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Roads condition worst ever



A section of road highlighting the affects of permanent deformation.

Results of the latest National Road Maintenance Condition survey confirm that the visual state of roads in England and Wales continues to deteriorate – to the worst overall level since the survey began 22 years ago. All road classes show a worsening condition except rural unclassified, with trunk roads affected in particular by rutting and 'whole carriageway major deterioration'.

The annual NRMCS is sponsored jointly by the Local Government Association; Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions; and Highways Agency. This year's document carries the results of a visual survey involving 156 high-

way authorities and Highways Agency Super Agents plus a structural survey of residual life based on deflectograph analysis.

Motorways are excluded from the visual survey because of the practical difficulties of conducting such a survey, and so are the small proportion of roads with a concrete running surface.

"In each local authority area inspectors carry out a visual survey of a sample of 100m long sites, recording the presence of certain carriageway, footway and verge defects," the report says.

"These defects relate to the visible physical condition only – not deflection, riding quality or skid resistance. The 'Defects Index'

(calculated) for each road class is a summary of carriageway defects. An increase in the value of the index indicates deterioration in road condition."

The index for all roads now stands at 106.9 (1977, the survey's first year, equals 100), an increase of 1.3 over the previous year. Urban principal and urban classified stand at 124.4 and 126.0, representing increases of 1.2 and 3.2 respectively. All purpose trunk roads have gone to 90.4 from 83.8.

The structural condition of roads in England and Wales is demonstrated via a table showing residual life distribution for trunk and principal roads, with motorways "included for completeness even though no visual survey results are available for comparison". The table is compiled by processing the results of deflection surveys conducted nationally together with associated traffic, construction and maintenance data.

Residual life is defined as the period for which it is possible to be confident of serviceability. A negative residual life flags up a

Cold-lay goes to HAPAS

Approval of permanent cold-lay surfacing materials (PCSM) will be taken over by the British Board of Agrément (BBA) from this summer under its Highways Authorities Product Approval Scheme (HAPAS).

PCSMs, which have previously been certified by the Highways Authorities & Utilities Committee (HAUC), are the latest in a lengthening list of highways products that have been taken under the wing of the HAPAS scheme since

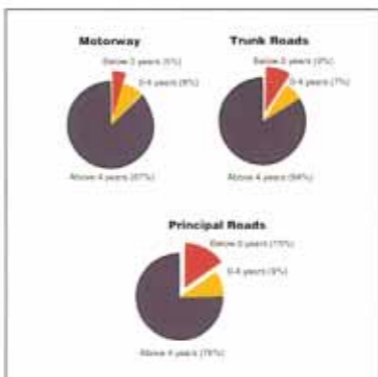
its inception in 1996.

"The HAUC approval scheme for PCSMs will fit neatly in with the wider HAPAS system of approval," says BBA technical manager Paul Oddy. "PCSMs will join a list of seven proprietary highway product groups already beginning to be certified under HAPAS including high friction and thin surfacings, modified binders, bridge deck waterproofing systems and parapet anchorages.

"HAPAS provides nationally

accepted certification of proprietary products to confirm their performance for use on all roads with regular monitoring thereafter. Many proprietary highways products have come to the market during recent times with claims of high performance. HAPAS approval reduces risk for specifiers and allows them to specify proprietary products with confidence."

Oddy says the HAUC approval scheme for PCSMs has already been suspended although existing HAUC certificates will remain valid for two years after the scheme is taken over by the BBA



Distribution of residual life.

possible maintenance requirement; the report indicates that 5% of motorways fall into this category; 9% of trunk roads and 15% of principal roads.

● A £1500M shortfall between what local authorities' highway departments need to maintain their roads properly and what they actually receive was revealed this spring in a survey conducted by the Refined Bitumen Association. The RBA's fourth Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance survey sought the views of all Britain's local authorities which, between them, are responsible for 95% of UK roads. The survey found that the shortfall had increased by 25% over the past year. Under current budgets, local authorities can afford to resurface roads only once every 106 years.

this summer. Holders of HAUC certificates will be able to transfer them for a reduced fee during the first 12 months of the new HAPAS scheme.



Paul Oddy

"There will not be any major changes made to the existing system," adds Oddy.

"It will be taken over and managed in its present form but under surveillance so any problems can be identified and ironed out by the BBA's Highways Technical Advisory Committee."

Modern Asphalts