

Tarmac

Selection of Tarmac's Masterflex overlay material for resurfacing two sites near Bridgend has been justified by the results of the work and a unique public survey

Public opinion poll welcomes Masterflex

Public feeling towards Tarmac Quarry Products' Masterflex thin asphalt overlay material has been gauged for the first time in South Wales. The level of response and the comments made by residents effected by the surfacing work and its results have shown how important local people consider the quality of their roads to be.

The favourable feedback has also presented the best possible evidence of the public's high regard for the low noise, quick-lay, low spray and high skid resistance benefits produced by thin modern asphalts and confirmed the good impressions Masterflex has made on Tarmac's client.



"We were staggered by the level of response and the comments that were put forward." Dale Riley

Around 12,000m² of Masterflex was laid to a nominal 20mm thickness on the single carriageway Fairfield in North Cornelly and the A473 in Pencoed near Bridgend between June 23 and 26 this year for Bridgend County Borough Council (see box).

Both roads are in residential areas with houses on both sides, which gave the company an ideal opportunity to find out what the local people thought of their new road surface, says TQP's Special Products Representative Dale Riley.

"Local residents were very keen to discuss the material we had laid every time we revisited the sites to see how the Masterflex was standing up," says Riley. "We thought it would be a good idea to canvas a response from the people directly effected by the road.

"Masterflex has been laid on several high profile and larger sites such as the Forth Road Bridge in Scotland, the M65 and the M6. But these applications have not given us an opportunity to gauge public opinion of the material and its low noise and spray reduction benefits and the speed at which it can be laid."

Riley says TQP's South Wales team set about approaching the local residents for comment by producing response cards that were mail-dropped to around 150 houses lining the Pencoed site. The cards invited people to comment on the new road surface and the efficiency of the surfacing team.

"We were staggered by the level of response and the comments that were put forward," says Riley. "Around 75% of the cards were returned and nearly all of them presented positive feedback on the Masterflex material and the speed of application."

The length of the responses TQP received varies from a short "very good job" to more in-depth examination and comment on the advantages and disadvantages of using thin overlays to restore surface characteristics.

But a typical response came from Mr R Jones of 13 Ffordd-y-Eglwys. On the quality of the new road



1. **Masterflex was used to provide a negative surface texture on the residential and high stress sites in North Cornelly and Pencoed.**
2. **One eight-man Tarmac gang surfaced both sites using conventional plant in just four days.**

“Silent, level, good looking and extremely good to drive over, in fact a model for all other road surfaces.”

Malcolm Emerson

surface he said: “Resulted in the environment being much quieter and a much better surface for driving on. All in all I find it a great improvement”; and on the efficiency of the surfacing team: “Worked swiftly and cleanly with a minimum of inconvenience to the public or motorists.”

Such a positive response from people directly effected by the new surface is added reward for TQP, which has also impressed its client with the results of Masterflex.

“Fairfield in North Cornelly and the the A473 in Pencoed were identified as needing resurfacing by our highway inspectors in the Summer of 1998,” says Bridgend County Borough Council’s Highway Maintenance Manager Glyn Jenkins.

“We also identified both roads as high stress sites due to relatively high traffic speeds for a residential area with several junctions and roundabouts. This meant we required a treatment that could produce a negative surface texture of at least 1mm.”

Jenkins says attempts to achieve this surface characteristic using the council’s traditionally favoured overlay method ran into difficulty and

TARMAC PROPOSED AN APPLICATION of its Masterflex thin overlay to Bridgend County Borough Council after the material was successfully trialled on a similar contract for Bristol City Council in 1998.

The council’s acceptance of Tarmac’s proposal led the company to develop a specific Masterflex mix for the Pencoed and Cornelly sites. A 6mm local gritstone with an appropriately high polished stone value of 63 was selected and a polymer modified binder was used to provide the material with sufficient stiffness and flexibility.

Tarmac then carried out surfacing trials with the material on an approach road to its South Cornelly quarry two weeks prior to the contract start date to ensure the required surface texture could be achieved.

“Both Bridgend sites were surfaced by one eight-man surfacing gang using conventional laying plant in just four days,” says Tarmac Contracts Manager Mike McAndrew. “The material was laid in one pass and was then trafficable after one hour, which made the operation very quick and kept traffic disruption to a minimum.”

plans to resurface both sites were put on hold until an alternative solution could be found.

“In spring 1999 Tarmac came forward with its innovative Masterflex material, which we accepted,” says Jenkins. “It was clearly a better product and it offered greater value because it promised a more durable surface than the alternatives at the same time as providing us with the required texture and additional benefits of low traffic noise and spray reduction.”

Jenkins says his initial impression of the results produced by Tarmac in Cornelly and Pencoed is

“very good”. An average surface texture of 1.2mm was achieved and the road has produced an excellent response from local residents.

“The comments received from the public, particularly with regard to the reduction in traffic noise and little disruption caused by the laying process, are a bonus,” adds Jenkins.

“This new surface now only needs to stand the test of time. Given that it looks like it will, we will be considering thin asphalt overlay materials, such as Tarmac’s Masterflex, for meeting our needs on similar sites in future.”