PREVENTION AND A BETTER CURE – THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT’S POTHOLE REVIEW

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Abstract

Three successive severe winters (2008/09 – 2010/11) had a devastating impact on the condition of the English local road network. After each of these winters there had been a vast increase in the number of potholes and wider road surface defects caused by the winter freeze/thaw conditions. The scale of the problem resulted in widespread public discontent and media criticism. The concern and criticism has not just been about the danger and damage caused by potholes but the inability of Local Highway Authorities to repair these defects satisfactorily.

Recognising the increasing concerns about the “pothole problem” the English Government, as part of the Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP), commissioned an initiative to review the pothole problem.

The review undertaken identified and built on existing best practice both in the UK and internationally. The findings of the review were published in April 2012 and included 17 recommendations which related to 3 key themes:-

- Right first time
- Prevention is a better cure
- Improved communication

The report also contained 20 case studies and other technical advice. This paper describes these key findings in more detail and the progress that has been made in delivering the recommendation since the report was published.

Key Words: Asset management, highway maintenance, potholes, efficiency, severe winters, road network