



EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Growth and Development
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Environment & Operations
DATE:	23 June 2023

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Growth and Development
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WARD/S AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
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SUBJECT: National Highways and Transport (NHT) 2022 Survey Results

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To inform the Executive Member of the results of the National Highways and Transport's (NHT) 2022 Public Satisfaction Survey, On-line Themed Surveys, Performance Management Framework (PMF) and Customer, Quality, Cost (CQC) Efficiency Network.

Officers will carry out detailed analysis of the results and use the findings to inform policy and budget proposals going forward with the survey's results used to guide how we can improve on Public Satisfaction, Performance and Efficiencies. These will be the subject of separate briefing papers as necessary.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

- Notes the review of the detailed results of the NHT Survey 2022
- Approves the use of the findings of this review to inform policy and budget proposals going forward
- Approves the continued participation in the NHT Network by the submission of an Expression of Interest for the 2024 survey.

3. BACKGROUND

The DfT reward local authorities that can demonstrate that their Highway's Service is delivering value for money and carrying out cost effective improvements. They do this through the Incentive Fund Self-assessment process with Level 3 authorities receiving a higher level of funding.

A key element in achieving Level 3 status is showing that the authority actively participates in Customer Satisfaction, Benchmarking and Efficiency Monitoring and uses them to drive improvement and efficiencies in the delivery of the highway service.

With the DfT backing, the NHT Network saw 111 Authorities participating in the 2022 Public Satisfaction Survey of which 93 also participated in the Performance Management Framework (PMF) Network and Customer Quality Cost (CQC) Network, which provide benchmarking and cost efficiency data respectively. Continued participation in the network is recommended.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

NHT Public Satisfaction Survey

Postal Surveys

As in previous years the authority had a poor response rate to this survey. The survey was sent to 4,300 households with only 657 responding (14 fewer than last year with 541 postal responses and 116 online responses received) this equates to a response rate of just 15.3% compared to the national average of 22.8%. Overall there is a trend towards marginally lower response rates for the survey year on year.

Attached as background papers to this report are the two general reports provided by the NHT for the postal survey:

- 2021 NHT Survey Executive Summary
- 2021 NHT Survey Authority Annual Report





The Executive Highlights Report focuses on the performance of the authority's Key Benchmark Indicators (KBI) comparing 'Year on Year Trends' and 'Differences from NHT averages'.

The Authority Annual Report looks at the performance of all indicators – Key Benchmark Indicators, Benchmark Indicators, Key Quality Indicators and Quality Indicators - comparing each with NHT averages.

Overall, the authority is generally below the national average for public satisfaction with the results also suggesting there is a slight downward trend from previous years. This downward trend, however, is seen across the vast majority of authorities nationally.

This overall downward trend can be seen in the tables below where the 2022 results are compared to the 2021 both against our own previous submission and against the NHT average.









The table below summarises the change in Blackburn's results compared with last year.

Change	Result	Key Benchmark Indicators	Key Quality Indicators	Benchmark Indicators	Quality Indicators
	4%+ above last year	0	0	1	0
	0-3% above last year	10	2	29	14
	0-3% below last year	15	2	48	1
	4%+ below last year	2	0	17	2

The table below summarises the difference between Blackburn's results and the NHT average.

Change	Result	Key Benchmark Indicators	Benchmark Indicator	Key Quality Indicators	Quality Indicators
+	4%+ above average	1	5	0	3
+	0-3% above average	7	26	3	7
-	0-3% below average	12	34	1	8
-	4%+ below average	7	31	0	4

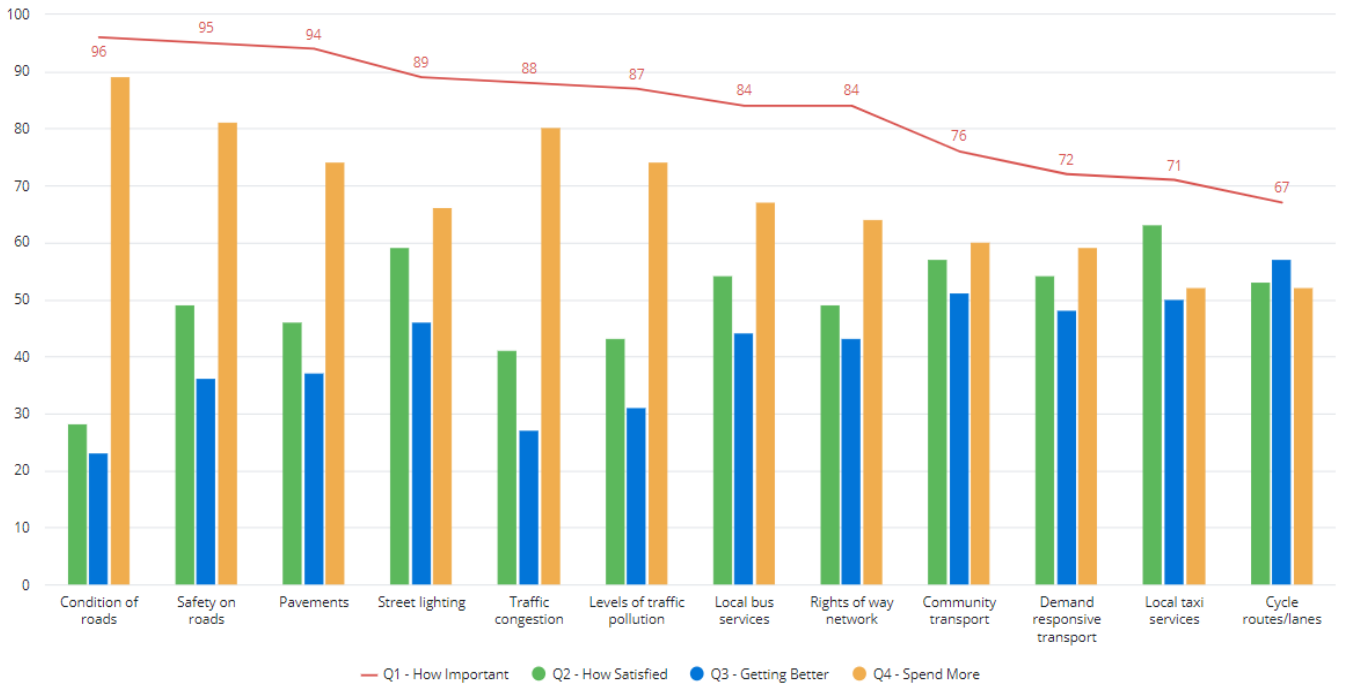
Blackburn's theme scores are compared with the NHT Average scores below. Also shown are the year on year change in results (Trend) and the difference from the NHT Average (Gap), which are highlighted in colour; blue and green for positive and amber and red for negative.

Theme	Description	Score	NHT Average	Trend	Gap
	Overall	47%	50%	-1%	-3%
	Accessibility	67%	68%	-1%	-1%
	Communications	46%	46%	-1%	0%
	Public Transport	53%	51%	-1%	2%
	Walking/Cycling	49%	51%	-1%	-2%
	Tackling Congestion	41%	44%	0%	-3%
	Road Safety	49%	52%	0%	-3%
	Highway Maintenance	42%	46%	-1%	-4%

Residents were again least satisfied with the 'Condition of Roads' and felt that this area should be the Highest Priority. This is in line with the Key Public Perceptions across all authorities where 'Condition of Roads' was the area with least satisfaction from those polled and also the area considered to be the most important and with a need to spend more.

The importance that residents put on different aspects of highway services can be seen in the graph below where they were asked which area was the most important to them, how satisfied they are with that area, if they perceive that area to be getting better and if it would be acceptable to improve the level of the service in that area by spending more.

Graphical Presentation of Scores



A summary of the surveys best and worst scores can be found in the Highlights report attached for background information.

A summary of the best and worst scores can be found below:

Best and Worst Scores

Best Scores

Your authority's highest scores in the Survey this year:

- * Best theme: Accessibility, 67%
- * Best satisfaction result: How easy buses are to get on/off (PTBI05), 67%
- * Best well informed result: Informed about climate change (CMQI18), 59%
- * Best ease of access result: Ease of access to local shops/supermarkets (ABI03), 76%

Worst Scores

Your authority's lowest scores in the Survey this year:

- * Worst theme: Tackling Congestion, 41%
- * Worst satisfaction result: Speed of repair to damaged roads (HMBI30), 25%
- * Worst well informed result: Informed about local air quality (CMQI07), 30%
- * Worst ease of access result: Ease of access (disabilities) (KBI04), 62%

Best and Worst KBI Satisfaction Scores

Your authority's best and worst KBI scores in the Survey this year:

- * Best KBI: Taxi/mini cab services (KBI09), 63%
- * Worst KBI: Condition of highways (KBI23), 28%
- * Most improved KBI: Local bus services (aspects) (KBI07), 3%
- * Most reduced KBI: Pavements & footpaths (aspects) (KBI12), -4%

In other highlights it shows public perception is that there are more pot holes and damaged roads and we are doing less to repair them:

Other Highlights

Potholes and Damaged Roads

Compared to a year ago would you say:

* There are more potholes and damaged roads, there are fewer or no change in the number: More

* The Council is doing more to repair local roads, doing less, or about the same: Less

Response demographics

Of the 657 responses received, 352 were from residents who were over 65 years old. As a result, 285 respondents were recorded as 'Wholly retired from work' whereas only 161 respondents were recorded as 'Employee in full-time job'.

The effects of any uneven distribution of age are offset when the indicator scores (KBI's, BI's and QI's) are calculated by the use of a weighting scheme carefully devised by Ipsos MORI.

It is also worth noting the results of this survey indicate the public's perception of our services and not our actual performance and that these downward trends are seen across the majority of Authorities as we continue to provide an ever more efficient service against increasing material costs, inflation, extreme weather conditions and increased traffic volumes along with maintaining an ageing network of assets.

Online Surveys

In addition to the randomly sampled postal survey, there were a selection of online surveys which people were urged to participate in. The number of responses to each themed online survey was as follows:

Type of Online Survey	No. of Surveys	Complete	Incomplete	Blank	No. of Responses
Accessibility	25	0	1	24	1
Highway Maintenance	25	2	2	21	4
Public Transport	28	0	0	28	0
Road Safety	22	1	0	21	1
Tackling Congestion	20	0	1	19	1
Walking & Cycling	12	1	1	10	2

Once again, as previous years, it is disappointing to see a significant number of people accessing the surveys only to then leave their scorecards blank but particularly disappointing this year is the extremely low numbers overall, with only 132 surveys accessed and only 4 responses completed with a further 5 partially completed.

To put this in perspective, below is the same table from the 2021 survey, where it can be seen that a much higher response rate was achieved with 559 surveys accessed, of which 175 were completed and 72 partially completed. Officers will carry out an investigation as to why there is

such a discrepancy of results between the response rates for the two years and seek to ensure that next year's online survey response is improved.

Type of Online Survey	No. of Surveys	Complete	Incomplete	Blank	No. of Responses
Accessibility	102	32	9	61	41
Business User	40	0	2	38	2
Highway Maintenance	160	76	20	64	96
Public Representative	1	0	0	1	0
Public Transport	51	10	3	38	13
Road Safety	77	17	20	40	37
Tackling Congestion	54	16	7	31	23
Walking & Cycling	74	24	11	39	35

Performance Management Framework (PMF)

Question 3 within the self-assessment of the Local Highways Maintenance Incentive Fund highlights the importance of each highway authority possessing a performance management framework. Such a Framework is also recommended within the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice and associated documents.

The NHT Performance Management Framework is designed to provide a systematic approach to measure progress in the implementation of asset management. It gives participating authorities:

- A standard performance management framework
- A measurement hierarchy to highlight strengths and weaknesses, and good and bad performance
- A means of measuring improvement and targeting corrective action
- A standard set of measures that provide a basis for benchmarking performance with others

The NHT provides an annual PMF report, a copy of which is attached as background information to this report and will be published on the council's website

The chart below taken from the report shows that overall the authority is performing below par when compared to other authorities with the majority of our performances being in the poor (amber) category. There are none in the very good category (blue) a few in the good category (green) and none in the very poor (red) category. Overall there is a slight downward trend compared with last year's performances:

Overall Performance Hierarchy

Aggregated performance of the PMF Indicators by category, and by level (based on benchmark scores).

Corporate Level Performance

Economic Growth	Health & Environment	Resident Experience
-0.4	0.4	-1.0

Management Level Performance

Strategic	Tactical	Operational
-0.9	-0.7	0.3

Theme Performance

Accessibility	Serviceability	Sustainability	Safety	Financial
-0.5	-0.5	-1.2	0.3	-0.5

Activity Performance

Claims	Condition	Defects	Enquiries	Financial	Incidents	Inspections	Operations
1.0	-0.2	-0.9	1.5	-1.1	0.0	2.5	-0.5

Asset Type Performance

Carriageways	Cycleways	Footways	Rights of Way	Highways	Drainage	Green Infrastructure	ITS Infrastructure	Street Lighting	Structures
-0.3	1.7	-0.8	0.9	-1.3	-0.1	-1.9	-0.9	-0.3	0.5

The table below shows the results of the final line of the chart above (Asset Type Performance) in more detail. From this it can be seen that of the ten asset types being measured, four are on an upward trend and six on a downward trend with seven of the ten asset types being below average compared to only three last year.

Summary Performance by Asset Type

The table below summarises the performance for all PMF indicators scored by Blackburn by Asset.

Asset	Above/Below Average	Year on Year Trend	Indicators Above Average	Indicators Below Average	Benchmark Score	Indicators Trending Up	Indicators Trending Down	Benchmark Trend
Carriageway	–	↓	20	25	-0.3	16	20	-0.3
Cycleway	+	↑	3	0	1.7	3	0	0.9
Drainage	–	↓	4	4	-0.1	4	4	-0.8
Footway	–	↓	8	11	-0.8	3	11	-1.0
Green Infrastructure	–	↑	0	1	-1.9	1	0	0.6
Highways	–	↓	6	18	-1.3	3	9	-1.1
ITS Infrastructure	–	↓	0	1	-0.9	0	1	-0.9
Right of Way	+	↑	4	2	0.9	3	1	0.1
Street Lighting	–	↓	5	8	-0.3	5	4	-0.9
Structures	+	↑	7	7	0.5	6	4	0.0

The table shows that in general terms the performance of the highway service has declined since last year and highlights the areas that require improvements to be made. These areas are generally linked to the condition of roads being Carriageways, Footways and Highways and to a lesser extent carriageway related infrastructure.

It is worth noting that this downward trend is seen in the majority of Authorities as previously highlighted we continue to strive to provide an ever more efficient service against increasing material costs, more extreme weather conditions and traffic volumes along with the condition of our ageing network of assets, which, due to budgetary constraints, have been subject to a long term and systematic lack of routine and planned maintenance.

Customer Quality Cost (CQC) Network

Conventional benchmarking methods, using metrics like £ per Km of road network or £ per head of population take no account of the differing circumstances that authorities work under.

The NHT CQC Statistical Model provides a better like for like comparison of cost between authorities by using advance statistical techniques:

- Adjusting the cost of each authority before they are compared to allow for differences in network size and composition, traffic volume and input prices (wages).
- Making allowances for the effects of changes in the level of investment on the network to avoid penalising authorities in the analysis when they are investing in their network.

NHT CQC quantifies the real efficiency gains made by an authority over time (since 2013/14), expressing the savings made in percentage and financial terms.

These efficiency gains are savings that result from improved effectiveness as opposed to budget cuts. They represent real improvements that have been made without loss of quality or that result in higher quality for the same spend - increased effectiveness = more for the same or less.

The authority's headline results from the 2021/22 round of analysis are as follows:

- **NHT CQC Rating (based on trend figures) 90%**
This is how close you are to your 'Predicted Minimum Cost' (100%). The difference to minimum cost is the amount you could theoretically reduce costs without affecting quality (see note).
- **Efficiency Improvement (since 2013/14) 8.2%**
This is the amount by which your adjusted annual expenditure has reduced and you have improved your efficiency through the adoption of more efficient practices, without loss of quality.
- **Efficiency Savings this year £209.296**
This is how much your authority saved in 2021/22 through the adoption of more efficient practices and represents the additional amount it would be costing your authority if you were still using 2013/14 practices.
- **Cumulative Efficiency Savings (since 2013/14) £3,095,711.00**
This is the total amount of money you have saved by adopting more efficient practices since 2013/14, it is the amount extra your authority would have paid over the period had you not made these savings.
- **Catch up Improvement -2.0%**
Your Catch-up Improvement reflects the change in your performance relative to the best performer in the Network, the amount by which your CQC rating has changed over the period.

Whilst an efficiency improvement of 8.2% since 2013/14 is to be welcomed, the authority's catch-up improvement figure is -2.0%. This indicates that although we have improved since 2013/14 we are not keeping pace with our predicted minimum cost over time.

As always there are further improvements that can be made and further lessons to be learned from other authorities.

In this respect, officers continue to seek ways to improve the service, one way of which is by participating in regional and national groups such as LCRIG (Local Council Roads Innovation Group) and NWHAG (North West Highways Alliance Group). At these forums, members share best practice, innovation and ideas.

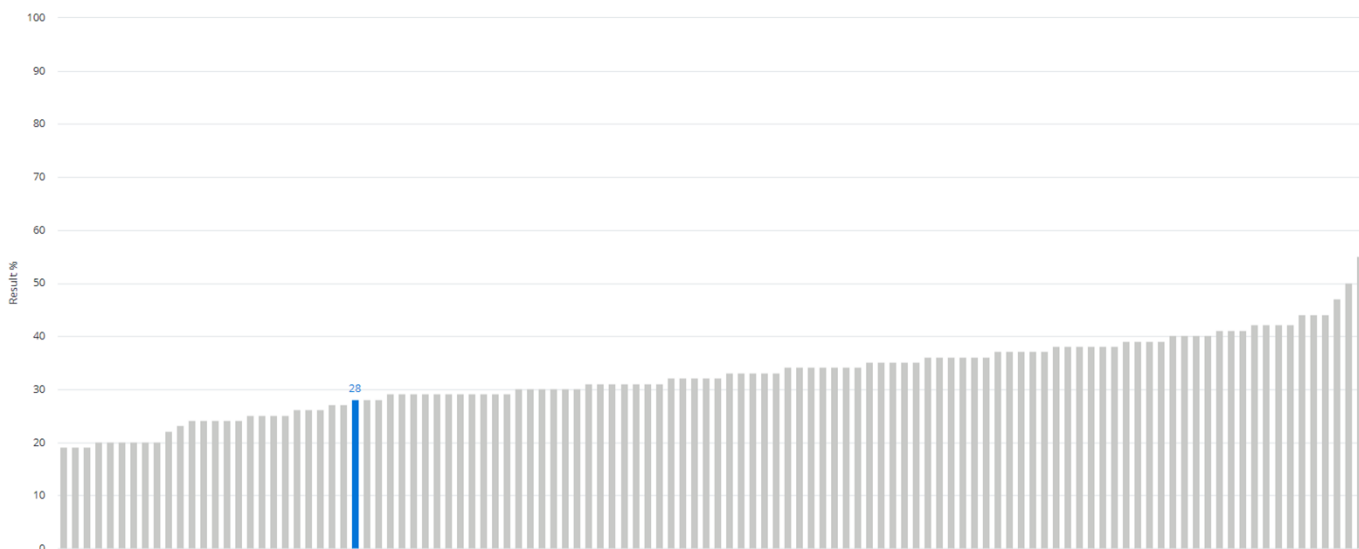
NHT Website Members Area

Finally, it should be noted that in addition to the official reports produced by NHT and submitted with this report as Background Papers, officers have access to the member's section of the NHT website where a deeper analysis of the results for each of the areas above can be undertaken.

For example, a deeper analysis of the Indicator 'HMBI 01 - Condition of road surfaces' which had the lowest public satisfaction results in the postal survey shows the distribution of all authority's results below, with Blackburn with Darwen's result highlighted in blue where we scored 28% and are ranked 85 out of 111 authorities:

Result distribution

The graph below shows the distribution of results in this year's survey from low to high, with Blackburn's result highlighted in blue.



Whilst this means that there is definitely room for improvement as to how the public perceive the condition of our roads, it is worth looking at this in context to our immediate neighbouring authorities whose results for this indicator were as follows:

Bury Council	24%
Lancashire County Council	26%
Bolton Council	29%
Blackpool Council	29%
Wigan Council	31%

This would suggest that the public's satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) has a regional context to it and improving our individual score may be difficult.

Another example are the individual reports which can be run comparing our results to different peer groups. These reports show the top performers in each group together with the biggest improvers. This enables officers to contact relevant colleagues in these authorities to ascertain any practices that may be transferrable to our way of working in order to improve our services.

Officers will use this more detailed analysis capability as a further tool to inform any policy and budget proposals going forward.

Recommendations

1. To improve awareness of the survey and the surveys response rates, particularly to the online surveys which had a poor response rate this year. It is felt that greater response rates across a greater cross section of the population would bring more accurate results.

This can be done by actively advertising the survey and perhaps offering some incentive to taking part.

2. To use the results of the survey to guide how we can improve on Public Satisfaction, Performance and Cost Efficiencies internally.

We will review the delivery of our services focusing on those areas highlighted by the survey to seek out and implement any changes or efficiencies that may be found to ensure these services are running as effectively as possible and more importantly that they are spreading awareness of their efficiencies and successes to our customers.

This will be done by sending individual reports to service leads tailored to their delivery area to inform them of the results and to discuss ways in which improvements can be made where possible. Data and individual reports can be generated during this process to target specific areas upon request.

This process will also look at the data we submit, the format of the data and how this may affect our results when comparing our data to others.

3. To promote awareness of areas where we have been successful and provide information to the public to keep them informed of activities and upcoming works.

By sharing positive information our aim is to improve the public's perception of our services. We can do this through various channels, for example:

- Introducing the use of scheme sign boards at works to give information on site about the scheme and how it has been funded.
- Providing more positive information on our website and social media channels about our successes, for example:
 - How many pothole repairs we have undertaken in the previous month/year

- How many gullies we have cleared in the previous month/year,
- About our funding where it comes from and where/how it is spent.
- List or locations of schemes to be undertaken in the next 5 years.
- Information on schemes we have planned for the current year
- Information on schemes we have successfully completed in the previous year and the improvements they have brought about.
- Actively asking for feedback following schemes whilst satisfaction is high and posting positive feedback on our website and social media channels.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None – Any changes or updating of existing policies as a result of the review of the results will be taken separately through the Council’s approval procedure with any revised policies submitted individually for approval.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Continued participation in the NHT Network is a key element of the DfT Incentive Funding Self-Assessment process and non-participation could reduce the council’s self-assessment grade which would impact negatively on future DfT Incentive Funding.

The cost of participation in 2023 is £23,268 (inc VAT).

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

None

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Berry
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DATE:	9 th May 2023
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	2022 NHT CQC Authority Report
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	2022 NHT CQC Executive Summary
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	2022 NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Authority Annual Report
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	2022 NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Executive Summary
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	2022 NHT Public Satisfaction Survey Highlights Report
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	2022 PMF Authority Annual Report
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