



## **A19 DBFO: 28 years of collaboration**



# Background

In 1996 National Highways awarded one of the first Design, Build, Finance and Operate contracts to a private consortium, Autolink Concessionaires (A19) Ltd. Over the 30-year contract, Autolink is responsible for the management, maintenance, and improvement of over 120km of dual carriageway between the Tyne Tunnel and the A1(M) junction at Dishforth. The A19 not only serves as a key gateway to major industrial areas and their associated ports of Teesside, Wearside, and Tyneside, it is essential for tourism and local traffic, accessing towns and villages along the route. Heidelberg Materials Contracting have been a partner of Autolink since inception.





## Key Achievements

- Contract value: £90m
- Materials laid annually: 28,000 tonnes
- Top ranking: 1 trunk road in England in the Strategic Road Users Survey
- Environmental impact: 60,000 tonnes of warm asphalt laid, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> by 558 tonnes
- Collaborative certification: ISO 44001 secured and retained since 2018

## Social Value

The partnership has consistently delivered meaningful social value outcomes, enhancing the wellbeing of local communities and stakeholders. Key achievements include:

- Engaging local SMEs annually
- Employing two local gangs and site manager
- Jointly hosting two charity nights per year to support local causes such as 4Louis and Butterwick Hospice.



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## Collaboration

For 28 years, Autolink, Sir Robert McAlpine and Heidelberg materials Contracting have embraced a single team ethos, working to pre-agreed set of behaviours and a common goal of ensuring a high quality, best value service. The creation of a shared Performance Management Tool kit and the adoption of a cost-plus fee mechanism has facilitated effective communication to share best practices and improve the overall quality of the work. Key collaborative approaches include:

- Periodic collaborative meetings
- Adherence to the Collaboration Charter,
- Joint health and safety training and audits for cost and time reduction,
- Sharing of digital systems for transparency and efficiency,
- Group panels of learnings,
- Stakeholder Pulse Check reviews
- Annual collaborative reporting.

The scheme runs on nights between March and November, programmed collaboratively from a shared office in Billingham. The partnership prioritises innovation, cost-effective solutions, and embraces a “single team” culture with a focus on health, safety, and sustainability. Progress is monitored through the Performance Management Toolkit to promote continuous improvement. The partnership’s dedication to collaborative excellence is reflected in its achievement and retention of its ISO 44001 certification since 2018. Overall, the partnership’s collaborative working approach, driven by effective communication and shared objectives, sustains the commitment to delivering high-quality service for the A19 project.



## Conclusion

Before ISO 44001 became a recognised standard, the A19 partnership between Autolink, Sir Robert McAlpine, and Heidelberg Materials was already at the forefront of collaborative excellence. This alliance showcases the power of teamwork and innovation in joint ventures, setting a high bar for industry practices. The commitment to excellence is evident in the 2024 Strategic Road User's Survey, which named the A19 the best road in England for its exceptional journey time, superior road surface, and most importantly, the sense of safety it provides.

### A19 Dishforth to Tyne Tunnel Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) Contract

## Collaboration Charter

We, the Integrated Team, are committed to working collaboratively to achieve a smooth and successful completion of the Contract:

### Our Values and Behaviours

Working together in collaboration to deliver a safe and sustainable level of service on the contract network we will continue to be:

#### Responsible

- Promoting safe, sustainable and socially responsible practices
- Ensuring staff and operatives are trained and competent
- Encouraging continual improvement
- Supporting health and wellbeing

#### Respectful

- Valuing the views and opinions of team members
- Ensuring everyone is treated fairly

#### Open

- Being honest, trustworthy and acting with integrity

#### Inclusive

- Valuing the commitment, cooperation, dedication, experience and knowledge of our staff, operatives and collaborative partners
- Promoting equality and diversity

**'Driving forward, together'**



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