

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13 MARCH 2002

THE SCOTTISH ROAD MAINTENANCE CONDITION SURVEY

Report by The Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To recommend participation in the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey being organised by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** It has been recognised for some time that there is a need to measure the structural condition of carriageways.
- 2.2** Audit Scotland have consulted Scottish Local Authorities on the introduction of a new performance indicator, to measure the condition of carriageways, similar to that already being calculated in England.
- 2.3** In England, the “Ten Year Plan for Transport” sets specific targets for arresting the decline in the condition of local roads by 2004 and eliminating the backlog of outstanding maintenance work by 2010, backed by significant increases in budgets. The funding is based on information gathered from road condition surveys.
- 2.4** In recognition of the need to encourage the Scottish Parliament to provide additional funding along similar lines, SCOTS members have agreed to set up the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) with Perth and Kinross Council as lead Authority.
- 2.5** Close collaboration is taking place with the Scottish Executive, and there is a possibility they will provide some funding for the project.

3 PROPOSED SURVEYS

- 3.1** The purpose of the SRMCS survey is to assess the condition of the whole 56,000 km Scottish road network and to produce evidence, in the form of indicators, to address the £1.5bn maintenance spending backlog across Scotland.

- 3.2** The preferable survey regime would be to carry out surveys on 100% of 'A' class, 50% of B and C class and 25% of unclassified. However, due to technical and procurement difficulties in year 1 (2002/2003), only the 'A' class network will be done.
- 3.3** Generally the method to be used will be machine based, using a vehicle developed by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL). This may require to be augmented by visual surveys where it is not suitable to use the machine.
- 3.4** Machine based surveys while not perfect, are safe, cost effective and do not have the repeatability problems associated with traditional visual techniques.
- 3.5** Visual techniques are required in England to calculate the Performance Indicator. SCOTS consider that this method is fundamentally flawed, due to the repeatability problems. Audit Scotland may force Scottish Authorities to adopt visual techniques unless they can show that machine surveys are the way forward.

Audit Scotland have given a years grace until 2003-2004 to allow SCOTS to come forward with alternative meaningful PI's.

- 3.6** Unless the project is progressed, the more costly and problematic inspection regime based on visual inspections will be imposed by Audit Scotland without further consultation.
- 3.7** In 2002-2003, the survey contract will piggy-back onto the existing Scottish Executive Survey Contract with WDM Ltd. Over the course of the first year, a contract will be let for the survey work in future years.
- 3.8** The TRL have been appointed to act as independent auditors of the project.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The cost to East Ayrshire Council will be :

Year 1	£7,500
Years 2 – 5	£15,625
Total cost	£70,000

It is hoped that the Scottish Executive will contribute to the survey costs.

- 4.2** The surveys will be funded from Development Services Revenue Budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The Council will require to sign up to a joint Legal Agreement with the other Authorities involved in the project. This document has been verified by Legal Services.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the requirements to undertake road maintenance condition surveys for calculating the new proposed performance indicator to measure residual life of carriageways.
- (ii) to approve participation in the proposed Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey being organised by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland
- (ii) authorise the Head of Legal Services to enter into a legal agreement with other Councils involved in the project

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services

AW/YK
22 February 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information please contact Alastair Wyper on 01563 576310.

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AGENDA