



Fast Beam on the M5

On 7 February 2019, a VolkerLaser team received sign off from BMV - a joint venture between BAM Nuttall, Morgan Sindall and VolkerFitzpatrick - and National Highways to undertake the first ever trial of Fast Beam access technology in the UK on the M5 Oldbury Viaduct.



Prior to the trial, the team undertook a successful test install underneath the deck at Bescot storage area, Oldbury, to refine the construction technique and allow the workforce to become familiar with the system before conducting the on-deck trial.

Once this initial test was complete, our specialist team installed a Fast Beam platform on the northbound parapet between junction 1 and 2 of the M5, with this remaining in place for a week to allow a series of concrete repairs to take place. During the trial, an independent health and safety inspection took place, specifically looking at the innovation initiative being used to replace traditional scaffolding for bridge repairs and maintenance.

The inspection resulted in the system being awarded with the RTB Blue Star Award from National Highways.

The feedback highlighted that “benefits include the fast and easy installation of the system, which is estimated to be 50% quicker than scaffolding and other methods.”; “It minimises traffic disturbance and lane closures.”; “it significantly reduces manual handling and requires fewer workers.” and “using Fast Beam rather than traditional scaffolding methods will provide a value engineering solution on many bridge repair and maintenance projects.”

As well as providing this recognition from National Highways, the trial proved even more significant due to the installation method required. The team were unable to remove the existing parapet, which meant an innovative method of installing the system, up and over the parapet had to be developed.

