



At Highways England we believe in a connected country and our network makes these connections happen. We strive to improve our major roads and motorways - engineering the future to keep people moving today and moving better tomorrow.



Progress so far

Engineers have continued to work tirelessly since the bridge beams were lifted into place, using a 1,000-tonne mobile crane, last summer. Since then, we have been able to see more clearly what the final flyover structure will look like.

Concrete pouring has taken place on the bridge deck which will allow the road to be built over the top of the structure, and over the winter months the earth embankments will continue to settle before laying the surfaces of the new A19.

We are working towards an open to traffic date of summer 2021.

We've also adjusted the contraflow and moved it further south to create more room for the ongoing work at Downhill Lane. These changes have extended the working area by 1.5 miles and mean that the Testo's and Downhill Lane projects can be delivered as one scheme, reducing delays and minimising the impact on drivers.

The Downhill Lane improvement will create extra capacity on the junction between the A19 and the A1290 in Sunderland, helping boost the regional economy and plans for the development of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP). New link roads will be created between Downhill Lane and Testo's, boosting journey times and providing new facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

We'd like to remind everyone that Downhill Lane is closed for safety reasons and it's no longer possible to use this as a route from West Boldon onto the A19, A1290 or Washington Road. **This applies to cyclists and pedestrians as well as motorists.** Worryingly, we have seen a number of cyclists cross the cone line to access Downhill Lane. This puts both them and our workforce at risk of injury. We want everyone to get home safe and well so please do stay out of work areas and closed sections of road.

How are we working through Covid?

We have worked on site all the way through the Covid restrictions. All our staff work socially distanced with enhanced cleaning of all work areas.

We have reached the milestone of over 724,000 working hours on this project and have around 300 workers on site every day.

We are very pleased that finding safe ways to continue working means that we have not had to lay any staff off or place anyone on furlough. We are

proud to be supporting the economy of the North East with the majority of our workforce and the companies we use for materials and vehicles being from the North of England.

Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) North East Awards

As part of a virtual awards ceremony Costain, who are delivering the A19 Testo's and A19 Downhill Lane projects on behalf of Highways England, were named CECA's **health and safety company of the year**.

The award specifically focussed on our work at Testo's was assessed by looking at the number of people hours worked, combined with recognising the proactive safety culture in place which actively

encourages staff to make health and safety interventions

The assessors were also impressed by the amount of health and safety information included in staff induction process, scores awarded by the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) and the company's overall approach to health and wellbeing of its staff.

Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) Excellence award

The team has recently received a National site award from CCS. A further virtual inspection took place in November 2020 where the A19 Testo's project was awarded an 'Excellence in Construction' certificate.

The inspector commented:

The overall appearance of this large and exposed site remains impressive. The site is very visible to the public and presents an excellent image of the industry. It continues to be well organised with prominent signage throughout. The whole area was very clean and tidy. The traffic management is exemplary with regular reviews and changing priorities to maintain a constant flow of traffic.



Community Engagement

Even though Covid regulations have meant our teams can't get out and about to support community groups they haven't stopped pulling out all the stops to help.

Costain are delivering the A19 Testo's, and Costain Jacobs Partnership the A19 Downhill Lane and A1 Scotswood to North Brunton improvement schemes for Highways England. They work hard to keep local businesses and residents updated on how the schemes are progressing and what they can expect to see next. They also reach out to local charities and schools whenever they can.

Newcastle-based charity, **The Sunshine Fund**, which offers counselling and equipment to disabled children, found itself in need of help.

As many of their staff are working from home due to Covid-19, they desperately needed an i-phone and a printer. The charity contacted Business in the Community who in turn approached Costain.

Costain's IT and HR teams quickly located suitable tech and rode to the rescue.

The i-phone means that more families can reach a support worker quickly, and the printer reduces admin time, leading to more time to counsel and help.



Education and careers advice

Ordinarily we would invite students on to site or visit them in their schools. As this hasn't been possible, we've introduced some virtual tours and they have proved pretty popular.

We've held tours for virtual tours for University of Newcastle, University of Teesside, ICE North East, CIHT North East and Cumbria and charity employment initiatives including Prince's Trust.

Abbey French from Newcastle University said:

We've also offered virtual assemblies to year 5 and 6 students at Cleadon Church of England school and hope to be working more with them, and other local schools, as soon as Covid restrictions allow.

Super excited to take our students on a site visit. No getting cold and muddy this time and no need for a hardhat, thanks to the ingenuity of Costain. With 70+ students wanting to join the event, we'd have needed a big mini-bus...





More information



www.highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a19-testos-junction-improvement/



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