

Press release: Be part of the fourth industrial revolution

Could you create a road surface that heals itself to make it more resilient for the future? Do you have an idea or product that will help prepare the highways infrastructure for the coming of connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV)?

If you or your company has a solution which could help transform England's motorways and major A roads then Highways England wants to hear from you.

The company responsible for maintaining, operating and improving the strategic road network has today launched an ['Innovation Portal'](#) to help identify things that could make roads safer for motorists and road workers, improve how information reaches those travelling around or help deliver an ambitious programme of road schemes.

The online platform shows just some of the research and development being funded by Highways England through a special fund it has ring-fenced for innovation. These include an intelligent and connected construction plant development to make excavation work safer and more productive, mobile safety equipment to protect our road workers and CAV test bed sites to prepare our network for future vehicles.



Paul Doney, Innovation and Continuous Improvement Director, Highways England

(pictured). Credit: Highways England

Launching the portal, Paul Doney, Innovation and Continuous Improvement Director, Highways England, said:

This is a really exciting time to work in infrastructure and in a world with technology at our fingertips the possibilities for the future are endless.

At Highways England we have an ambitious roads programme and we want to harness the good ideas out there to help us build our future network.

The new Innovation Portal gives a two-way platform to connect on. It shows everyone the areas that really matter to us and the challenges we expect to face: improving safety for road users and our work force, customer service and delivering our ambitious road programme.

If you think you can help us and want to be part of this come and speak with us at Highways England.

The company is keen to engage with the industry, small and medium-sized enterprises, research organisations and academic bodies.

Highways England also wants people to understand the 'journey' their idea or product will go on. Solutions to problems are fed by the discovery stage of research, which Highways England is keen to support. Beyond that it's about developing new products and services and how innovation can be linked to what customers want; it also needs to deliver value for money. The big challenge is then to 'land' innovation and make it business as usual through standardisation.

A previous innovation which is now standard is the way Highways England models major improvement schemes. Historically a bespoke model would be built for each scheme, incurring significant cost and time.

The new models now provide the opportunity for the traffic model building process to "hit the ground running" with a much stronger information base helping Highways England to deliver projects in a shorter timescale and in turn providing the benefits sooner. Furthermore they have been used to provide information for models developed by a number of local authorities and Sub-Regional Transport Bodies, providing wider benefits to the country.

Another innovation in development is looking toward building a real-time simulation of our network using computer gaming technology to improve decision making when assessing the operational impact of incident management or changes to the road layout.

Highways England wants to use the new portal to reach outside of the company and show people what it will be like to work with them and maximise opportunities. This could be through funding or connecting idea owners up

with others who may be able to work with them.

Currently Highways England is supporting over 95 projects across the country with investment from the £150 million [special fund for innovation](#). The portal shows the process for applying, as well as live research and innovation competitions. Anyone who wants to engage with the company should get in touch via the Innovation Portal.

Interview opportunity:

Paul Doney, Highways England, is available for interview on Wednesday 27 June (afternoon only) or Thursday 28 June, where he is attending the [Traffex Seeing Is Believing event](#). If you are interested in speaking to Paul, please call Kelly Barnes or Andy Broughton, Highways England Press Office on 0844 693 1448 (select Option 1).

Note: the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” (see title of news release) is referenced in an independent report [“Made Smarter Review”](#) published by Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in October 2017.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.