

THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

NORTH WESTERN BRANCH AWARDS DINNER 2009

The North Western Branch will present awards this evening to projects which have been shown to demonstrate excellence in the environment of transportation in the north-west of England. A shortlist of projects has been drawn up in four categories: Sustainability Project of the Year, Safety Project of the Year, Transportation Project of the Year – Construction and Best Practice and Transportation Project of the Year – Transport Planning. The shortlisted projects are summarised below.

North West Sustainability Project of the Year

Vegecol – Vegecol is a plant based alternative to bitumen and petroleum resin based binders which has been developed by Colas Group's Campus for Science and Techniques. It contains only plant based raw materials which can be used to manufacture many different types of asphalt, or used in pure or emulsified form in surface dressing and decorative applications. Performance data has shown that the characteristics of asphalt containing Vegecol are comparable with or better than conventional materials. Its greatest benefit may become its bringing about a shift away from the use of crude oil in bitumen binders.

Installation of a Combined Noise and Pollution Reduction Fence – The Highways Agency seeks to play its part in delivering the UK's Air Quality Strategy and wanted to research a new technique to assist with this aim. The chosen project was the installation of a noise barrier which could also remove oxides of nitrogen from the atmosphere. The HA chose to install a NOxer barrier on the eastern side of the M60 between junctions 13 and 14 near Swinton. The HA's agent, A-one+, commissioned Capita Symonds to carry out the design of the barrier, and Ringway, the UK agent for NOxer, carried out the design of the panels. The barrier was erected by Tarmac and the next phase of the barrier's performance monitoring and evaluation is ongoing.

Freight Best Practice – Faber Maunsell manages 'Freight Best Practice', the flagship freight transport sustainability project in the UK, through working in partnership with the DfT. The programme promotes operational efficiency, safety, journey time reliability and the reduction of CO₂ emissions within freight operations on road, rail and waterways. Freight Best Practice gives organisations free practical help to maximise the competitiveness and productivity of the economy, making a direct contribution towards addressing climate change. A 2007 assessment of the English programme showed that it had saved industry £85m per year compared with £65m during the previous assessment and had achieved a reduction in CO₂ emissions of 120,000 tonnes. Freight Best Practice has been proven to represent good value for money for its governmental sponsors, and by delivering trusted support it will continue to stimulate behavioural change resulting in sustainable transport initiatives within individual organisations.

Manchester Airport's Carbon Reduction Plan – Climate change is without doubt a major challenge to the responsible and sustainable growth of the aviation industry. Manchester Airport's latest Environmental Plan sets out its strategy for carbon reduction through a Carbon Reduction Plan. The plan uses the principle of a 'carbon ladder' which identifies where savings can be made and identifies projects to support carbon reduction. Projects vary from behavioural change to the innovative use of emerging technologies. The Carbon Reduction Plan has already led to a reduction in CO₂ emissions with the Airport on programme to meet its scheduled targets.

North West Safety Project of the Year

Reducing Child Casualties through Innovative Partnership Working – Capita Symonds is committed to delivering successful road safety schemes through genuine partnership working and works closely with Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council and Urban Vision to achieve this objective. Their approach to casualty reduction is based on Community Participation and Integration, Partnership Working, Innovation and Effective Evaluation. There is a structured and continued approach which allows young people to learn, develop and sustain their road safety awareness from pre-school to becoming drivers and beyond.

The Manchester Airport Runway Incursion Avoidance System (MARIAS) – A runway incursion is an event at an aerodrome that involves the unauthorised or unplanned presence of an aircraft, vehicle or person on the 'protected area' of a surface designated for aircraft landings and departures. There has been a steady increase in the number of runway incursions in the UK and abroad. Manchester Airport has developed a GPS based system which has helped to reduce the number and frequency of runway incursions. The system was installed in a number of MA Operations vehicles in March and a post implementation study will be carried out. Interest in the MARIAS system and its potential has been considerable and both the Civil Aviation Authority and other airports have expressed a wish to explore the possibility of acquiring and implementing it.

The Wasted Lives Young Driver Education Programme – One in three male drivers crash within the first two years of getting their licence: the majority of those in the first six months. In 2006 in Lancashire, 276 young drivers lost their lives or were seriously injured, leaving thousands of families and friends devastated. The Wasted Lives Young Driver Education Programme triggers emotions such as guilt and regret as drivers realise the very real consequences of making the wrong decision. The Lancashire Partnership for Road Safety has distilled the very best content from existing young driver programmes across the country and applied educational theory to achieve successful learning through an active experience that totally involves and is led by the participants.

North West Transportation Project of the Year – Construction and Best Practice

A5117 Deeside Improvement – The A5117 Deeside Improvement connects the A55 North Wales Expressway to the national motorway network via the M56, providing a strategic link between North Wales and the North West of England. The section of road it replaced was a major holiday route but was built to a lower standard which led to significant congestion, a very poor safety record, and poor or non-existent facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. A team of six major organisations worked in partnership to deliver the project: these included the Highways Agency as Client and Carillion as ECI Contractor together with designers, environmental specialists and funding partners. The site is close to a number of Sites of Biological Importance, and areas within and around the site are home to great crested newts and badgers. There are also areas of ancient woodland and an important hedgerow. At each stage of the project great care was taken to ensure that wildlife and its environment were protected: species were translocated, habitats were recreated, and sensitive landscaping and extensive planting were undertaken. A great deal of community liaison and involvement was carried out: there were regular meetings with stakeholders, widespread distribution of a quarterly newsletter, and many initiatives including working closely with local schools and sponsoring their activities. Two lanes of traffic were kept open during construction at peak times and through Value Engineering exercises a total of £6.2m of cost savings were generated. The site safety record was outstanding with a continuous period of nearly 0.5 million hours worked without any construction accidents.

The Liverpool Canal Link – The Liverpool Canal Link is a £22m project that extends the length of the 127 mile Leeds-Liverpool Canal through the previously disused Central Docks, across the Pier Head in front of the world famous Three Graces, and into the South Docks. The Canal Link provides a further 1.4km of navigable waterway which allows canal craft to access a world-class destination via the inland waterway network. Balfour Beatty Regional Civil Engineering constructed the Pier Head section of the canal network which was designed by Ove Arup Partnership. British Waterways managed the public realm aspect which was designed by 2020 Liverpool and Edaw. The initial design concept was subjected to extensive Value Engineering exercises which led to a 30% reduction in the programme duration. Throughout the course of the construction process attempts were made to reduce the environmental impact and this led to numerous initiatives including the use of locally-sourced recycled backfill material, reuse of excavated materials on site, adoption of car share and cycle to work schemes, and the implementation of a waste management plan. The Canal Link is now open offering a highly attractive transport route that will increase tourism and have a significant positive impact on the city.

Freight Best Practice – This project was described in the Sustainability Project category above.

North West Transportation Project of the Year – Transportation Planning

The Lancaster and Morecambe Vision Transport Strategy – The Lancaster and Morecambe Vision aims to make the area an increasingly attractive place to live and work. Faber Maunsell were commissioned to develop an Access and Transport Strategy to support this aim. Remedial schemes were developed to improve access and movement between the two centres, alleviate congestion at key hotspots, improve the quality of life for residents and assist the economic development and regeneration. Following the study, which involved a wide-ranging engagement with stakeholders, a number of schemes were identified and were appraised using a complex process to create a shortlist of recommended schemes worthy of further study and investment. The shortlist included a rapid transit system between Lancaster, Morecambe and Lancaster University, improvements at M6 Junction 33, a review of the one-way system in Lancaster City Centre, and a Masterplan for improvements in Morecambe Town Centre.

Hazel Grove SCOOT Gating Scheme – Faber Maunsell has worked extensively with Greater Manchester PTE to plan and develop numerous Quality Bus Corridors within the county. The high frequency 192 bus service links Hazel Grove to Stockport and Manchester City Centre but experienced large variations in journey time due to heavy traffic flows. This was alleviated by the introduction of a SCOOT Urban Traffic Control System to regulate traffic during the morning peak. The gating system allows the 192 service to travel without delay whilst general traffic is held back at gated junctions. Monitoring has shown that both bus and car journey times have improved with queue management improving traffic flow throughput. This scheme has provided real benefits to all users and has demonstrated that SCOOT UTC has the flexibility to deliver high-benefit queue management systems in appropriate locations with benefits for both buses and general traffic.

Liverpool City Council Accessibility Planning Projects – Liverpool City Council has established a Neighbourhood Travel Team (NTT) that aims to eliminate transport barriers that currently prevent residents of some of Merseyside's most disadvantaged communities from taking up employment or learning opportunities. The NTT provides tailored services to individuals providing all information and also acting as a referral agent for other travel schemes. These services include bespoke personal journey plans for individuals, provision of WorkWise Travel Cards, referral to the Scooter Commuter scheme and to WorkWise Wheels, and the provision of further WorkWise information. This project was part of a wider Merseyside project that achieved Beacon status in 2008 for Improving Accessibility. Judges for the Beacon status highlighted the schemes as 'imaginative' and which 'break the poverty cycle and enhance community cohesion'.