



Environment & Transport Select Committee  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2011

**Update on Road Marking Maintenance**

**Purpose of the report:** Policy Development and Review

This is an officer report to provide an update to the Environment & Transport Select Committee on the progress with road marking maintenance following the introduction of the new term maintenance contracts.

**Introduction:**

- 1 Road markings are an essential part of the highway environment providing both a safety function and impacting on the street scene. They provide instruction and guidance to road users in terms of safety and can also have a positive or negative impact on the visual appearance of the street scene depending on their condition. For road markings to be effective, they must be clearly visible both by day and night. Road marking longevity will vary by location however the 'typical' road marking lasts up to 3 years on major roads and 7 on minor roads.
- 2 Road markings on the highway must comply with, and be used as prescribed, by relevant legislation. Road markings are used to control, warn, guide or provide information to road users. Some markings have legal implications in that not complying with them could constitute a traffic offence, for example give way markings. (Please refer to Annex A for road markings included in the Highway Code)
- 3 Road marking maintenance can include refreshment of existing markings as a reactive response to a safety defect, a planned or ad-hoc refreshment of existing markings or replacement of markings following resurfacing or patching works. The reactive response to safety defects and replacement following resurfacing etc are integral to the processes of other maintenance activities rather than being a standalone activity. Annex B provides the current response to road marking safety defects identified as part of the Highway Inspection process. The introduction of new road markings would be undertaken as a scheme rather than as part of a maintenance regime. For the purposes of an update on road

marking maintenance this report will focus primarily on the refreshment of existing road markings.

- 4 During the first few years of the previous highway contract road marking maintenance was carried out on a completely ad-hoc basis across the county. In the absence of a planned approach, road marking was refreshed following officer and public requests leading to inconsistency and deterioration in condition across the county. Over the last few years of the contract a planned approach was re-introduced and planned refreshment was undertaken in some urban areas within the county. Due to several operational issues and budget restrictions this was considered only a partial success.
- 5 Procurement of the new highway contracts provided an opportunity to learn from previous experience and improve the condition of road markings across the wider road network in a planned and cost effective approach. The funding has also been significantly increased for the signs and lines budget this year with an increase from £500,000 in 2010/11 to £2,000,000 in 2011/12.

## **New Contract Arrangements**

### **The Service Providers**

- 6 Following procurement of the highway maintenance contracts during 2010/11 the following service providers will deliver road-marking refreshment/replacement as part of the term contracts;
  - Wilson & Scott will deliver the annual road marking refreshment programmes to the SPN 1, 2 & 3 network, Parking schemes and a monthly programme of ad-hoc refreshment across the county.
  - May Gurney, via an appointed sub-contractor, will deliver reactive refreshment in response to safety defect requirements and planned replacement in conjunction with the minor planned, surface treatment and resurfacing programmes.
  - Tarmac, via an appointed sub-contractor, will deliver planned replacement in conjunction with the major maintenance programmes.
- 7 In addition to the County Council contracts, it is worth noting that some borough and district councils, such as Woking and Guildford, undertake refreshment of waiting restriction markings.

### **Wilson & Scott Contract Activities**

- 8 Similar to the other highways contract procurement in 2010 the aim of the new road marking maintenance contract was to get as much work completed as part of a fixed lump sum as possible. Through negotiation the following activities are now being progressed under a lump sum arrangement;
  - The complete SPN 1 network refreshed over 3 years
  - The complete SPN 2 network refreshed over 4 years

- 9 Other activities are also being delivered, as funding allows;
- Completion of a machine survey to measure the condition of the existing road markings on the SPN 1 & 2 networks at the start of the contract.
  - Refreshment of the SPN 3 network.
  - A monthly programme of ad-hoc refreshment.
  - New or refreshment of parking related road markings.

### **Other Contract Activities**

- 10 May Gurney and Tarmac have appointed sub-contractors to carry out the road marking replacement to complete surface treatment and resurfacing schemes. This activity is driven by the requirements of the carriageway maintenance scheme and will be managed as part of that process rather than as a standalone activity.

### **Current Condition of Surrey's Road Markings**

- 11 As a result of the new contract procurement a condition survey has now been carried out on the road markings on SPN 1 & 2 networks. The survey measures the retro-reflectivity of the road markings, which essentially is a measure of the nighttime reflection from a car headlight. At the time of writing the survey report is still being finalised however initial results indicate that the majority of road markings across Surrey have retro-reflectivity below the recognised minimum standard. (Please refer to annex C for an example of the data received to-date)
- 12 These survey results probably reflect the level of maintenance that was achieved through the last contract both in terms of available investment and lack of regular maintenance regime. As described above road markings have an average lifetime of 3 years on major roads and so without planned regular refreshment over the same period, the road markings will deteriorate in condition.
- 13 There has also been a perception that the quality of road marking material has not been consistent over previous years. This could be due to numerous reasons including the choice of marking material by previous suppliers, the ad-hoc approach to maintenance and also the surface texture of the roads being re-marked. Wilson and Scott are part of a group of companies that manufactures road marking material and so this connection provides greater confidence in the ability to provide a consistent quality of material.

### **Programmes of Road Marking Refreshment**

#### **Programme Approach**

- 14 The optimal time to carry out road marking maintenance is during the spring and summer months as a successful operation relies on warm and dry weather conditions and salt free roads. This obviously shortens

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the working window across the financial year and so the vast majority of the work is completed during this period.

- 15 Surrey County Council maintains approx 3,000 miles of roads. These are classified nationally and comprises A, B, C and unclassified roads. Surrey has also developed its own classification, the Surrey Priority Network (SPN), as recommended by the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management. The SPN classification is based on more locally known volumes of traffic and comprises SPN 1, 2 & 3 roads. For example, the highest classification SPN 1 comprises key routes with a high volume of traffic across all of the classifications outlined above. (Please refer to Annex D for detailed description of SPN classification) Currently the volume of road markings is unknown across the county however it is reasonable to expect that the higher classifications of roads will have more road markings than those of a lower classification e.g. a strategic route such as the A217 will have more road markings than a cul-de-sac residential road. (Please refer to annex E for current SPN list)
- 16 With so much of the SPN1 & 2 network below the recognised minimum standard, we will prepare a prioritised programme from this data for the remaining working window of 2011/12. Any prioritisation will need to reflect the lump sum arrangement for complete refreshment over the three and four year cycle.
- 17 To achieve best value for money in 2011/12 the SPN 1 & 2 programme prioritisation will take an area approach and match the SPN 3 programme as far as possible to achieve the benefit of an area wide refresh. (Please refer to annex F for programme areas) It is anticipated that this year's SPN 1 & 2 programmes will be completed at the end of October/early November 2011.
- 18 The SPN3 programme for 2011/12 will continue the urban area refreshment that was started under the previous contract. Further areas for refreshment have been collated using local knowledge from the Area Team Officers. As above, the future strategy for SPN 3 road markings will be reviewed over the winter. (Please refer to annex F for programme areas)
- 19 The planned and cyclical approach to road marking maintenance described above is considered a significant improvement to previous contract and maintenance arrangements. The new contract set-up has addressed previous inefficiencies in road marking maintenance and will also provide opportunities to achieve further efficiency improvements in the future. The area wide maintenance approach also ensures the road marking refresh will be noticed by residents and road users, whereas the previous approach of isolated area refresh would largely go unnoticed. Details of the programmes of refreshment, for 2011/12 and future year proposals will be communicated to members via the highways bulletin and also made available on the webpages for public reference.
- 20 In addition to the SPN annual programmes, a monthly programme of ad-hoc sites, identified by the Area Teams, is also completed. This allows

the Area Teams to progress local road marking issues or areas that are not on other refresh programmes within the year. This ad-hoc programme provides a good opportunity to be able to respond within a reasonably prompt timescale to customer requests for road marking refreshment.

- 21 The programme of new or refreshment of on street parking related markings is currently being developed in conjunction with the progress of the Local Committee meetings. It is expected that the pay and display markings programme will begin from January 2012.

### **Additional Activities/Benefits**

#### **Asset Management**

- 22 Whilst completing the refreshment, Wilson & Scott are also collecting accurate inventory data of the road marking asset. This information will greatly assist the procurement and pricing of future road marking contracts and potentially allow for further cost savings to be realised. The inventory also provides us with opportunities to programme the work and resources more efficiently in the future, creating further cost saving potential.

#### **Innovation**

- 23 We are currently exploring the opportunity to trial a harder wearing material on a few busy sites across the county. This material should provide an increased life 3 to 5 times longer than currently used standard materials but does come at an additional cost. The benefit of a hard wearing material will be most suited to busy locations where wear of the road markings is accelerated and thereby the additional investment should off set the need to refresh on such a frequent basis. In identifying future trials factors such as current frequency of refresh and associated resource implications including traffic management requirements will be considered to evaluate the cost efficacy of different materials.

#### **Sign Cleaning and Road Stud Replacement Follow Up**

- 24 As the road marking refreshment programmes get completed, this will be followed up by sign cleaning in the same areas to complete an area wide refresh of the signs and lines. The majority of this work will take place during the autumn and winter months, as it is not seasonably dependent.
- 25 Wilson & Scott are also due to undertake a night time survey of the road studs on the SPN 1 network to help develop a programme of roads for stud replacement. This work will also take place over the winter months.

<b>Conclusions:</b>
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- 26 Excellent progress has been made with road marking maintenance following the introduction of the new contracts and the significant increase in available funding. This includes large programmes of refreshment to the road marking asset ensuring that, over a reasonable amount of time, the vast majority of the markings will be improved and considered fully fit for purpose. The area-based approach should also realise noticeable benefit to road users and the residents of Surrey.

**Financial and value for money implications**

- 27 The new contract with Wilson & Scott and May Gurney is already delivering a higher quality, better value for money service.

**Equalities Implications**

- 28 A comprehensive Equality Impacts Assessment has been undertaken for the Surrey Highways maintenance contract as a whole.  
[30 November Cabinet paper \(Item 16, Annex F\)](#).

**Risk Management Implications**

- 29 Improved road markings help to reduce the risk of insurance claims and are an important road safety tool.

**Implications for the Council's Priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement Targets**

- 30 None

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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- (a) That the select committee consider and comment on the significant improvements to road marking maintenance achieved through the introduction of the new contracts.
- (b) That the select committee consider and comment on the requirement for ongoing funding to carry out regular maintenance to ensure that road markings are fit for purpose.
- (c) That the select committee endorse the area based programme approach for 2011/12 and subsequent development of prioritisation criteria for future programmes.

<b>Next steps:</b>
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To continue to progress the 2011/12 programme for road marking maintenance as described and progress identification of programmes for 2012 using the condition survey and asset inventory data.

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**Sources/background papers:**

Highway Code

Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 5 Road Markings