



Case Study

National Customer Satisfaction Initiative – Highways and Transport Services

The National Highways Benchmarking Club in Collaboration with
The CSS South West Highways Service Improvement Group (SWHSIG)
Supported and endorsed by the National Highways Efficiency Liaison Group (HELG),
SW Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (Lift SW) and
The Government Office for the South West (GOSW)

Highway authorities engage with local people to gauge the quality of services and to drive service improvement. Different standards and methodologies have led to little reliable or statistically valid opportunity to benchmark or compare results of such work. Responding to local, regional and national needs for better standards in customer satisfaction work, a new method of gauging public satisfaction in Highway and Transportation Services has been developed.

A questionnaire was developed and Ipsos MORI provide the survey service through the National Highways Benchmarking Club. The terms of the contract enable economies of scale to be delivered with a growing participant base and in May 2008 33 English highway authorities had signed up to the survey. Response forms enable geographical plotting of results and minimal manual handling costs. Questions on respondent profile, circumstances, existing travel choices and location were added to facilitate detailed and extensive analysis and drill down opportunities. The 2008 fee was £6,000 for an existing highway authority member of the Benchmarking Club and £6,500 for a non member.

The first survey was conducted in June 2008. Around 27,000 responses were received from 150,000 mailed out. The average response of 19% is significantly higher than the 12.5% predicted by experts and provides a reasonably high level of statistical confidence.

Efficiency in Conducting the Survey and in Data Analysis

The national backdrop was one of widespread variation in standards and methodology along with wholesale and frequent wheel reinvention in the way such work was carried out. Opportunities to share best practice have been limited and bespoke one off surveys tend to carry a high price tag. It is likely that a survey of this new type, providing this level of detailed response, would cost around 100% more if it was carried out as a 'one-off'. Some authorities have spend large sums on surveys and without the comparison and benchmarking opportunities offered here, and a number of authorities have deferred or cancelled higher cost work to take part. On average it is reasonable to say that the survey has provided a typical participant authority with a cashable efficiency of around £6,000.

An additional efficiency is the added value of central survey analysis. It would otherwise be for authorities to analyse independently and with likely inconsistency and therefore poor opportunity for comparison and best practice identification and sharing. It is difficult to assign cashable savings to this efficiency, but it is estimated to be around £1500 per authority on average.

Understanding the Public's View – A Catalyst for Driving Improvement:

Results are gathered under themes linked to national (LTP2) shared transport priorities and other important highway and transport related topics, see table. There is further aggregation to provide overall public satisfaction for an authority and also the collective view of all respondents to the survey nationally. Results are provided both un-weighted and weighted. Weighted results can be used to minimise the impact of significant demographic variations and for enhanced comparability between authorities with differing populations and respondent profiles.

Beneath the aggregated results there are multi level opportunities to drill down through the results to identify exceptions and areas for attention. Drill down can be undertaken for all respondents or for categories of respondents (eg, the elderly, non-car users, people in certain locations etc) providing exceptionally diverse, comprehensive and location based information.

Repeatability of the survey will allow authorities to monitor, with some accuracy, the impact of service improvement activity on different aspects and themes as well as on the service overall.

Mapping Results

The ability to link in with other spatial and location based issues is seen as crucial to maximising the opportunities for cross service integration and service improvement and mapping has the potential to provide the most useful representation of many results. This will enable hot spots to be geographically located and overlaid with a myriad of other data. It is likely that some participating authorities would have sought to map their own results and this provides another opportunity to maximise the benefits of the club approach and to offer an exciting extra dimension to the service, whilst delivering consistency and economies of scale.

The SW Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP) are involved in discussion of the mapping idea. The project is promised SW RIEP grant funding support to 'pump prime' the work to enable the survey results to be depicted in a consistent way on a mapping platform for the benefit of all participants. The SW RIEP is enthusiastic about the idea and its potential to drive service improvements both within authorities and regionally. The detailed proposals are being developed and costed by the Benchmarking Club.

Mapping will support place-based understanding of service issues. This enables an authority to show hot spots arising from the survey (eg related to access, congestion) and then to be able to look across the authority boundaries to see where those hot spots are shared with neighbours. The facility will then exist for further overlay, eg, map based health or deprivation data from the NHS or the Office of National Statistics. The potential to make cross service and authority links in order to help maximise the benefits from investment integration and co-ordination is likely to be unprecedented. The approach will also help authority's transport issues and activities to be considered in a regional context which coincides very much with emerging government thinking and investment.

It is intended to provide map based 'sharable' representation of the survey results (to all survey participants) at no extra cost.

Contact for further information

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Headline Aggregation of Results under Service Themes:

	Overall Public Satisfaction
H&T KBI 1	Overall Satisfaction with Highways & Transport (against local importance)
H&T KBI 2	Overall Satisfaction with Highways & Transport (against national importance)
	Accessibility
H&T KBI 3	Ease of Access to Key Services (all people)
H&T KBI 4	Ease of Access to Key Services (people with disabilities)
H&T KBI 5	Ease of Access to Key Services (no car households)
	Public Transport
H&T KBI 6	Overall Satisfaction with Local bus services
H&T KBI 7	Satisfaction with Local Bus Services (BVPI 104)
H&T KBI 8	Satisfaction with Local Public Transport Information (BVPI103)
H&T KBI 9	Overall Satisfaction with Local taxi (or mini-cab) services
H&T KBI 10	Overall Satisfaction with Community Transport, e.g. Dial-a-Ride & volunteer cars
	Walking & Cycling
H&T KBI 11	Overall Satisfaction with Pavements & Footpaths
H&T KBI 12	Satisfaction with specific aspects of Pavements & Footpaths
H&T KBI 13	Overall Satisfaction with Cycle Routes & Facilities
H&T KBI 14	Satisfaction with specific aspects of Cycle Routes & Facilities
H&T KBI 15	Overall Satisfaction with The Local Rights of Way Network
H&T KBI 16	Satisfaction with specific aspects of The Local Rights of Way Network
	Tackling Congestion
H&T KBI 17	Overall Satisfaction with Traffic Levels & Congestion i.e. queues
H&T KBI 18	Satisfaction with Management of Road-works
H&T KBI 19	Satisfaction with Traffic Management
	Road Safety
H&T KBI 20	Overall Satisfaction with Road Safety Locally
H&T KBI 21	Satisfaction with Road Safety Environment
H&T KBI 22	Satisfaction with Road Safety Education
	Highway Maintenance & Enforcement
H&T KBI 23	Overall Satisfaction with the Condition of Highways i.e. roads & pavements
H&T KBI 24	Satisfaction with Highway Maintenance
H&T KBI 25	Overall Satisfaction with Street lighting
H&T KBI 26	Highway Enforcement / Obstructions