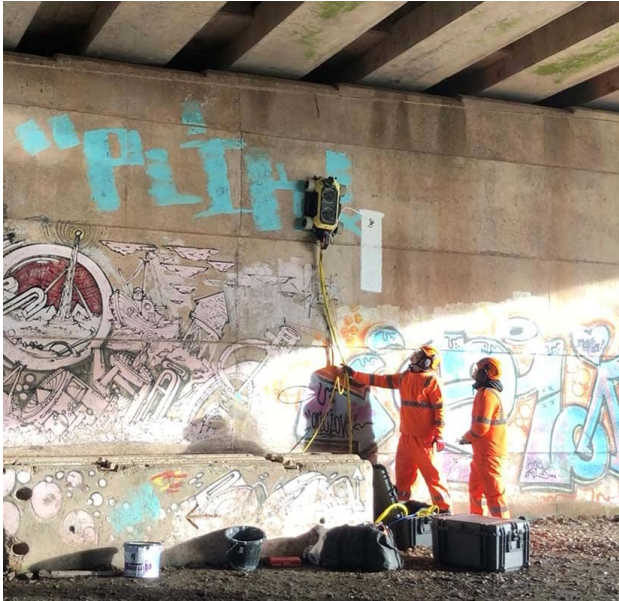


Kier to trial pioneering products that tackle graffiti on National Highways network

3 years ago



As part of a quest to combat unsightly graffiti on the strategic road network, Kier Highways and its client, National Highways, have selected three pioneering ideas to trial as part of an innovations competition which was launched last summer.

More than a dozen companies entered the first stage of the competition and the three finalists that will receive up to £30,000 each to spend on taking their products forwards in a live scenario across the West Midlands are:

- HausBots – wall-climbing robotics which would apply graffiti preventative paints, reducing the risk of such hazards as working at heights for the workforce.
- Nano Eco Group – a chemical coating to prevent the adhesion of graffiti to a variety of surfaces and films.
- Sensing Feeling and Innovation Factory – these two separate entries will now work together on an audio-video recognition solution with sensors to detect the application of graffiti which will then trigger lights and alarms.

The aim of the competition, which also includes partners, Connected Places Catapult, the government's innovation agency for the transport industry, was to find innovative and modern products that can remove graffiti, as well as preventing it appearing in the first place.

It can cost up to £10,000 to remove one instance of graffiti – money that could be better spent elsewhere

on the network. The vandalism is also a distraction for drivers and often requires road closures to remove it safely.

Tom Tideswell, Kier Highways head of innovation, said: "These new methods of removing graffiti have the potential to save on time, can reduce inherent risks of working at height, as well as the exposure of our teams to live traffic when installing and removing traffic management. This should improve on journey times for road users as well as the aesthetics of the network."

Paul Bate, Connected Places Catapult executive director, said: "One of the key purposes of this innovation competition has been to demonstrate and build confidence in the use of new technologies to tackle the problem of graffiti. The investment being made in these trials will help to progress these innovative solutions towards commercial deployments, with the potential, not only to improve journeys for road users, but to help put great UK companies on the path to further success."

Annette Pass, National Highways head of innovation, said: "People are, quite rightly, annoyed by the sight of graffiti in their communities and we are determined to find innovative new products that work quickly, safely, are cost-effective and eco-friendly to deal with the problem."

"The three concepts we have selected are very different but very exciting and could offer some innovative solutions to the age-old problem of graffiti. We look forward to seeing the results of the trials."

The competition follows an initial trial last year of several new solutions to remove or prevent graffiti that took place over two days at an off-road site at Gravelly Hill Interchange – more commonly known as Spaghetti Junction – in Birmingham.

Photo credit: Kier