Scheme - Severn Bridge M48 Suspension Cable Inspection
Contractor - Laing O’Rourke
Laing O’Rourke have been engaged by Severn River Crossing to carry out maintenance and inspection of the M48 Severn Bridge Crossing as an on-going project since 1996, including maintenance of the bridge itself and surrounding concession areas. This challenging work involves working at height, with live traffic, above water and in restricted spaces, all subject to adverse weather conditions.

One of the major projects on the structure is the close inspection of the bridge’s suspension cables carried out for Highways England. Laing O’Rourke is responsible for the organising of the extensive traffic management.

Scaffold access points to the cables are needed and due to the restricted width of the bridge deck, intermittent motorway lane closures are necessary. These scaffold points are close to the bridge’s permanent safety barriers and required a secondary temporary vehicle restraint system.

Laing O’Rourke have provided professional support with the temporary barriers being moved quickly and efficiently.

ASSET VRS Varioguard steel barrier is utilised to meet the necessary safety requirements for the protection of the travelling public and site operatives involved in the works.

The Asset Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) is tested to BS EN 1317-2:1998 containment level H2. Galvanised steel elements lock together to make a rigid, energy-absorbing barrier where errant vehicles driving onto the foot section stabilises the Varioguard and limits deflection. A narrow 700 mm foot section and lightweight construction, which does not need securing to the deck! Concrete TVCBs are designed to deflect errant vehicles whilst providing a solid, stable end section. Tapered 3 metre long end sections lead into the Highways England approved ASSET barrier joints whilst oblong concrete sections provide runout on the steel barrier sections.

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Laing O’Rourke’s Project Engineer for the Severn Crossing has high praise for the products and companies involved in keeping the 50 year old bridge “fit for purpose”. Laing O’Rourke advises that they have had good service and good professional support with the temporary barriers being moved quickly and efficiently. This has helped tremendously when staff are working at height, with live traffic flow above water and at night.
ASSET International is a division of Hill and Smith Ltd. The ‘vehicle restraint systems’ division of the business was established in 1998 to provide ASSET VARIOGUARD® temporary safety barriers to the highways sector. The business now provides a full installation service from strategically located depots around the UK and Ireland.