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Ringway Finishes Resurfacing Ahead of Schedule

Reconstruction projects on busy roads are a major challenge for all those involved in highway maintenance. On the organisational side, the challenge is to avoid delays that are not only costly, but also affect road users and residents in their daily lives. Technically, to construct surfaces that can deal with today's heavy strain requires a high level of expertise and attention to the specific situation on the site. The resurfacing of part of the A229 on Blue Bell Hill in spring this year, shows how close teamwork between the client and contractor, combined with the technical expertise and meticulous organisation, make such projects a success. The contract co-ordinated by Ringway, on behalf of Kent Highway Services, needed only 56 hours to completely reconstruct 9,000m² of the carriageway, and to plane and resurface almost 38,000m².

Ringway has been Kent's road maintenance contractor for eleven years, and in this time the two parties have established a teamwork approach that relies on close communication and involvement from an early stage. Geoff Mee, Director of Kent Highway Services saw an opportunity to improve the road surface and skid resistance conditions on Bluebell Hill. As a result, Kent Highway Services consulted with Ringway during the initial investigations, for their assistance in determining the type of work required to meet this objective. After a joint site visit, both the client and contractor agreed that due to a number of narrow points at the section in question a complete road closure was needed. To minimise disruption to the many road users, the project had to be completed over a weekend.

The A229 required an extremely durable material for the new construction, as it suffers from a very high level of traffic on a daily basis. "Ringway Technical Centre, based in Warrington came up with a unique solution for this project by developing an innovative multilayer surfacing for the works, ensuring long lasting durability", Andrew Burton, Project Manager at Kent Highway Services, explained.

At the weekend, Ringway applied five layers of surfacing after planning the existing carriageway: The first 40 mm asphalt layer consisted of a 14 mm Fibrovia binder course. Fibrovia is an asphaltic concrete with an exceptionally high binder content. Its workability and ease of application were especially helpful with regards to the short time frame of the Blue Bell Hill project.

Next, Flexiplast was applied, a dual-layer complex with excellent elastic properties and very low thermal sensitivity. Flexiplast was especially designed to prevent reflective cracking.

Ringway's patented Gripfibre, which was used as the next layer, combines polymer-modified emulsion, synthetic fibres, doping agents and specially selected aggregates to provide durability and outstanding hardwearing qualities.

On top of this 10 mm layer of Gripfibre Ringway put another 40 mm layer of Fibrovia binder course before applying the final surface of 14 mm ULM 65psv. Durable and versatile, ULM also offers a number of qualities that are particularly important for road users and residents; high skid-resistance, ultra-smooth riding qualities and noticeably lower noise levels

The resulting multilayer surfacing combines the individual strengths of the four products that were developed by Ringway's parent company Eurovia, forming a hardwearing and skid resistant road. This makes Blue Bell Hill a good example of how Ringway is able to take advantage of the latest European product innovations and apply them to the needs of an individual site. Experts at Ringway Technical Centre in Warrington not only test and adapt Eurovia formulas to the UK requirements, but also tailor bespoke solutions for single projects.

To find the best technical solution was only one of the important challenges facing Kent Highways Services and Ringway with the Blue Bell Hill project. "There were a number of organisational issues to be solved", Steve Clark from Ringway stated. "We needed to fully close the road to minimise the impact on the network users and yet ensure local businesses near the site (a golf course, a diner and a petrol station) were disrupted as little as possible. We therefore chose a short working window over one weekend, enabling us to put the road back into service by 5am Monday morning."

To meet these objectives, Ringway worked out an hourly working scheme and went through it in detail with all parties involved prior to the start of the project. All staff were given a site induction to ensure works were carried out safely and as planned.

Once the works had started, the closure of the road was publicised on local radio, with supervisors and agents in continuous contact with the radio stations. To ensure that any car broken down on the diversion route was removed instantly, a 24 hour breakdown service was also arranged.

A convoy system throughout the works made it possible for the golf course to remain open on Sunday and Ringway also minimised the effect the works had on the diner by actually striking a deal with them to provide catering for the workers across the weekend.

Roger Manning, elected member and chairman of the Kent Highways Advisory Board, and Geoff Mee, Head of Highways, were both extremely pleased with the works: "There has been a tremendous effort in the organisation, resource commitment and focus involved. We would like to thank all those who contributed to the spectacular success of this project." Emphasising the unique relationship with Ringway, Roger Manning stressed the extra value created by the close collaboration of client and contractor: "It's all about mutual understanding and creating synergy."

Steve Clark concluded that Ringway's 25 years plus experience helped to get the project completed four hours ahead of schedule. "Everyone within Ringway is a team player", he said. "With a positive and pro active approach to challenges."

The Ringway Group is a specialist provider of highway maintenance services. Its experience in the business is complemented by an open, flexible and committed approach, leading to innovative solutions tailored to meet the customer's needs. Ringway has built a reputation in completing projects within budget, schedule and to consistently high standards.

For more information on Ringway and its services please visit www.ringway.co.uk

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For further press information please contact Joanne Curtis or Katharina Ratschko at CIB Communications on 01372 371 800 or joannec@cibcommunications.co.uk or katharinar@cibcommunications.co.uk