

Bexhill to Hastings Link Road Ground Investigation



Southern Testing were awarded the contract by URS Corporation to undertake the main ground investigation works for the proposed Bexhill to Hastings Link Road. The scope of works was designed by Mott MacDonald and included over 170 trial pits, 12 CPT holes, 91 cable percussive boreholes with 12 of these extended by rotary drilling to depths of up to 20m bgl. The Contract included geotechnical and environmental sampling and insitu testing, laboratory testing and factual reporting, with all data provided in AGS format.

The new road linking the outskirts of Bexhill and Hastings is approximately 5.5km long and will start at the A259 in Bexhill. It will run along the line of the disused Bexhill to Crowhurst railway line and then pass around the northern side of the Comb Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). From there it will go to the south of the Marline Valley Woods SSSI crossing the Hastings to London Railway line to join Queensway just north of the Crowhurst Road. The rural part of the road will include a separate safe "greenway" for cycling, walking and horse riding and enable users to enjoy this part of the Pebsham Countryside Park and Wildlife area.

Environmental considerations have had an increasing impact on all aspects of our work in recent years, both on green field and brownfield sites, and this route presented a varied and challenging "sensitive" rural environment. Environmental, ecological and archaeological issues were encountered including various protected flora, fauna, woodland and species such as badgers, birds and newts. Some areas of the route crossed within low-lying wetland floodplains and on steeply sloping ground. To further complicate matters the start of the work in December coincided with the very worst of the winter weather.

We recognised from an early stage that it would be essential to ensure that a sympathetic and appreciative approach was adopted to all ground investigation works, and by modifying procedures and taking a case by case approach to each area, we were able to ensure minimal overall disturbance and that all field data was collected in an efficient and environmentally acceptable manner.

