

Making Highways a career of choice

Brand Highways

Working better together as one sector



Contents

	Page number
Foreword	4
HSC focus areas and structure	6
Our survey and who we asked	8
The best of highways careers	10
Where we need to improve	12
What this means	13
Our opportunity to transform the highways sector	14
Campaign key themes	16
Mobilising the plan	17
HSC purpose and aims	18

Foreword

Roads connect everyone and make the country work better.

The Highways Sector Council's (HSC) Future Leaders Group wants to ensure the sector attracts skilled candidates and retains its existing talent.

This year, we launched a survey to help gain an understanding of how to make highways a career of choice for individuals across the country.

Over 1,000 people responded from the public and private sector across the UK in both the strategic and local road networks, covering a range of different roles. 39% of the responses came from females. They told us what makes them proud to work in our sector and where we could improve.

This survey has provided a credible and independent baseline of evidence to help us understand the needs of individuals and groups at all levels in the sector. We have the foundation elements to promote our sector, shaping it to attract a diverse range of people and skills, to position it as an attractive career option full of potential, development and reward.

The opportunity for us is to work better together as one to respond to their feedback, ensure our existing staff are committed, our pipeline of skilled talent stays strong and our delivery for the country continues.

Together, we need to use this opportunity for the sector to have a unified voice across highways to more clearly define

the key skills that will enable growth, ultimately improving our nation's roads and strengthening the capacity, capability and competitiveness of our supply chains.

We need to galvanise the sector to improve the image of highways as an essential provider of connectivity for people to loved ones, goods, services, jobs, healthcare and leisure. Whether people use public transport, cycle, ride a horse, drive a traditional or electric vehicle, roads connect everyone and everything.

We need to celebrate the variety of amazing jobs and skills we have - boldly and more widely - to all ages and to those in other industries with skills to share. Attracting and retaining diversity in all respects is key.

We must improve our collective image for brand highways. This is one of the key actions as well as a more structured training portal for sector wide training.



LEON DANIELS OBE
Highways Sector Council Chair



ANNA DELVECCHIO
Chair of the Future Leaders Group, and a founding member of the HSC

Baroness Vere, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, said:

"I am pleased to be supporting this first of its kind survey to help understand how we can make the highways sector a career of choice for young people across the country. Our people within highways carry out an essential job in keeping our strategic and local road networks running, and it is critical that we can attract new, emerging talent, while retaining the invaluable skills and experience of our existing workforce."

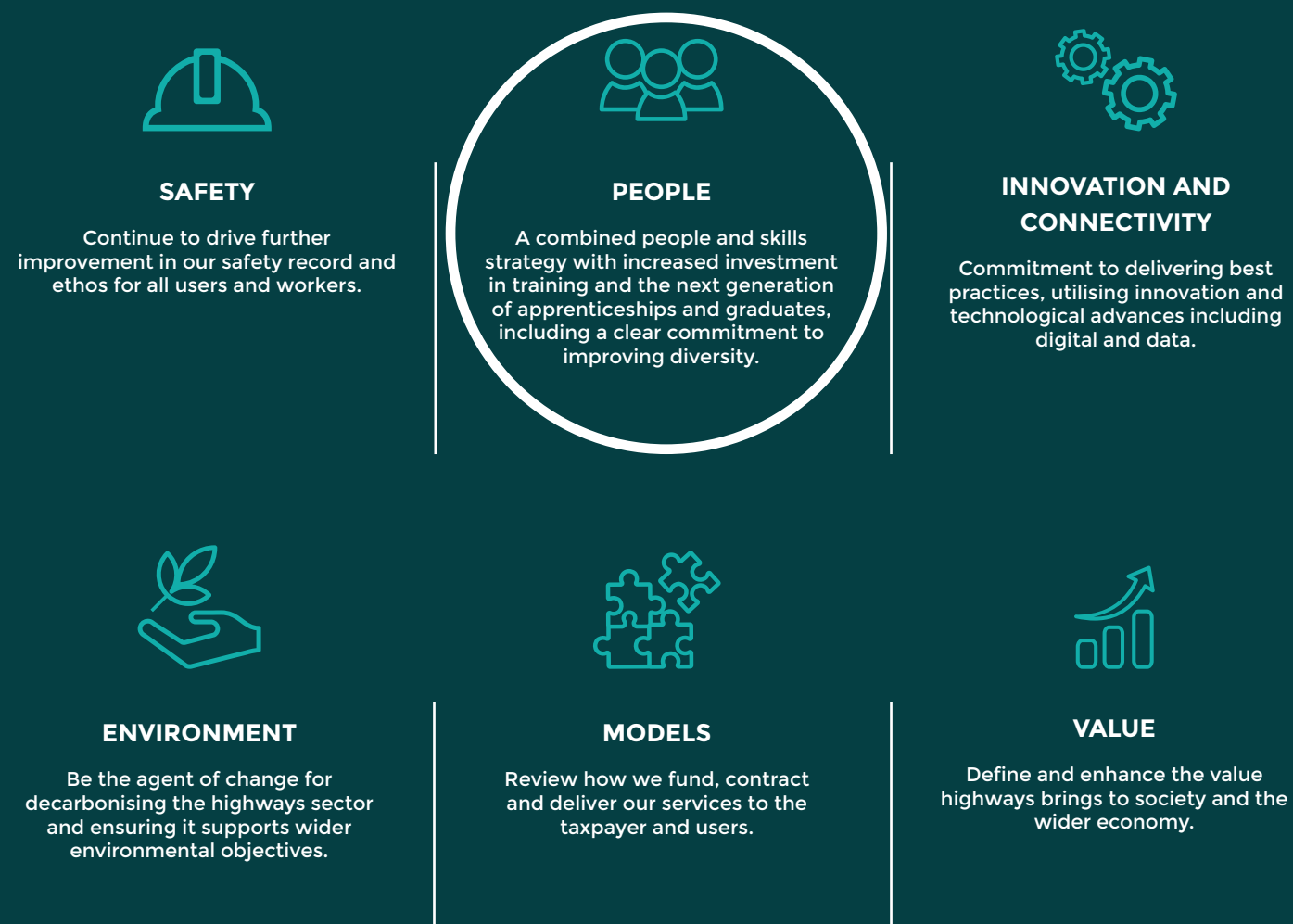
Anna Delvecchio, Chair of the Future Leaders Group, and a founding member of the HSC said:

"The Highways Sector Council promotes cross industry collaboration to transform highways and at the centre of this are our people. We need to attract a new diverse workforce and retain the fantastic people we already have across the sector. This survey will help us understand what attracts people to the sector and identify any barriers that we can work together to break down. I look forward to seeing the results and further promoting the sector for the rewarding career that it is."

Dipesh J Shah OBE, National Highways Chair said:

"I welcome this survey. For our industry to meet the current and future challenges we face, we need to attract and retain the right people with the right skills. The survey will help us to understand what we need to do to make the highways sector a career of choice for young people and one where our people with a wealth of experience can thrive."

HSC focus areas and structure



Our survey

Our landmark survey sets out to make highways a career of choice. We sought views from highway sector individuals at every level, about what they believe makes it great and some of the opportunities and barriers it faces. Our intention was to provide the impetus that will take the sector forward, shaping it to attract a diverse range of people and, more importantly, position it as an attractive career option full of potential, opportunity and reward.

Over 1,000 individuals told us they are proud to make a difference, solve problems with great colleagues and enjoy the satisfaction of delivering tangible work.

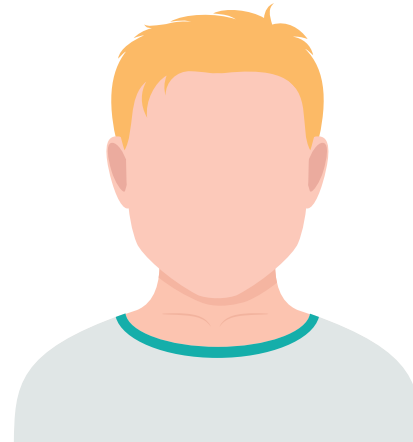
In this report, we will set out what was said, who responded and more importantly how we can respond as a sector to make highways a career of choice.

The survey included responses from people in over 300 jobs across our sector, including apprentices, graduates, operatives and frontline workers, commercial and project managers.

The quotes have been randomly selected in the next couple of pages to articulate key messages from some of the respondents.

Who we asked

56%
were male:
55% over the
age of 45



39%
were female:
48% over the
age of 45

2% as 'other' in terms
of their gender

3% preferred not to say
if their gender was
the same as at birth

47%
joined
mid-career*



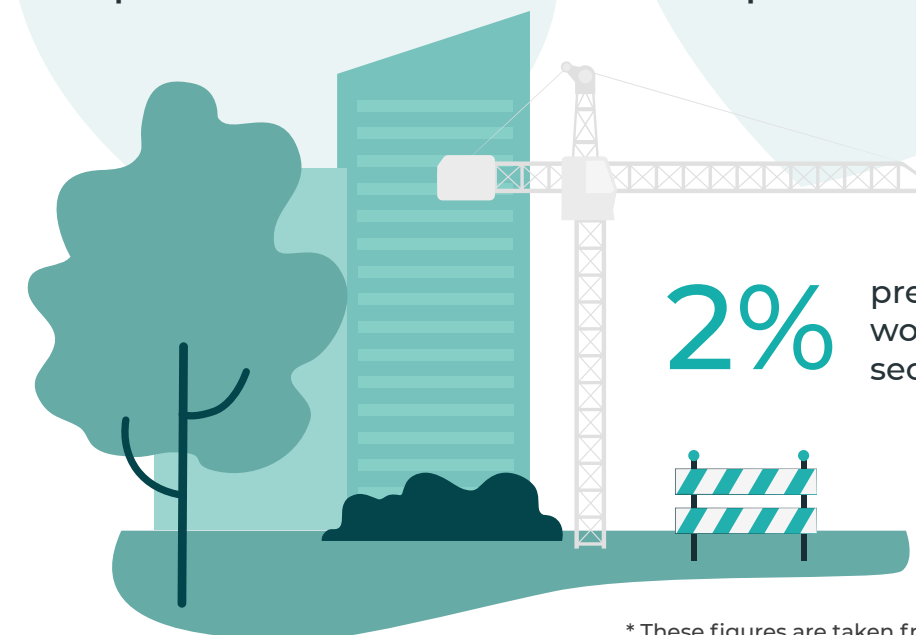
43%
joined from
education*



37%
were from the
private sector

58%
were from the
public sector

2% preferred not to say if they
work in the public or private
sector and **3%** put 'Other'



* These figures are taken from different categories from the survey

The best of highways careers

People enjoy varied work, seeing their achievements in the physical infrastructure and making a difference to the environments where they live and work.

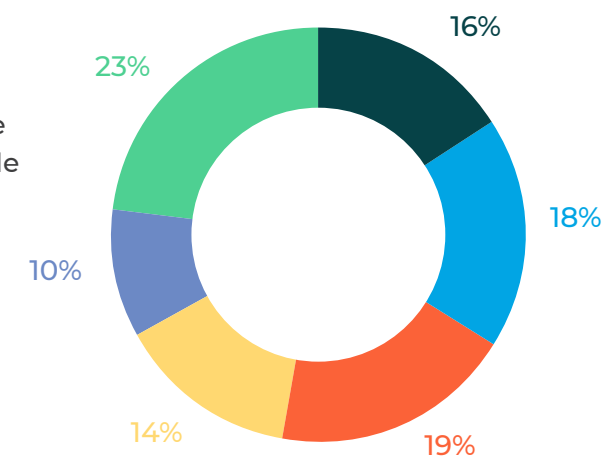
66% scored five out of five when recommending highways as a career

Best things about working in the highways sector

- Career opportunities
- People and team
- Satisfaction seeing your work
- Making a difference
- Problem solving
- Variety of work

“Every day is different, we contribute to a sustainable society, we facilitate the lives of everybody.”

“You get to see the outcome of your work and you use the infrastructure you create as part of your daily life. It's always varied with no two jobs being the same.”



“Trying to tackle big issues and make a real difference (e.g. help improve biodiversity and lower carbon in transport).”

“Daily Challenge, things we do today make a difference to tomorrow.”

“Prospect of innovation in transport, having a direct and positive impact on renewable transport, varied work.”

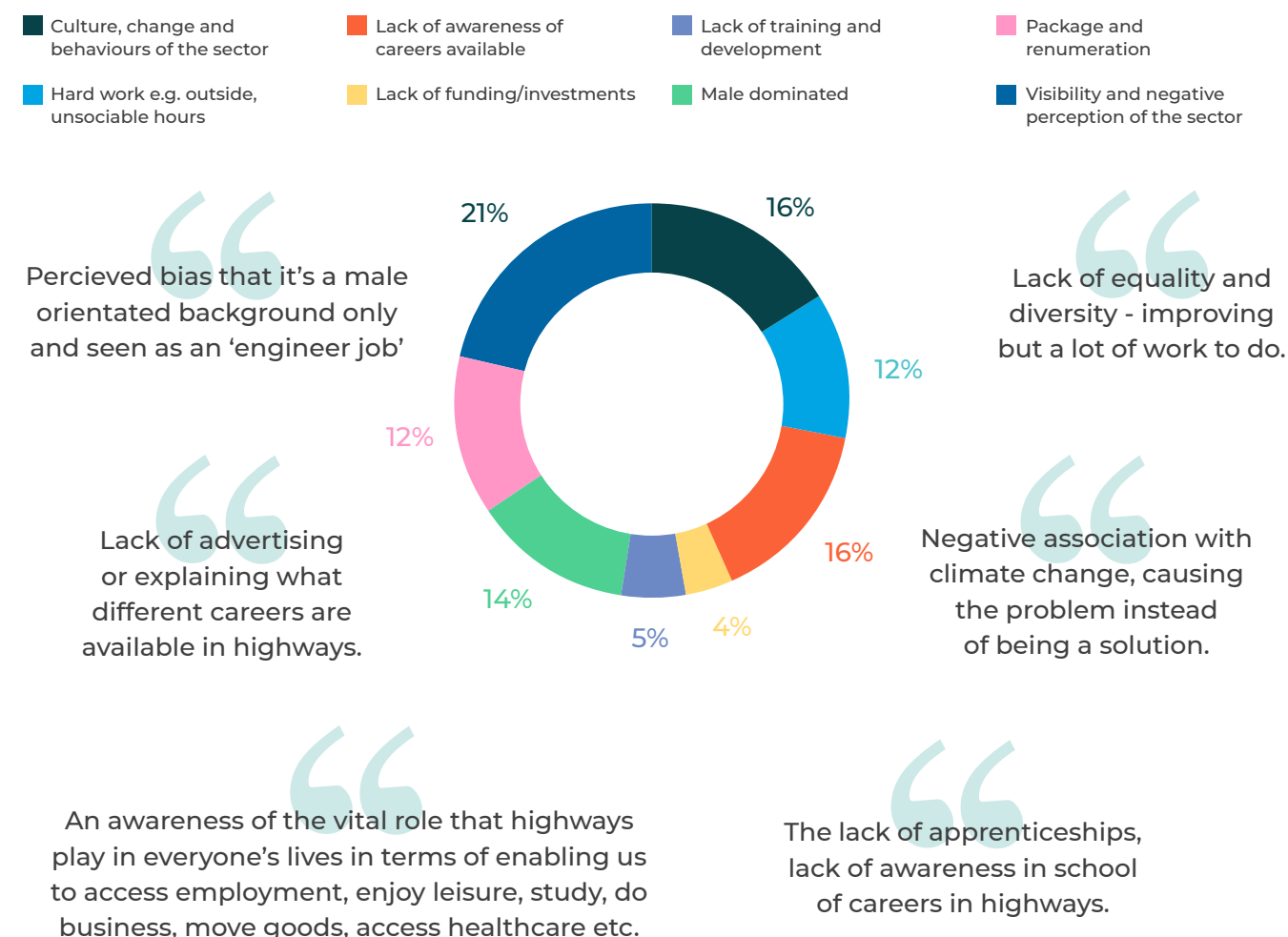
“Building and working with a great team of people.”



Where we need to improve

We need to bust myths and increase pride by celebrating the positive outcomes of highway operations, and raise awareness of the range of careers available.

Perceived blockers



What this means

- ▶ We can share and promote the great **reasons to be proud of working in highways**, to attract talent at all levels and ages.
- ▶ We must provide **equal focus on young talent and mid-career candidates**; making no assumptions about when people might join the sector.
- ▶ We should do more to **train our highways colleagues on emerging topics** including climate change, decarbonisation, social value, changing travel needs, asset management and mobility as a service.
- ▶ We need to understand how to create environments where **everyone feels they can flourish**.
- ▶ We need to do more to ensure we **engage and listen** to our younger workforce.

For people with strong environmental ethics, there's a perception that highways is all about road building, cars and environmental destruction.

The emphasis on professional and academic qualifications, rather than skills and abilities can be a barrier in some organisations.



Our opportunity to transform the highways sector

The Highways Sector Council has been created to help transform delivery in the highways sector, creating a unified voice and approach so the sector can work in greater partnership with central and local government.

We are focused on developing a collaborative approach to transform and improve how the sector works, across a number of key areas: people and skills, innovation, safety, environment, value, investment and delivery models.

We need to change, together
Diverse people, skills and talent are key to the success of our sector. Our ageing workforce and limited pipeline of new talent are significant risks.

Other sectors have been more successful at promoting job opportunities in a unified way, and we believe our sector would benefit from a unified approach to attracting talent as well as massively improving brand highways.

Upskilling highways talent is vital for the digital and low carbon agendas.

Currently, levels of diversity tend to be inconsistent with the communities we serve.

Time to galvanise

Working in partnership, we need a combined people and skills strategy with increased levels of investment in training and next generation highways skills.

We invite you to collaborate with the Highways Sector Council, Department for Transport, National Highways and other key stakeholders e.g. Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, Local Council Roads Innovation Group and UK Roads Liaison Group on two key focus areas:

- 1. A sector wide campaign, targeted at making highways a career of choice. We should initially start by highlighting the unsung heroes and the importance of what they do as a unified sector.**
- 2. Develop a 'virtual not for profit' sector wide training portal which consolidates sector wide training available across the combined sector.**

Sector wide collaboration, leadership and commitment will be key components of making this happen.

Campaign framework idea:

OVERARCHING PLATFORM:

Enhancing the highways brand and making highways a career of choice.
Making the case for Roads and how vital they are.

COMMUNICATIONS PROPOSITION:

Demonstrating the opportunities in the sector and ability to make a difference

APPROACH:

Being a champion

Become a voice on issues that matter

Become a respected voice on issues that matter to our audiences, in our key markets. e.g. Net Zero, digitisation, diversity and inclusion

Legacy

Satisfaction of seeing your work

Working in highways you can work on some of the UK's most important and iconic infrastructure from Queensferry Crossing to Spaghetti Junction

Making a difference

Drive progress via highways network

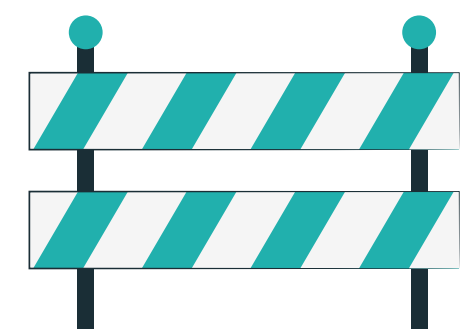
Highways will continue to innovate and help the country move towards Net Zero

EXAMPLE THEMES:

People care about sustainability, diversity and inclusion, digitisation, funding – we need to find our voice on these topics

Tell the stories of where highways have come from and will go to. Referencing the iconic past and look ahead to roads of the future

Highlight Impact - tell the stories of communities, connected and carbon reduction objectives and achievements



Campaign key themes

The campaign should be linked to the following themes:



Sustainability

The highways sector's ambition is to be a green solution and a key part of our UK PLC Net Zero journey - roads will decarbonise quickly by greater collaboration



Connected

Highways connect everyone and everything. From walking and cycling to public transport, HGVs to electric vehicles



Communities

Highways are the lifeblood of the country – they are used for leisure and business, they keep our supply chain moving, they connect communities - they are a vital UK Plc asset

Mobilising the plan

We would like to launch a partnership with both the public and private members of our sector to take forward a unified campaign to address the findings of our survey and ensure that roads continue to support and drive economic growth.

Our survey results show that we need to understand how we can make our sector more inclusive, attracting a more diverse workforce, including the younger generation. We also need to consolidate our training offer for individuals already in the sector to ensure we have the skills needed, both for now and the future.

Next steps

We are keen to launch the findings as well as a high level structure for the campaign at Highways UK 2022.

Detailed below are a few suggested milestones for consideration:

- ▶ The HSC will host a number of combined public and private sector workshops to canvas views on our framework and campaign approach as well as establish key messages for the sector
- ▶ If agreed we could add a reference to mapping opportunities and entry points that exist in highways
- ▶ Agree leadership team to drive unified campaign forward
- ▶ Define target audiences and which cluster of audience we want to focus on e.g. mid career professional, Generation Z, Generation Alpha, apprentices etc to have the most impact
- ▶ Host a roundtable dinner with senior leaders from the sector to discuss how we can make this a reality. Chaired by the Minister and Non Executive Chair National Highways

In summary

We need to work in greater collaboration as a sector to improve the highways brand, making it a career of choice irrespective of which part of the sector you join or work in.

We can only do this with stronger alignment and partnership between the public and private sector, our clients and DfT with collective and agreed targets and commitments.

HSC purpose and aims

Our purpose

The Highways Sector Council brings together industry and government to transform the Highways Sector by taking advantage of new technologies and ways of working to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits for all highway users, taxpayers and the wider society.

Aims

- ▶ Developing a collaborative approach to transform and improve how the sector works across a number of key areas: people and skills, innovation, safety, environment, value, investment and delivery models
- ▶ Speaking to central government with a unified voice with greater clarity on asks from and offers to government
- ▶ Working as a private and public partnership with central government, local government and the supply chain to develop and deliver a plan as one for our key areas
- ▶ Using ISO 44001 Collaborative Framework and its behaviours as the benchmark for all Sector Council related activity

Values

Collaboration

We will work together towards a common aim in a spirit of mutual trust and respect

Integrity

We will conduct ourselves in an open and transparent manner to ensure the council benefits the sector before our own individual organisations

Customer focus

We will recognise and behave in a way that puts customer benefits at the heart of our activities

Progressive

We will be agents of change in the Highways Sector, using innovation to drive positive sector change in how we work

Leadership

We are leaders within the Highways Sector delivering and leveraging positive sector change in line with the council's aims in an inclusive way



