

Briefing paper for Consultees

This consultation is being undertaken by Highways England in collaboration with Transport Scotland, Welsh Government and Department for Infrastructure Northern Ireland.

1. Why is a consultation being undertaken now?

There has been a previous consultation (in 2018) on the “Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works” (MCHW). All the MCHW Volumes (Volume 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) were included in that consultation.

The overarching reason for that earlier consultation on the MCHW is explained in [Appendix A](#).

This further consultation is solely on MCHW Volume 4 - Bills of Quantities for Highway Works.

Volume 4 Bills of Quantities for Highways Works includes the following:

- Section 1 – Method of Measurement for Highway Works.
- Section 2 – Notes for Guidance on the Method of Measurement for Highway Works.
- Section 3 – Library of Standard Item Descriptions for Highway Works.

2. Scope of the consultation

The scope of the consultation is solely Volume 4 – Bills of Quantities for Highway Works, Sections 1, 2 and 3 - “Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works” (MCHW).

The previous consultation on the whole of the MCHW concluded that Volume 4 should be included in the future update of the MCHW (Future MCHW) for the following reasons.

Volume 4 to be retained in the MCHW and updated – it is valuable:

1. in support of estimating (although alternative approaches are becoming predominant);
2. contracting / sub-contracting (including valuing compensation events by agreement);
3. in support of consistency

NOTE Potential for harmonisation with recently published MoM by Network Rail.

Therefore, the objectives of this consultation are as detailed in Chapter 3 below.

3. Objectives of the consultation

The objectives of the consultation are:

- to collect a whole roads sector view on **How and Why** (eg: **software use, removal of a Section or an addition of a Section etc etc and Why**) Volume 4 Bills of Quantities should be updated for the Future MCHW;
- to identify any other **Opportunities** other than computerisation (eg **formalise its use in Estimating project costs by BoQ sections or Unit Rates; or in Tender Assessments without the need for other 3rd Party software or input/transfer to the International Construction Measurement Standard (ICMS)**);
- to identify suggested **Changes** (eg **by Section of the Volume**) to Volume 4 Bills of Quantities.
- to identify other **Opportunities** linked to BIM (eg **Software use**).

- to identify the different **Users** of Volume 4 Bills of Quantities.
- to understand how Volume 4 Bills of Quantities is **Used** (eg *Stage of project; Planning – Environmental Statement, Cost Estimate, Tender Stage (assessment) and Contract*).
- to identify any possible **alternatives** to the current method of measurement for highways work and library of item descriptions (eg *Network Rail Method of Measurement etc, etc*)
- to identify and explore **any differences of opinion** on how Volume 4 Bills of Quantities should be updated for the Future MCHW.
- to identify a suitable location in contract documents for the **Preamble to the Bills of Quantities** (eg *for NEC3 or 4 Forms of Contract it is either Works Information or Scope*).

The purpose of the consultation is not to identify technical concerns with specific elements of Volume 4 Bills of Quantities in the existing MCHW documents, but these would be gratefully received.

4. Approach to the consultation

This consultation will comprise:

- one questionnaire (attached) containing open questions and statements to be scored according to the level of agreement or disagreement;

5. How will the findings of the consultation be used?

A report on the outcomes of the consultation will be prepared so it may be finalised by the **end of June 2020** and the report findings (consultation) will be used to inform the recommendations for the update of Volume 4 Bills of Quantities in the Future MCHW.

6. Background

The current range of MCHW documents has evolved over 50 years and the elements of Volume 4 Bills of Quantities have not been updated on average in 11 years.

6.1 MCHW Volume 4 – Bills of Quantities

The MCHW Volume 4, including all three sections, is not used consistently in current contract documents.

Table 1: MCHW Volume 4 Contents

Volume No.	Title	Content
Volume 4	Bills of Quantities for Highway Works	<p>Section 1 – Method of Measurement for Highway Works.</p> <p>Section 2 – Notes for Guidance on the Method of Measurement for Highway Works.</p> <p>Section 3 – Library of Standard Item Descriptions for Highway Works.</p>

6.2 Issues

A range of issues with the current MCHW Volume 4 Bills of Quantities has been recognised, including amongst others:

- (i) **Age of documents** – Since its first publication, the average age of documents in the Bills of Quantities in Volume 4 has an average age of 11 years.
- (ii) **Inconsistencies.**
- (iii) **Lack of Software with Manual collation of the Bills of quantities.**
- (iv) **Lost usage, knowledge and understanding of the Volume 4 document.**

7. Responses from organisations

Only one consolidated response should be provided from each organisation.

Consultees will serve in a personal capacity, but where relevant will be expected to have an understanding and broadly reflect the views of the organisation that has nominated them.

8. Timescales

The questionnaires will be sent on **Friday 1st of May 2020** and needs to be returned by all stakeholders or consultees by **Wednesday 27th May 2020** at the latest.

There will not be a workshop in this Phase/Stage, but should it become apparent that a workshop would be helpful this may become a recommendation from the consultation.

Appendix A

On 1 April 2015 the Highways Agency became Highways England, a government company charged with operating England's motorway and all-purpose trunk road network.

The statutory directions and guidance which apply to Highways England are defined in a Licence. The overall governance framework and relationship between government and Highways England are defined in a Framework document. Highways England is also obliged to carry out activities or functions specified by the Secretary of State in a Protocol Agreement (Annex C to the Framework Document).

While the Protocol Agreement does not refer to the MCHW specifically as for the DMRB (see sections 8.3 and 8.8 to the Protocol Agreement), there is a general obligation on Highways England to maintain the standards for all works on the motorway and all-purpose trunk road network in the UK, including the MCHW.

The opportunity to embrace industry best practice and national strategic objectives (such as the Roads Investment Strategy, the Transport Infrastructure Efficiency Strategy and the Government Construction Strategy), as well as to align the MCHW with the future DMRB (currently under review) has also been recognised.