Creating and caring for safe, efficient highways

CNDR

YEAR 1 OCTOBER 2010
UPDATE REPORT

Working for Cumbria County Council as part of Cumbria Highways
Welcome to our first update report

Welcome

We were delighted to have been selected by Cumbria County Council as the concession company to construct and operate the new Carlisle Northern Development Route (CNDR) and operate and maintain approximately 150km of existing roads in West Cumbria. More information can be found overleaf.

To mark the start of the major construction work a ceremony was held back in October 2009 where Councillor Tony Markley cut a ribbon across the alignment of the route. Work is continuing at a pace despite the severe weather experienced in Cumbria in late 2009 and early 2010. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff whose hard work and dedication has enabled us to meet the challenges which arose from the severe weather.

Should you wish to discuss any of the articles in this report, or any other issues, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address found on the back cover.

We hope you enjoy the read.

Andy Dean, Regional Manager
About us

Connect CNDR Limited is the concession company awarded the PFI contract to design, build, finance and operate the new CNDR, together with the operation and maintenance of approximately 150km of existing roads throughout West Cumbria.

The concession commenced on 1st October 2009 and the contract will run for 30 years. It comprises the construction of an 8.25km two-way single carriageway road from the M6 Junction 44 to the A595 southwest of Carlisle and the management of operations together with the maintenance and on-going investment in approximately 150km of other existing roads in Cumbria, namely parts of the A7, A594, A596, A689 and the A6871.

In partnership with our supply chain, Birse Civils and Connect Roads will construct the CNDR road over the next two years. Together with our O&M Contractor, Balfour Beatty Civil Engineering, Connect Roads will undertake all the maintenance requirements for CNDR and the existing roads.

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The event was organised in partnership between Cumbria County Council and Connect Roads and was attended by members of our supply chain partners, including designers, archeologists and environmentalists who could answer any queries and questions regarding the scheme.

The exhibition featured a variety of display boards and an electronic flythrough of the scheme, together with a newsletter. A children’s drawing competition was held, to engage with all ages of people who attended the exhibition.

To inform the public of the wider CNDR network, Connect Roads provided additional information regarding the service provided for the 150km of existing roads in West Cumbria and our O&M Contractor, Balfour Beatty Regional Civil Engineering, was in attendance at the exhibition to assist in explaining its role on the concession.

Working in partnership

To inform members of the public and other affected stakeholders about the construction of the new CNDR road and the existing CNDR Project network, a Start of Works Exhibition was held in Carlisle city centre over two days during September 2009.

The event was attended by over 760 people, including the local MP, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Cumbria County Council, as well as several county, city and parish councillors. Coverage was extensive in the local press, radio and television and positive feedback was received from all parties.

A mini exhibition was also held as part of the West of City Event, a local exhibition held in the west of Carlisle at Richard Rose Morton Academy, attended by 550 school children and over 130 local residents, and included County Councillors and City Councillors.

Boards from the exhibition have also been out on display as part of Neighbourhood Forums, which are attended jointly by Cumbria County Council, Connect Roads and Birse Civils to provide ongoing information on the project to affected stakeholders and answer any questions.
Torrential rainfall

During November 2009, the flood events in Cumbria became national news. Torrential rainfall caused widespread flooding throughout the west of the County, most devastatingly along the River Derwent.

The mean average temperature was just 1.51°C across the UK, with snow, sleet and rain falling through December, January and even February in some areas. The much greater than predicted snowfall challenged every highway authority’s winter service plans to keep roads safe and open.

The five Connect Roads concessions are spread across the UK and together with our maintaining agent contractors, we offer a national coverage with the opportunity to take lessons learnt from one concession and apply across our network to offer a continuously improved service.

Torrential rainfall

Following a cold snap which began in December 2009, the UK experienced the coldest winter for some 30 years.

This year the exceptional snowfall brought the biggest winter challenge we have faced to date in keeping the roads operational in the severe weather, not aided by a national shortage of rock salt (or as it is commonly known, grit). Thanks to Connect Roads’ supply chain partnerships, we offered an additional level of resilience to this challenge, with our capability to manage rock salt across the concessions whilst ensuring that service levels did not drop in any one area.

Thanks to a fully collaborative approach with our supply chain partners and clients, we were pleased to have kept Cumbria’s roads open throughout this challenging period.

Proactive management

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The collapse of Northside bridge and the damage to, and expected collapse of, Workington Bridge (also known as the Calva Bridge) drew widespread media coverage. With Navvies footbridge also washed away, travel across the Derwent in the Workington area was rendered impossible.

Workington Bridge carries the A596 over the River Derwent and became part of Connect Roads’ CNDR network on 1st October 2009. The Grade II listed structure, which was built in 1841, remained intact as the flooding receded, but sustained substantial structural damage. Strengthening works undertaken in 2003 are likely to have prevented a total collapse following extensive loss of masonry to the foundation of one of the supporting piers.

Connect Roads along with the O&M Contractor, Balfour Beatty Regional Civil Engineering undertook regular inspections throughout the flood period and security was established to prevent public use of the structure.

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Connect Roads is committed to following best practice in health and safety throughout all its work.

Our Zero Harm initiative is now in its second operational year and we continue to implement new initiatives to enhance our performance and ensure the safety of our road workers and those affected by how we undertake our operations.

Following our successful upgrade accreditation to ISO 9001:2008 for quality management, and accreditation to ISO 14001 for environmental management and PAS 99 for integrated management, Connect Roads’ key priority for health and safety for this year is working towards gaining OHSAS 18001 accreditation for occupational health and safety management.

GHSAS 18001 is an internationally recognised assessment specification which addresses a wide range of health and safety management.

This is the next step in our journey to Zero Harm by 2012 and will enhance our ability to minimise the risks associated with health and safety in the workplace, whether that be in the office or on the roads.

In April this year Birse Civils (a Balfour Beatty company) were awarded Silver from the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

Considerate Constructor sites are assessed against their performance in several areas, including the categories Considerate, Environment, Cleanliness, Good Neighbour, Respectful, Safe, Responsible and Accountable. Over 7,000 sites in the UK are eligible and only the top 7.5% are given awards so, Birse Civils is very proud of its achievement and will continue to maintain these high standards for the rest of the construction period on CNDR.

CNDR wins Silver!

By encouraging everyone working on the site to act considerately towards all those affected by the work, we hope to minimise our impact during the construction period.

OHSAS 18001 is an internationally recognised assessment specification which addresses a wide range of health and safety management.

DID YOU KNOW?

Birse Civils has now achieved 500,000 RIDDOR (Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) injury free hours worked on the CNDR project.

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Increasing biodiversity

Connect Roads and Cumbria County Council are committed to maintaining the biodiversity along the route throughout the construction and beyond. Ecological surveys have identified protected species on the site, including great crested newts, bats, otters and orchids. A range of protection measures are being introduced, including:

- Moving newts from the site to a safe location, improving existing newt ponds to encourage breeding and creating new ponds;
- Introducing new bat boxes, offering alternative roosts around the site, and installing bat deflection fences;
- Creating new homes for otters (known as holts) from logs and cut vegetation;
- Moving orchids to Kingmoor Nature Reserve.

In addition, environmental barriers will be built along certain sections of the road to reduce the impact of traffic noise.

Minimising disruption

The route of the new CNDR road linking Junction 44 of the M6 to the A595 to the west of the city requires two significant new bridges to be constructed. In the northern section, the route crosses the West Coast Mainline railway where the existing Kingmoor Rail Bridge carried a local road over the railway. The poor condition of this bridge meant that a replacement was necessary to meet the standards for the new road.

A temporary bridge and road diversion were constructed during a series of short railway closures during November 2009, and it became open to traffic in early December.

Over the 2009/2010 winter period, a longer rail closure of the West Coast Mainline tracks took place during which parts of the existing structure were demolished. Some of the major demolition plant available in the UK was brought in to complete the demolition. This was completed ahead of programme allowing a full use of the railway by the CNDR Scheme by the summer of 2010.

Work is ongoing throughout 2010 to construct the new four span steel and concrete bridge structure, which will be opened for traffic in mid 2011, before being fully opened as part of the new road in spring 2012.

Connect Roads recognises the importance of taking a joined up approach to ensuring sustainability at the heart of its activities.

Archaeology

As the proposed route for CNDR crosses the Scheduled and Ancient Monument of Hadrian’s Wall, archaeology has played an important part of the scheme’s preparatory works.

The new road crosses several areas including the River Eden flood plain, Hadrian’s Wall, as well as green and brown field land. There is a need for archaeological survey to examine all potential areas and to establish an understanding of the environmental impact of the new road construction on the cultural heritage of the area. A team of archaeologists was employed to assess the site and establish the extent of the archaeological activity which could commence and that the finds have been recorded. This included the creation of site compound, test drilling and line structures.

A watching brief on the remaining lengths of the road has been put in place. Further discoveries were made that had not been anticipated and the finds included stone tools, axes and arrowheads, flint debris, pottery and timber structures.

Site work was completed in December 2009, allowing planning permission for one in five acres of the site to be granted. The babies are now analysing the finds made by Cumbria’s ancestors.

Sustainability

Connect Roads recognises the importance of taking a joined up approach to ensuring sustainability at the heart of its activities.
Spotlight on… Andrew Moss

Andrew Moss is the Head of Highways and Transportation for Cumbria County Council.

How long have you worked for the County Council?
I initially came to Cumbria in November 2008 as an Interim Head of Highways before being appointed as the Head of Highways and Transportation in April 2009. The role was a new one created as part of an internal restructuring and it is a job which I find a great challenge but one which I enjoy immensely.

What does your role entail?
My role is essentially to work towards providing the County Council with one of the best highways and transportation services in the county that can be viewed by others as a model of success. It is a wide ranging remit and one that includes transport policy, passenger transport, transport operations, countryside access and network management via Cumbria Highways. It also involves working closely with a wide range of external delivery partners including Connect Roads, Capita Symonds, Amey and Stagecoach as well as communities across the county.

What’s your favourite part of the role?
My favourite part of the role is the huge variety of work I get involved with on a day to day basis as well as the ability to make a real difference in my position. This can be very rewarding although it can equally be extremely frustrating at times. I also have a very committed group of people working with me who have clearly demonstrated in the last 10 months or so that we can tackle just about anything thrown at us. By this I mean the very challenging period we went through with the major floods in late 2009 which was then followed by one of the worst winter periods that we’ve had for many years.

And the biggest challenge?
It was the variety of challenges in the highways and transport world that drew me to Cumbria, from the CNDR project to new nuclear transport infrastructure and lots more besides. But by far the biggest challenge facing the service just now is to re-shape it for the future taking into account the likely budget reductions that will be imposed by central government in the current economic climate. This comes at a time when our existing highways delivery arrangements need to be renewed and we are also rolling out the systems thinking approach across the county to make the service better and more efficient. Whilst this is a period of uncertainty for staff affected, it represents a huge challenge for everyone involved. At the same time ensuring that we continue to deliver the service to a high standard and providing value for money for our customers is a key part of the challenge.

What do you get up to outside of work?
I’m a keen sportsman with a real passion for swimming. In recent years I’ve run, cycled and swam for charity but my focus in recent weeks has been the training required for the Great North Swim in Windermere lake. I participated in the event last year and raised quite a bit of money for the British Heart Foundation which is important to me as I have lost a number of close family members to heart disease. This year I’m hoping to raise money for Diabetes UK. The hardest bit is fitting in the training around work and family commitments but I find it extremely rewarding to get to the level of fitness required.

And finally?
I’m hugely impressed and pleased that the partnership with Connect Roads has got off to a very successful start particularly following the floods in late 2009. In going forward, I think it’s important that the County Council and Connect Roads continue to build a close long term working relationship and start to focus on some of the bigger picture agenda items such as carbon footprint reductions and sustainability issues. These will form some of the challenges we can hopefully face up to and overcome together.