

Appendix I - Increase in Unit Rates between 2009 & 2010

Approximately one third of the cost of completing surface dressing work is the cost of the bituminous emulsion which is referred to as the binder. The Central Statistics Office (Ireland) tracks wholesale prices and retrospectively publishes price changes on a monthly and a yearly basis.

The latest information on the CSO website in its wholesale price indices for construction materials is April 2010. Under the heading of “bituminous emulsions” the index increased from 118.2 in April 2009 to 150.7 in April 2010 and that represents a 28% increase. A 28% increase on one third of the cost base equates to an overall increase for surface dressing work of just over 9%.

The average cost for surface dressing for all counties outside Dublin increased from €4.56(per m²) in 2009 to €4.96 (per m²) in 2010 which is an 8.8% increase. Essentially the cost increase in this case is accounted for by the change in the cost of bituminous emulsion which does fluctuate.

It is important to note that other factors also affect unit costs and if some factors represent increases and others represent decreases then they may cancel out. It so happened that between 2009 and 2010 the dominant factor was the change in the cost of bituminous emulsion. Other factors that will affect the cost of carrying out surface dressing are the other cost elements such as the cost of chippings, labour, machinery, traffic management and health and safety requirements.

A further factor which would affect the unit rate is the carrying out of non-surface dressing work in urban areas. Such works can greatly increase unit rates as the work will involve more expensive strengthening materials (Hot Rolled Asphalt & Clause 942 materials). It may also be necessary to remove the old surface to maintain levels adjacent to kerbs and manholes and gullies or alternatively to raise all of those features which are common in urban areas.

From 2011 onwards all non-surface dressing works have been excluded from the surface dressing unit rates and this will help to ensure better comparability of rates in the future. In the case of South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Councils it should be noted that all of the restoration maintenance monies were used on other surface treatments as the application of surface dressing was not appropriate.