

Our social value plan: 2022-2024



| Foreword

We play a vital role in our society and economy. Our roads connect friends and families across all the regions of England and link the nations of the UK. They're the backbone of the economy, providing a fast, reliable, and effective means of transport for businesses around the country.

As an organisation, we're committed to connecting the country and advancing the economy through safe, sustainable, and accessible roads. The government trusts us with billions of pounds each year to operate, maintain and improve our strategic road network. The value of the network is relatively well understood, delivering benefits to society of around twice the investment in it. We've assessed the direct and, in some cases, the indirect costs and benefits associated with our work. However, we've not previously explained what we contribute to local areas and how our work creates important impacts too.

This document outlines our approach to social value. It showcases our ambitions, our focus areas, the way we already deliver social value, and describes how we can do even more.

All our suppliers and every person working in our organisation has a role to play. Whether that's on the road helping people get to where they need to be, supporting our suppliers to deliver social value, or getting 'hands-on' in communities through things like our volunteering days.

We won't achieve all our social value ambitions overnight. But we've already identified four action areas that will strengthen the way we deliver social value and will help us to keep on improving. These areas focus on empowering our people and our suppliers to do the right things, while making sure we have robust governance and processes in place to effectively capture, measure and evaluate the social value we deliver.

It's now time for us to tell the complete story of National Highways – what our people and our suppliers do for the environment, the economy, communities and the country as a whole.



Nick Harris
Chief Executive



Malcolm Dare
Executive Director of
Commercial & Procurement

| Executive summary

We define social value as **‘the benefits that we and our supply chain deliver for people, the environment and the economy’**.

Social value isn't new to us – we've always built value into every aspect of our network, whether that's delivering 160 cycling schemes during the first road period, or our plans to deliver even more, by investing £956m through our designated funds programme in the second road period.

From economic prosperity to preserving natural habitats, we know how important it is that we make a positive difference to the communities and environment where we work.

Although we've been contributing to social value for a while, we haven't measured what we contribute before, or set ourselves ambitions for future growth.

It's why we now have a social value plan, together with a framework that showcases our ambitions, how we already deliver social value, and how we can do even more.

OUR FRAMEWORK

Our social value framework comprises four pillars:

Economic prosperity



Investing in new skills, jobs, supply chains and delivering improvements in every region across England.

Improving the environment



Making sustainable decisions that conserve natural resources and enhance ecosystems.

Community wellbeing



Addressing health-related issues and improving connectivity, amenities, education and heritage programmes for communities.

Equality, diversity and inclusion



Supporting the creation of a more equal society by increasing opportunities for under-represented groups and providing a road network that is accessible for all.

ENABLING ACTION AREAS

Our social value plan includes four enabling action areas. They support our pillar aspirations and will help us increase our value to society.

1. Engage with our people, so we can make sure social value is part of our day-to-day work.
2. Review our processes and governance, so we can make sure social value is considered in our decision making.
3. Make changes to our reporting, so we can measure our social value impact alongside existing metrics.
4. Work with our suppliers so they can maximise the impact of their social value.

Introduction

WHAT IS SOCIAL VALUE?

Social value can be interpreted in many different ways, but this is what we mean when we use the term at National Highways:

The benefits that National Highways and its supply chain deliver for people, the environment and the economy.

Social value isn't separate from all the other things we deliver. Everything we do ultimately creates value for society and our social value plan helps us to articulate that. Together with our supply chain, we already deliver a huge amount of value for society, probably more than we even know.

This is why we've developed a framework, informed by the [UN Sustainability Goals](#) and the [UK Government's social value model](#). The framework provides a clear and consistent way for us to talk about the value we deliver for society. Perhaps more importantly, it'll provide direction on how we, and our supply chain partners can provide social value in the future.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL VALUE

Social value is reflected in our purpose:

“*We operate, maintain and improve one of the most advanced road networks in the world, driving economic growth across the country, creating jobs, supporting businesses and opening up areas for development. We aim to provide all our customers with safe and reliable journeys, and to deliver a sustainable benefit to the environment.*”

We want to serve the nation, not only by operating a world-class road network, but also by being an organisation that people can rely on to do the right thing. We also want to use our position as a leading voice in the transport sector to make things better for everyone.

Our work drives economic growth across the country, provides jobs, supports businesses, helps whole regions to develop their potential and allows people to connect with loved ones using safe, reliable roads.

Finally, we understand how critical we are in helping the country move to net zero, while becoming more resilient to climate change and improving the natural environment.

Our plan sets out how we and our supply chain will deliver social value for all our stakeholders and the actions we'll take to make this happen.



Tree planting at M20 Junction 10a in Kent

OUR FOUR PILLARS

The table below sets out how each of our four pillars contributes value. Collectively, they align with Government's themes of tackling economic inequality, equal opportunity, fighting climate change, and wellbeing. They also feed into key policy drivers such as the Levelling Up agenda and the Net Zero plan.

OUR SOCIAL VALUE FRAMEWORK PILLARS

Economic prosperity 	Improving the environment  <p>(See our Net Zero Highways plan and Environmental Sustainability Strategy, due for publication in 2023)</p>	Community wellbeing 	Equality, diversity and inclusion 
<p>Directly contributing to economic growth including suppliers, local spend, new businesses, small-to-medium-size enterprises, micro, voluntary, charitable and social enterprises/mutuals</p> <p>Improving productivity by improving the strategic road network</p> <p>Contributing to apprenticeships, skills and education, and regional economic prosperity</p>	<p>Working toward net carbon zero emissions from corporate activity, road users and construction</p> <p>Enhancing the natural environment through improving ecosystems and biodiversity; and protecting our natural resources</p> <p>Respecting neighbouring communities by reducing our impact on air quality, noise and water quality; supporting a healthier society</p>	<p>Healthier and safer communities</p> <p>Promoting safe, active travel and non-motorised users improving health from issues related to the strategic road network</p> <p>Improving community amenities</p> <p>Improving connections within and between communities</p> <p>Contributing to the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in</p> <p>Supporting community education and heritage programmes</p>	<p>Contributing to employment and opportunities for women; ethnic minorities; the long-term unemployed; veterans; people with disabilities; the LGBTQ+ community; care givers; school leavers; young people not engaged in education, employment or training; ex-offenders; the homeless; maternity returners; new to industry; flexible workers</p> <p>Contributing opportunities to create a more equal society</p> <p>Creating a more inclusive and accessible strategic road network</p>

| How we deliver social value

PILLAR 1: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



We believe that supporting economic prosperity makes our network an enabler of business and helps the country's businesses and economy to grow. Our work

drives economic growth and this is central to the way we deliver social value.

Our work will focus on:

- Directly contributing to economic growth including suppliers, local spend, new businesses, small-to-medium-size enterprises, micro, voluntary, charitable and social enterprises/mutuals
- Improving productivity by improving the strategic road network
- Contributing to apprenticeships, skills and education, and regional economic prosperity

What we do already

We support the country's economy

Significant sectors in the economy rely on our strategic road network to arrive on time, boost productivity and, in so doing, contribute significantly to England's economy. This simply could not happen without the work that we do.

We contribute to apprenticeships, skills and education

We create jobs and skills throughout the country and open doors to the industry, offering a range of opportunities from apprenticeships and graduate roles through to experienced positions.

We are investing in new skills for our employees in areas such as digital and net zero carbon. We'll also share these skills with our suppliers so their businesses can benefit too.

“*The strategic road network is the lifeblood of the economy and keeps people and goods moving.*”

Social value in action

Supporting local job creation and entrepreneurship

The new A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon scheme was specifically designed to support the growth of the economy. However, we also asked our lead contractor to source local companies to work on the scheme.

K2 Recovery, based in Kettering, was appointed to provide free recovery for breakdowns and incidents along the route. Thanks to this contract, the company was able to increase its fleet from 10 to 60 vehicles, creating more jobs for local people.

“*When this opportunity arose, we didn't think we'd be successful because of the size of the contract and the size we were at the time. But we went for it, gave it our best shot and here we are! National Highways and the A14 team helped us get our brand out there and that's probably the main thing for us.*”

David Brown, Company Director, K2 Recovery

Our ambitions

Demand for our strategic road network is expected to grow by 40% by 2050. We'll continue to seek investment in our network to reduce congestion and enable businesses to boost their productivity by using our roads.

We'll continue to deliver improvements in every region across England so people can travel safely and smoothly. In doing this, we'll support the economic prosperity of England's regions and keep traffic moving safely through the country's vital transport arteries.

We want at least 5% of our workforce enrolled on formal apprenticeships or graduate development schemes within five years.

We aim to increase our spend with diverse suppliers by ensuring that we share our requirements with a variety of smaller and more diverse organisations – helping them to better understand our requirements. This will increase our diversity of thought and generate the widest possible social impact.

Signs of changing lives

More than 100 veterans and people with disabilities are making thousands of road signs each year for use on England's motorways and major A-roads for National Highways. The Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) is leading this through its social enterprise, Britain's Bravest Manufacturing Company (BBMC).

BBMC employs more than 100 people, 70% of whom are veterans and people with disabilities, and reinvests 100% of its surplus, providing greater employment opportunities to its beneficiaries.

Thanks to support from National Highways and our suppliers, the factory has been able to significantly expand its operations and improve the lives of the people it supports. This support has also enabled them to invest in state-of-the-art machinery, which is faster and more energy efficient. They've also

committed to becoming a Real Living Wage employer, which will have a lasting impact on people across RBLI.



Jeff Blizard, an employee at Britain's Bravest Manufacturing Company making signs for National Highways

Jeff Blizard (pictured) is a former soldier in the Queen's Regiment. Diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, Jeff was out of work for 10 years. BBMC has supported him on his journey back to full-time employment making road signs in the factory

PILLAR 2: IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT



We'll continue to drive forward on our plan to protect and improve the environment for current and future generations.

Our work will focus on:

- developing a net zero business and network
- making improvements that reduce local environmental impacts and support a healthier fairer society
- enhancing the natural environment and protecting natural resources

What we're doing and our ambitions

Our work helps to ensure that the future of road travel is net zero carbon, and that it will be powered by renewable electricity, hydrogen and biofuels. Our emission reduction ambitions are published within [Net Zero Highways: our 2030 / 2040 / 2050 Plan](#) and subsequent progress reports. They are underpinned by our Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which outlines our plans, priorities and progress reporting (due for publication in 2023).

Social value in action

National Highways employees get stuck in at Painshill Park

Fifteen employees working on the upgrade of an M25 junction in Surrey took off their hard hats for the day and worked as volunteers for a coppicing project.

They were volunteering at Painshill, located in Cobham, a collection of 18th century landscape gardens across 158 acres.



By cutting trees down to their stumps (coppicing), our team helped extend the lives of the trees and increase light into the area, which improves biodiversity and provides a haven for wildlife.

PILLAR 3: COMMUNITY WELLBEING



Our work is a vital part of everyday life and we have a responsibility to improve the wellbeing of our communities. We encourage healthier lifestyles, promote safe travel for all users and improve community amenities.

What we're already doing

Our work will focus on:

- Healthier and safer communities
- Promoting safe, active travel and non-motorised users improving health from issues related to the strategic road network
- Improving community amenities
- Improving connections within and between communities
- Contributing to the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in
- Supporting community education and heritage programmes

“*The strategic road network plays an important role in people's daily lives and ensuring that customers travel safely and on time.*”

We promote safe travel and support healthier and safer communities

We have one of the safest road networks in Europe, but we will continue to work diligently to maintain and increase levels of road-user safety. We will design and deliver schemes to meet the specific needs of regions and support targeted safety research to improve our understanding.

We engage our local communities

Every employee has three volunteering days to support causes that matter to them, which was increased to six during the pandemic. By engaging with and supporting charities in our communities, we can leave a legacy that is accessible to everyone.

Our ambitions

We will minimise the impact of our work in communities, such as health-related issues stemming from the strategic road network. We will do this by ensuring our construction activities are increasingly automated, modular and conducted off-site. This will lead to safer production, while reducing disruption, carbon emissions and waste from construction.

We will improve connectivity for communities by investing in digital innovation to deliver road improvements and optimise traffic flow. We

will do this through data-led decision making and automation.

We will help build communities for people to enjoy by working closely with charities and community groups to improve community amenities, education and heritage programmes.



Social value in action

Working with local primary school to support beekeeping

The Smart Motorways Alliance working on the M6 j 21a to 26 are working with a local beekeeping society to establish hives that the children can tend and selling the honey to raise funds. The approach is helping to make the project self-sustaining and introducing the children to finance management and business skills.

Bees making honey on a hive

PILLAR 4: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



We are building an inclusive culture that encourages, supports and celebrates diverse voices, both internally and externally.

Our work will focus on:

- Contributing to employment and opportunities for women; ethnic minorities; the long-term unemployed; veterans; people with disabilities; the LGBTQ+ community; care givers; school leavers; young people not engaged in education, employment or training; ex-offenders; the homeless; maternity returners; new to industry; flexible workers
- Contributing opportunities to create a more equal society
- Creating a more inclusive and accessible strategic road network

What we do already

We collaborate with highways suppliers to develop strong effective leaders that can drive change across the sector

Our Roads Academy initiative helps to develop our industry's current and future leaders, and solve challenges. An important module

in the course explores how they can create inclusive workplaces. Our benchmarking activity and initiatives are already driving change in our sector.

We create a more inclusive and accessible strategic road network

We provide assistance for four million road users who use our roads every day. This includes detailed access information about 113 motorway service areas, so people with disabilities know the facilities available along their route.

We contribute to a more equal society

We were one of the first organisations to register for the Construction Talent Retention Scheme. This not-for profit programme helps retain talent

in the sector and allows individuals to showcase their experience and expertise.

Our ambitions

We will continue with our 'Be counted, be heard' campaign, encouraging employees to share details about themselves. The campaign will inform our equality, diversity and inclusion plans, and enable us to make evidence-based decisions.

Through targeted activity and initiatives, we will make sure that our employees understand the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion and how they can make a difference throughout all areas of our organisation.



| Making it real – what we will focus on during the second road period

Our pillar ambitions and enabling action areas will help us deliver better outcomes for society and maximise our impact. We have agreed the following action plan for 2022-2024, building on the good work already undertaken throughout 2021. The following pages detail our enabling actions.

2022	2023	2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Approved social value definition and framework in place ■ Launch social value plan internally and externally to ensure consistency ■ Implement a base set of supply chain metrics ■ Capture supplier contributions in social value reporting tool ■ Establish social value governance: steering group, cross-department working group and supply chain focus group ■ Review and update our project and operational processes ■ Trial a Social Value Fund supporting small community benefit projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish a baseline for social value performance ■ Review supply chain base metrics ■ Implement corporate level reporting system ■ Include social value metrics in our Organisation Performance Report ■ Embed social value into our end-to-end procurement processes ■ Create opportunities for voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises via an established framework ■ Produce annual social value progress report ■ Fully incorporate social value into A303 and LTC ■ Make social value more prominent in our recruitment and retention approach ■ Encourage more suppliers to join our supplier group and actively contribute ■ Embed the importance of delivering social value across all our suppliers ■ Improve the skills of our people and suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lead social value in the public sector transport sector in RIS3 ■ Fully incorporate social value into all major procurements and decision making ■ Demonstrate continually improving performance trends ■ Ensure social value informs Road Period 3 decision-making ■ Continually assess our performance and hold ourselves and our suppliers to account ■ Embed social value in our culture as an organisation and within our supply base ■ Increase our supplier diversity and diversity of thought

**Our action areas relating to the environment and net zero are of critical importance to National Highways. They can be found in our Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which will be published in 2023, and their own specific document called Net Zero Highways: our 2030 / 2040 / 2050 Plan.*



ENABLING ACTION AREA 1:

Engage with our people and suppliers to ensure social value is embedded in our day-to-day work

Our employees and suppliers are vitally important to us. Not only do they play a key role in delivering social value on our behalf, like everyone else they're also affected by the social value we deliver.

We must foster a culture that supports and enhances the skills of our people, and ensures our organisation is an attractive place to work. It's important that our people understand how their role adds value to society.

Improving skills and knowledge

We will engage with our employees to help them understand how they deliver social value for the organisation and how their effort can be maximised.

We will target skills improvement in key roles across our business and our supply chain to leverage a higher return on social value related activity. We will ensure training and knowledge sharing is accessible.

Recruitment and retention

We will emphasise the social value we deliver in our attraction and internal communications to recruit and retain talent that is passionate about the positive impact we make on society.

Engage with our organisation

We will share success stories with our people, suppliers and stakeholders to embed best practice across the company and sector.



ENABLING ACTION AREA 2:

Review our existing processes and governance, to ensure social value is considered in day-to-day decision making

We aim to have a strong and consistent impact on everything we do. To achieve this, we must integrate social value into our usual processes, capability and governance.

Corporate governance

We will incorporate social value into the steps we take when making major decisions in our organisation. We will ensure that our social value activities are reported into a Steering Group and have the right level of governance.

Major projects, renewals and operations

We will embed social value into the way we deliver road projects and the everyday operation of the strategic road network. We will review our project and operational processes and update them where necessary.

Social value steering group

Led by our Sponsor, Malcolm Dare, our social value steering group will drive our efforts, monitor social value reporting and hold us accountable through governance.

Designated Funds alignment

We will ensure our Designated Funds programme is fully aligned with this plan. Our Social Value Fund will be trialled in 2022 to further support small community benefit projects outside of the traditional work we do.



ENABLING ACTION AREA 3:

Make changes to our reporting, so we can measure our social value impact alongside existing business metrics

We will improve our reporting capability to measure the impact of our social value in a clear and consistent way. By doing this we'll be in a better position to hold ourselves and our suppliers to account.

By measuring and reporting social value, we will be able to set targets and track our progress against them.

Integrated governance

We will include social value metrics in our Organisation Performance Report, a critical document that's regularly assessed by our Executive Committee.

Getting the right data

We will use our social value reporting tool to capture supplier contributions. This will be free to use, and suppliers will be trained to use it, so we can track our performance consistently.

Continuous improvement and learning

We will work with our people and supply chain to identify opportunities for improvement within our metrics and reporting.

Annual reporting

We will publish an external social value report each year to measure our performance against the Social Value Plan and identify our future ambitions.



ENABLING ACTION AREA 4:

Work collaboratively with our suppliers so they can maximise the impact of the social value they create

We recognise our supply chain's social value performance has a direct impact on our own, meaning it is critical for us to support each other and work together.

Sharing best practice

We will encourage more suppliers to join and actively contribute to our diverse supply chain social value group. We will emphasise the importance of social value delivery by sharing best practice to recognise what good looks like.

Procurement approach

We will ensure a potential supplier's ability to deliver social value is prioritised when we buy goods and services.

Improved access for our supply chain

We will ensure all opportunities are open to all types of suppliers: major contractors, small and medium enterprises, and voluntary, charitable and social enterprises. We will increase supplier diversity and generate the widest possible social impact.

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