



Rubber roads pave the way for tyre recycling as Tarmac expands asphalt range



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A new rubberised asphalt which uses recycled waste tyres has been launched by Tarmac.

The UK’s leading sustainable building materials and construction solutions business is the first to develop a new asphalt technology capable of recycling end-of-life tyres (ELTs) into roads.

With 40 million waste tyres produced every year in the UK, the company has created an innovative asphalt mix using granulated rubber.

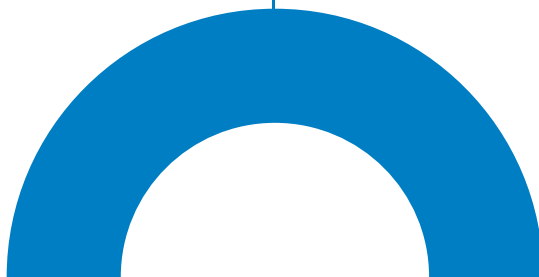
For every tonne of asphalt produced, dependent on the layer or thickness of the road, Tarmac estimates that it is possible to recycle one and a half tyres worth of rubber and for one mile of highway, this could provide an opportunity to recycle and reuse up to 750 waste tyres.

The initiative is part of Tarmac’s commitment to the circular economy with the business recycling 8.7 million tonnes of waste from other industries every year. It also builds on Tarmac’s reuse of waste tyres to power its cement kilns.

Brian Kent, technical director at Tarmac, said: “While plastic recycling has attracted media headlines, used tyres remain a significant and overlooked waste stream. We are undertaking trials involving rubberised asphalt, which we believe will provide at least the same safety, grip and rideability performance as conventional asphalt.

“Rubber is used in asphalt in many parts of the United States but in the UK there has historically been a lack of the necessary industrial infrastructure needed to allow manufacture of this type of material. Against the backdrop of major investment in the strategic road network there is now an opportunity to leverage this technology and unlock the benefits of this circular economic approach.”

As part of various trials, Tarmac has supplied asphalt with rubber in Coventry to assist with information gathering to test the performance and durability of the material with Coventry City Council.





Rob Little, Senior Engineer, Highways Technical, Coventry City Council, added: "Coventry City Council is delighted with the rubberised asphalt trial; we hope we can use more of the product across the city in the future to help divert waste tyres from landfill and incineration to reduce the carbon footprint for road construction projects in Coventry. We are proud to be leading with our partners, Balfour Beatty and Tarmac in providing road surfaces which are providing significant environmental benefits for our communities."

There is also a significant scope to recycle and reduce the UK's dependence on the export of ELT's to other countries.

Peter Taylor OBE, Secretary General of the Tyre Recovery Association comments: "While there has been significant progress in reusing and recycling waste tyres in the UK, there is still an over reliance on the export of used tyres to countries such as China, India and Pakistan, who are importing fewer tyres as they become self-sufficient.

The UK needs a second disposal route for used tyres. Tarmac's commitment to developing rubberised asphalt provides an excellent opportunity to achieve this and deliver environmental savings for this under-used waste stream."