

Doncaster gets the DG³ treatment



Doncaster now claims the only integrated public transport and retail complex under one roof in the UK. As befits a pioneering project, 3M's newest signing material has been used to make sure the traffic runs smoothly.

The Frenchgate complex has long been the main shopping centre in Doncaster. But now, as a result of a major project that started in 2004, Frenchgate is about to set new standards for integrating public transport. A £250m re-vamp means that shoppers and commuters will have access to road, rail and air-links all under one roof.

Whilst the addition of major new retailers, such as Debenhams, Next and Ottakars has boosted the status of Frenchgate for shopping, it's the transport integration that really sets it apart. Massive construction work has added a new bus terminal to serve more than 80 different services, an undercover link to the mainline rail station, and a new interchange for the Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield International Airport. There has also been a vast increase in the car-parking space available along with a major re-signing project to control access to the centre.



Doncaster Diamonds

The latter has been the responsibility of Andy Sutton, Assistant Engineer in the Traffic Section of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. As long-term users of 3M High Intensity and Diamond Grade™ materials, it was no surprise that Doncaster chose 3M materials for this new project too. The choice to use 3M™ Diamond Grade™ DG³ Reflective Sheeting was a last minute decision when Andy became aware of the new material during a consultation with 3M and sign makers Vista.

"We had a specific issue of wanting to erect signs with messages that could be obscured prior to the centre opening," says Andy. "The meeting with 3M and Vista was originally to discuss this solution, and it was then that I was introduced to DG³."

The big cover-up

Fortunately, 3M and Vista were able to solve the original problem too. All of the 60 directional signs that were needed to direct drivers safely to the new car-parks, were covered with 3M™ Protective Overlay Film (POF) Series 1160, and of those 30 were further covered with engineer grade sheeting that was removed on 7th June, the night before the opening. It's a simple solution that allowed the message on a permanent sign to be changed overnight. Much the same solution was used to obscure signs in advance of congestion charging in London and in other high profile schemes.

What London didn't have, of course, were signs that feature DG³, the latest high performance material from 3M. This micro-prismatic retroreflective sheeting is designed for maximum performance at every viewing angle and distance.

"It's been an interesting project," says Andy, "and it's looking good so far."

As pioneers of integrated transport and the use of Diamond Grade DG³, Doncaster may well be setting a trend for the rest of the UK to follow.