Working together to improve public perception through effective communication – specialist surface treatments

Roadtechs believes communication on all levels in the highways sector will help it thrive and be better understood in the eyes of the travelling public. It also believes in giving its customers the best service. That's why we are offering our local authority clients communication support - to help explain to the public why surface treatments are important and what the key benefits are in the overall context of improving their road network, often a council's biggest and most valuable asset.

Roadtechs' team of engineers and specialists and its marketing support network will happily work with local authorities and their communications teams to set out a plan to explain surface treatments and what they will achieve for the public. We have built up this understanding from the numerous local authorities and sites we have applied these on and are keen to share this knowledge and insight in a way that is easy to understand.

We believe that, when the reasoning behind the process has been shared and explained to the local business and residential residents, they understand and accept the benefits that the surface treatments will bring to them in their neighbourhood. All this adds to improving public perception.

Why communicate?

Communicating with the public in the right way has never been more important than now. With the majority of the general public working at home still and reading about their local area online, they are much more aware of work in their local area so there is more emphasis on local authorities and their private sector contractors to communicate the work they are doing on the road network, more frequently and more effectively. But historically this has not always been done well, or too late for the public to be fully engaged with local projects, or even worse, angry with disruptive works because they haven't been told or have failed to understand what the works are for.

While more common problems like potholes and utility repairs will be at the forefront of the public's minds, whatever the work, unless it is explained properly, the public will only see it as a negative not a positive. Communicate effectively and well in advance, then the public will understand why the work is being undertaken and what the benefits are to them.

Common problems like potholes.

Since the start of the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey, residents have been more engaged with transport and road issues than ever before. The NHT Public Satisfaction Survey collects public perspectives on, and satisfaction with, Highway and Transport Services in Local Authority areas. It is a unique, standardised, collaboration between Highway Authorities across the UK enabling comparison, knowledge sharing, and the potential to improve efficiencies by the sharing of good practice.

Over four million households have been sent a copy of the NHT Survey since it was first launched in 2008 and over 912,000 members of the public have responded to date.

T: +44 (0) 1508 536 360 | **E:** info@roadtechsgroup.com | **www.roadtechsgroup.com**

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A total of one hundred and thirty-nine Authorities have taken part in the survey over the past eleven years, twenty-eight County Councils, eleven London Boroughs, thirty-three Metropolitan Boroughs and sixty-seven Unitary Authorities, nine of which were Scottish and a further six were Welsh.

Ask most people what the important factors are when they are voting in an election, highways and transport will come in the top ten on most occasions.

The number of local authorities considering surface treatments such as **Reclamite** - the product that extends the use of asphalt roads and pavements through rejuvenation, or RHiNOPHALT - asphalt preservation which keeps roads and other assets in better condition for longer, is on the increase.

Reclamite is a formulated emulsion derived from the petrochemical industry and it restores the chemical elements that have been lost in the asphalt through aging and oxidation. **Reclamite** has been designed to absorb into the asphalt road and pavement to restore durability. **Reclamite** extends the life of asphalt roads and pavements saving time and money on resurfacing and maintenance. The product penetrates through the voids in the asphalt surface, strengthening the asphalt and aggregate bond.

We also apply **CRF** which remains flexible and resilient to create a new seal for the surface and protects the existing bitumen from the impact of oxidization due to weathering and UV degradation. **CRF** provides an economical alternative to conventional wear course seals.

During treatment

Some of the frequently asked questions we get are:

- We would like to try these treatments but what about the residents?
- We do not want complaints about the processes that we know will benefit the network in their area – what can we do?
- We know that the residents will complain about the plans we have, can you support?
- We had problems with the residents last time we had works in that area, street, or road, how do we avoid the same happening?
- How can we explain these works to the residents?
- The public will ask why we are treating new roads or ones in good condition and not the ones in poor condition with lots of potholes, can you help us with the response?

If you're a local authority and the above makes you think 'yes, we get that', you are not alone. Let us share with you how we can support you.

Contact Trevor Thompson –
info@roadtechsgroup.com
Visit: www.surfacetreatments.co.uk