



- > COLAS UK
- > HIGHWAYS ENGLAND
- > JANUARY - JUNE 2018

A43 Brackley, Northants

Colas won the Highways England contract to deliver a major resurfacing and repair road project on the A43 at Brackley, Northants which included carriageway and roundabout widening/resurfacing, refurbishment of signage, street lighting, traffic signals, pedestrian crossings and footpaths.

Close cooperation with the client and between five Colas divisions, saw the Colas end-to-end approach in action on this complex project. Colas overcame the logistical challenges of ensuring no disruption to traffic on this busy commuter route by night-time working for six months.



The Need

Housebuilders, Barrett Homes and Taylor Wimpey, are creating a new estate in the rapidly- expanding population hub of southern Northamptonshire, near Brackley.

Under a 278 agreement with the planning authorities, the builders needed to provide funds for the refurbishment and improvement of a nearby multi-carriage highway, part of the A43. Although not adjacent to the new estate, improvements to the surrounding road system were essential to take increased traffic volume.

Five divisions of Colas came together to bring the job in on time – despite unavoidable time delays and the road surface being worse than originally anticipated.

The Approach

Planning and integrated working were key to this project as it rapidly became clear that the scope had changed.

The Challenges #1 – Appearances can be deceptive.

Despite months of planning, it was only after we were able to close the road that it became clear the A43 was in much worse condition than had been thought. Not only would Colas need to lay new surface course, a binder layer was also required.

With the client's agreement, Colas altered plans to create a more resilient, longer-lasting surface – along with all the street furniture and signage needed.

It meant a higher cost and a longer time-frame to bring this essential highway up to a really good standard.

The Challenges #2 - The Road that could not be closed.

The extent of the work meant that the A43 needed to be closed at Brackley. Running south from Northampton, around Brackley, and linking up with the M40, the A43 is an essential part of the Midlands roads network. A daytime closure would have a major impact on traffic across the region. Additionally, the scheme needed to be completed in time for the Formula 1 British Grand Prix - the A43 is an important route serving Silverstone Race Circuit.

Colas's solution was to work at night – for some 120 nights – to not disrupt the busy daytime traffic.

The Challenges #3 – Night time Logistics

Precise logistical planning is essential for night-time working. You cannot access any materials or off-site staff at 3am. Colas planned every aspect of the project carefully before boots were on the ground. Working closely with the client, who shared our site office, smooth cooperation between Colas's diverse expert divisions was essential.

- > Total value was £2.8m
- > Major upgrade project to renew and refurbish road complex A43 multi-lane road system near Brackley
- > No impact on traffic thanks to precise logistical planning by Colas
- > Integrated approach by Colas with all work undertaken by in-house divisions
- > Delivered within contract period

The Challenges #4 – All Together Now

It was clear from the start that this was going to be a complex project. It was some two years from the contract being awarded to work beginning – because of the need for careful planning. But Colas was able to deliver within the contract period, thanks to our integrated approach.

Different aspects of this project – including street lighting, traffic signalling, widening of approach roads and crossings – needed to be carefully timetabled in order to ensure everyone worked effectively and efficiently together to ensure the smooth running

Associated Benefits

Although the road improvement scheme was at a distance to the new housing estate, the client confirmed that the traffic flow in the heavily congested area has improved.

Because of Colas's use of non-invasive working patterns, there was no disruption during the whole of the construction period despite major works taking place.

“Colas undertook the works in an efficient and collaborative manner. The overall scheme was affected by procurement, design and ‘on site’ issues, which would normally have resulted in a greatly prolonged programme and major contractual implications.

In my opinion, Colas dealt with changes on site to resolve issues quickly and the approach appeared to be based on delivery rather than following the contract to the letter. The contract has still to be delivered but I am confident that all matters can be resolved shortly to the satisfaction of all parties. With a few minor exceptions, I have been impressed with the quality of workmanship displayed by Colas and their sub-contractors and would certainly have no problem in working with them again in the future.”

**David Howland IEng FIHE, Construction Project Manager.
Highways England**

