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INCREASED TRAFFIC MEANS NO CONTINGENCY FOR REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

With over 33 million cars on our roads and congestion predicted to rise by a further 25% by 2015, it is important that the road network is capable of providing continued optimum performance. Lanes taken out for frequent and unplanned road and barrier repairs will exacerbate congestion problems.

The demands placed upon our road network are considerable. Unfortunately, the network is often unable to cope with these current demands, let alone those resulting from future increases in traffic. "Many of the problems facing our network stem from the construction methods used. Their relatively short-term performance necessitates continual programmes of maintenance, repair and replacement", said David Jones, director of Britpave, the transport infrastructure group. "The answer is to construct a road infrastructure that aims to meet future demands by providing guaranteed long-term performance".

Jones believes that concrete's recognised low maintenance and long-term performance could do much to ensure that the road network is fit for purpose by removing the need for on-going and unplanned repair and maintenance programmes.

"The provision of a concrete inlay to motorway lanes, particularly those used by heavy good vehicles, will do much to extend their life", said Jones. "Carriageways constructed from asphalt are designed to last a maximum of 40 years – often considerably less. Those where the main component is concrete the road will last for a minimum of 40 years - and often considerably longer".

Similar long-term performance is achieved with the new concrete step barrier that has been specified by the Highways Agency for motorways where the traffic flow exceeds 25,000 vehicles per day.

“The concrete step barrier is designed to be repair and maintenance free for the entirety of its 50-year life. By contrast steel barriers of a design life of only 20 years,” said Jones. “Steel barriers also need replacement after vehicular impact and regular tensioning and maintenance. This means the closure of motorways lanes whilst the work is being carried with all the resultant traffic delays and congestions. Concrete barriers do not need regular maintenance nor do they have to be replaced following impact.

With such increasing demands being placed upon our road network there is no contingency for traffic lanes being taken out for regular or unplanned repair and maintenance”.

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Notes to editors

1. Britpave (British In-situ Concrete Paving Association) promotes the better and greater use of concrete for transportation solutions. Its members include major contractors, specialist equipment and material suppliers, consulting engineers and interested trade associations. Together they provide a single voice for the in-situ concrete paving industry. For further information see: www.britpave.org.uk
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