments (England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) has requested any changes in the requirements for gathering and processing survey data for reporting carriageway condition (and hence performance). Therefore the requirements for reporting in 2010 are unchanged from 2009.

The Department for Transport has published guidance on the requirements for reporting NI168 and NI169 on the DfT website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/network/local/servicelevels/>

The DfT has also taken the opportunity to re-organise much of the material on this part of their site, and many of the superseded documents have been moved to archive.

## Footway Network Survey

At their meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March, the Footway and Cycletrack Management Group decided to authorise further development work on the treatment rules for the new Footway Network Survey. This work will be to address feedback on initial treatment rules, introduced last year, which were tested in the Annual Health Check 2009.

The Footway Network Survey, and the current treatment rules, are described in more detail in the UKPMS User Manual, Volume2, Chapter 9, available on the PCIS website at <http://www.pcis.org.uk/index.php?p=6/12/0/detail,0,644>

## Future requirements for UKPMS and SCANNER

We are reviewing the future requirements for UKPMS and SCANNER, and have consulted the UKPMS system developers and a number of other stakeholders for their views.

They were asked to think about the current requirements for UKPMS, identify any changes that they anticipated would be required either this year (in 2010 for the 2010 annual health check) or next year (in 2011 for the 2011 annual health check), and let us know of any changes that we should be considering, either for this year, or for next year.

We would welcome comments from anyone who has suggestions for the next round of changes in UKPMS either for the 2010 Annual Health Check or requirements which would affect the Rule Set or the Weighting Sets. We need them as soon as possible, so that the changes can be finalised into detailed requirements before the end of June. Please send any comments or suggestions to [ukpms@trl.co.uk](mailto:ukpms@trl.co.uk).

As part of the review, we would like to hear from anyone who is using the current UKPMS Tranche3 functionality for condition projection and economic prioritisation about his or her experiences.

**If you are (currently) using UKPMS Tranche3 functionality, please inform Andrew Gallagher ([agallagher@trl.co.uk](mailto:agallagher@trl.co.uk)).**

## The effect of frost on funding for maintenance

In February's newsletter we had a "topical" technical article on measuring the effect of the recent harsh weather on carriageways. Since then the Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced additional funding for local authorities in England.

John Dowie wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives on 25 March. His letter said:

"You will have seen in yesterday's Budget that the Chancellor has announced £100 million of funding for local authorities to repair the damage to their highways, following the extreme winter weather that we experienced over the past few months. This funding is exceptional, recognizing that this has been the most prolonged period of severe winter weather for 30 years. I am writing to set out how arrangements for distributing this funding will operate in England.

Of the £100 million announced yesterday, the Department for Transport will be distributing £84 million to English local highway authorities (including London), with

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(Including support for UKPMS, Visual Surveys & SCANNER)



the remainder being made available to the devolved administrations. We are conscious of the need to make early progress in delivering the repairs, and we therefore propose to distribute the funds formulaically, based on the road length component of the Department's highways maintenance capital funding formula.

The funding will be distributed as revenue grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. We will attach conditions to the grant requiring that it be spent on repairs to the authority's highway network resulting from, or worsened by, the 2009/10 winter weather. In the interests of transparency we will also require each authority to provide by 31 October 2010 a brief public statement (say two pages, made available on the local authority's website and copied to the Department) of how it has spent the money.

While an ad hoc patching approach to filling individual holes in the carriageway is possible (and some authorities will have already done some of this to make repairs which needed doing for immediate safety reasons), the Department is eager to see authorities use this additional funding in a way that will maximise the benefits to the road user over the longer term. Although the sums are being distributed as revenue funding, there is no reason why they should not be spent on (and accounted as) capital works, where this will provide a better, lasting solution. No council will wish to see repair works done over the summer unravel in the autumn, through the effects of heavy traffic or the weather, simply because they were hastily done.

In future, authorities will be expected, especially in the light of climate change and the need for them to take account of adaptation, to build in resilience as part of their overall maintenance programme. This country has now seen two severe winters in succession. It will, of course, be for each local authority to review its operations and make adjustments in plenty of time for next winter. Those who have not yet done so might usefully consider the recommendations in the UK Roads Liaison Group's *Lessons from the Severe Weather February 2009*. The Secretary of State will shortly announce details of a review of how the country's transport networks coped with this winter and further lessons for the future.

Although it is difficult to demonstrate a formal causal link, there is evidence that where roads have been properly maintained, winter weather has much less opportunity to do damage. While there will doubtless be severe winters in the future, yesterday's Budget announcement is not a promise that Government will be able to assist with recovery in the same way, particularly where authorities appear not to have taken this lesson to heart.

I hope that this additional investment in your highways network will assist in helping you to maintain it effectively."



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## Contact details

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

If you wish to be added to (or removed from) the circulation list please email your details to us at [newsletter@ukpms.com](mailto:newsletter@ukpms.com).

We welcome your comments and questions at:	<a href="mailto:newsletter@ukpms.com">newsletter@ukpms.com</a>
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