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The 25 year old surface at Guernsey was treated by Briser - extending its service life so that a feasibility study could be completed.

The rehabilitation of runway surface friction levels, which has gained additional importance for airport operators with the introduction of the new monitoring procedure CAP683, has provided Briser Road Safety with major opportunities to undertake mechanical retexturing of the main runways at Heathrow and Guernsey airports. Briser and its sister company, Klaruw RMS, has operated in the road surface sector for many years, within a regime where the Highways Agency's motorway and trunk road network is systematically monitored every three years for skid resistance and a course of improvement undertaken.

Environmental benefits recognised  
Retexturing is now recognised by the Highways Agency as the first step in improving road surface grip with substantial financial and environmental benefits. The process is recognised as a means of preserving valuable high quality aggregate stock by treatment, rather than the replacement of structurally sound wearing courses. Over 7m sq m of road surfaces have been treated over the last 15 years, the problem caused by the ever increasing volume and size of vehicles rapidly polishing the wearing surface at high stress sites such as corners and braking areas. With the current and anticipated increase in the amount of air traffic, a similar increase in surface wear and consequent pressure on runway availability will begin to take centre stage.

Mechanical retexturing improves friction levels by reinstating the surface texture of worn wearing courses such as asphalts, friction courses, surface dressings, thin surfacings and concrete used on runways and taxiways, as well as roads. The retexturing plant provides complete control of the process, catering for the characteristics of individual surface types.

The process can be undertaken in any weather and within convenient airport operational windows. Runways can be opened immediately, as marking and AGL remain in place. Repeat treatments can usually be carried out on structurally sound surfaces, the process becoming cyclical.

It is not necessary to treat the full length or width of the runway. Retexturing can be used selectively; localised areas falling below grip specification can be treated at a fraction of the cost and inconvenience of the conventional solution of replacement.

30% runway life extension at LHR  
The northern runway at Heathrow was treated in October 1997 when grip test levels of the then nine-year-old friction course had been reduced to Minimum Friction Levels. Retexturing raised friction levels to above Design Objective Level, well in excess of the

Planned Maintenance Level and has provided a three-year extension (30%) to the life of the surface.

At Guernsey airport a similar 25-year-old surface was treated in April 2000 with the same levels of improvement.

In this instance the improved friction levels, coupled with the anticipated extended life of the runway, has provided the essential time for airport authorities to complete a resurfacing and/or extension feasibility study.

It is not only old surfaces that have slippery problems. Successful trials have also been undertaken on new ungrooved Marshall Asphalt and SMA with similar improvements. In both cases these newly installed surfaces were below Minimum Friction Levels, bitumen having coated the aggregate surface. Retexturing was able to provide an immediate and cost effective solution.