

Why National Highways' A46 road scheme stands out a green mile in drive for net zero carbon

Contractors have gone that extra green mile when resurfacing a dual carriageway on the National Highways' network – by recycling more than half of the materials from the old road back into the new one and cutting the carbon footprint by 23%.

Some 17,432 tons of material were reused from the layers of road surface and saved from landfill as well as helping to make the A46 Warwick Bypass much smoother and safer for drivers.

A stretch of the busy road had deteriorated to a condition that, following a number of temporary repairs to ensure safety, a full depth reconstruction was needed, digging down almost 15 inches to replace the layers of road surface.

Kier led the project on behalf of National Highways and recruited Aggregate Industries (AI) to carry out the resurfacing on 3.5 miles of the northbound carriageway between Sherbourne roundabout and the Leek Wootton roundabout.

Much of the material in the lower levels contained tar which is classed as carcinogenic – has the potential to cause cancer – and must be dealt with as hazardous waste and disposed of at a licenced waste processing facility.

But tar-bound material can be safely recycled and encapsulated back into the pavement layers by processing and re-mixing it. Kier and AI devised a low carbon pavement solution for the resurfacing project and discovered the greenest and most cost-effective way to do this was by recycling the existing carriageway material and reducing the amount that would have to go to landfill.

The old layers of road were recycled back into the new carriageway using AI's ex situ cold recycled Foamix asphalt. Foamix is a fully cold process and can be laid and compacted at a much safer ambient temperature which reduces the asphalt fumes on site which workers are exposed to.

The material was mixed on site to minimise vehicle movements and reduce the scheme's carbon footprint. Using recycled material meant there was less raw material needed for the works too and without the trips to the waste site as well, around 82,000 road miles were saved on this scheme.

Some 56% of materials were recycled from the old road into the new one. Any remaining material not used in this scheme, which ran between late July and September, was recycled back across the road network through other projects.

National Highways Project Manager, Ryan Davies, said:

We have committed, through our net zero carbon plan, to rapidly cut carbon from road construction, maintenance and operations, and support the transition to zero emission vehicles.

A vital part of meeting our ambitious objectives is having the support of our supply chain on schemes such as this. Through close collaboration with partners such as Kier and AI we are taking great strides on our journey to net zero carbon.

National Highways has already started sustained action towards decarbonising England's motorways and A-roads so they can continue to bring significant benefits to motorists, communities and businesses in a net-zero future.

The net zero plan will put roads at the heart of Britain's net zero future through three key commitments; achieving net zero for its own operations by 2030; delivering net zero road maintenance and construction by 2040; and supporting net zero carbon travel on our roads by 2050.

AI's National Technical Manager, Neil Leake, said:

Good collaboration and an innovative approach were at the heart of this scheme, with people working together to achieve the same low carbon goal. We had some significant challenges to overcome to make sure this scheme could be delivered on time and still meet the low carbon goal we set ourselves.

Kier Managing Director, Scott Cooper, said:

This is the first time that Foamix has been used on this type of road on the Area 9 Strategic Road Network and this work on the A46 scheme really demonstrates how innovation and excellent collaboration across the value chain is needed if Kier and our partners are to succeed with reaching our net-zero ambition and combatting climate change.

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

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

Consultation to reform the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

The UK Government, in agreement with the Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, is seeking views on proposals for a reformed Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board ([AHDB](#)), to deliver greater accountability and value for money for farmers across the UK.

The AHDB, an arms-length body of Defra, was established in 2008 to help farmers improve their performance and drive growth through research, knowledge exchange, improving market access and marketing activities.

The consultation follows a Request for Views on the future of the AHDB in 2018, and the results of recent ballots in the horticulture and potato sectors to end the statutory levy in these two sectors. It is aimed at farmers, growers, processors and others in the food supply chain across the UK who pay a statutory levy specifically to the AHDB.

The consultation proposes:

- to end the statutory levy in the horticulture and potato sectors from April 2022. The Government and the Devolved Administrations remain open to exploring industry-led proposals for the AHDB to deliver research and market development activities through a range of other funding methods, such as voluntary levies, commercial agreements or new statutory levies where there is widespread support for this; and
- to allow levy payers in other sectors a greater say on how the levy is spent, through a vote on sector plans every five years. The AHDB has committed to delivering the first vote on sector work programmes in the Spring of 2022.

The consultation runs for 7 weeks from 17th November 2021 to midnight on the 10th January 2022.

In a joint statement, UK government and Devolved Administration Ministers said:

Our proposals for a reformed and more accountable AHDB respect the outcome of the horticulture and potato ballots and sit alongside improvements already underway to deliver a more efficient organisation, and better value for money for farmers and growers.

We encourage farmers, growers and all relevant stakeholders across the UK to submit their views and help us shape the AHDB of the future.

Further improvements to the governance and structure of the AHDB are already underway. A reformed AHDB will support the delivery of our ambitions for a sustainable and competitive agriculture sector, and will help farmers identify innovative ways to reduce carbon emissions, improve competitiveness and productivity, and access new markets.

The consultation extends to the whole of the United Kingdom. For further details and to respond to the consultation, please visit the related [GOV.UK page](#).

Antibiotic-resistant infections fell in 2020 for first time since 2016, but UKHSA warns drop likely temporary

New data [published by the UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\)](#), ahead of World Antibiotics Awareness Week (WAAW), 18 to 24 November, shows that antibiotic-resistant bloodstream infections fell in 2020 (from 65,583 in 2019, to 55,384) for the first time since 2016 but still remain at a higher level than 6 years ago. Importantly, the decline was largely driven by a reduction in recorded bloodstream infections overall, likely due to less social mixing, enhanced hand hygiene and changes to healthcare access and delivery.

Antibiotics are vital for the treatment of bacterial infections causing pneumonia, meningitis and sepsis. Without them, modern medical technology could not exist, as they also help to protect against infection during chemotherapy, caesarean sections and other common surgeries. However, they are sometimes prescribed to treat coughs, earache and sore throats where it is now clear they may have little or no effect.

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to treatment, causing serious complications, including bloodstream infections and hospitalisation. Taking antibiotics encourages harmful bacteria that live inside you to become resistant. That means that antibiotics may not work when you really need them. This is why it is important to take antibiotics only when they are needed.

Analysis of the bacteria that most commonly cause bloodstream infections, including E. coli, revealed that although the overall number of bloodstream infections decreased in 2020 compared with 2016, the overall proportion of infections that were resistant to antibiotics increased over the same time frame. This was most likely driven by changes in behaviour, prescribing and healthcare delivery in 2020 – 1 in 5 people with a bloodstream infection in 2020 had an antibiotic-resistant infection. This suggests that resistant infections are likely to rise in the post-pandemic years and will require ongoing action.

Concerted antimicrobial stewardship efforts over several years has led to continued decreases in antibiotic prescribing, with antibiotic prescribing dropping further during the pandemic, from 18 Defined Daily Doses (DDDs) per 1,000 inhabitants per day in 2019 to 16 DDDs per 1,000 inhabitants in 2020 – driven by reductions in antibiotics usually prescribed for respiratory infections. Antibiotics of last-resort use increased in hospitals.

Antibiotic prescribing in the dental setting showed, however, an increase in 2020 for the first time in many years, highlighting the importance of face-to-face practice in dentistry.

Dr Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Advisor at UKHSA, said:

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has been described as a hidden pandemic and it's important that we do not come out of COVID-19 and enter into another crisis.

It is likely that COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 including enhanced infection, prevention and control measures also played a part in driving down antibiotic resistance and prescribing. While these measures were severe, serious antibiotic-resistant infections will rise once again if we don't act responsibly and that can be as simple as regular and thorough handwashing.

As we head into winter, with increasing amounts of respiratory infections in circulation, it's important to remember that antibiotics are not needed for many cold-like symptoms. Stay at home if you feel unwell. Taking antibiotics when you don't need them only puts you and your loved ones at more risk in the future so please listen to your GP, nurse, dentist or pharmacist's advice.

£360 million investment to transform rail ticketing across the country

News story

Contactless pay-as-you-go ticketing to be rolled out across the commuter networks of the Midlands and North over the next 3 years.



- £360 million invested to radically reform and overhaul rail passengers' experience of fares, ticketing and retailing
- contactless tap-in and tap-out ticketing to be at more than 700 stations across the country outside London and the South East with 400 stations across the North set to benefit
- investment marks first stage of plan to roll out convenient and modern digital ticketing across the whole rail network, improving thousands of daily commutes and simplifying journeys

An investment of £360 million will radically reform and improve passengers' experience of fares, ticketing and retailing on the railways.

This will see contactless tap-in and tap-out ticketing at more than 700 stations across the country outside London and the South East, benefitting more than 400 stations across the North.

Over the next 3 years, the government will roll out contactless pay-as-you-go ticketing across the commuter networks of the Midlands and North – introducing London-style price caps and greater integration with local bus and tram networks.

This is just the first stage of the government's commitment to roll out convenient and modern digital ticketing across the whole rail network, improving thousands of daily commutes, simplifying journeys and ensuring passengers are charged the best price.

It will also help to create a rail network that will not only deliver the types of journeys that create jobs, supports businesses and unlocks housing opportunities, but will level up the Midlands and the North to become an economic power base to rival London and the South East.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Passengers across the North and Midlands have waited far too long to see the same fast, easy and convenient ticketing as those in London. We're determined to put that right.

Today's investment is just the first phase of our efforts to overhaul our rail network, focused on improving journeys for passengers right across the country.

This comes ahead of the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) and, once the full programme is delivered, cities across the North of England will have access to a contactless ticketing scheme.

The IRP will shortly set out how the government intends to transform rail across the North and Midlands while delivering benefits for passengers far sooner than under previous plans.

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Made in the UK, Sold to the World: New strategy to boost exports to £1 trillion

The Government today launches an ambitious new 'Made in the UK, Sold to the World' plan to help businesses across the UK double exports and sell their world-class products around the globe.

The 12-point export strategy – published today (Wednesday 17 November) by the Department for International Trade – will give businesses the tools they need to become a nation of exporters and reap the benefits of our free trade deals.

It includes an Export Support Service that offers a one-stop shop for exporting advice, and the launch of a new UK Tradeshow Programme better-tailored to help businesses, particularly those outside London and the South East, to attend and promote their products around the world.

DIT will also be expanding its Export Academy – launched in October – to roll it out across all of the UK including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The academy will invite owners and managers of SMEs to access masterclasses, roundtables and networking events that help them overcome common challenges first-time exporters face.

The UK exported £600 billion in goods and services last year (1), but only around one in ten GB businesses currently export (2) – with the number of goods exporters falling behind continental competitors like Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands (3).

Unlocking the UK's exporting potential will help level up the country and boost the UK's economy, with government-led research estimating that exports currently support 6.5 million jobs across the UK, and showing that exporters pay higher wages and are on average 21 percent more productive.

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan is calling on businesses to 'Race to a Trillion' by seizing huge untapped opportunities on offer in the world's fast-growing markets.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, said:

This is a defining moment in our national trading story. As we agree ambitious new trade deals around the world, it is more vital than ever that businesses across the UK take advantage of these opportunities and unleash their full exporting potential.

Our export strategy will help more businesses start exporting and help those who already export to sell more products to more countries. Reaching £1 trillion worth of exports by the end of this decade means more jobs, more opportunities and higher wages helping the UK to level up and build back better.

This week, DIT is running the inaugural International Trade Week, featuring a series of over 100 events and workshops across the country hosted by expert trade advisers aimed to help businesses to take advantage of the export support available to them.

Minister for Exports, Mike Freer MP, said:

We know businesses are at different points on their exporting journey. Some are already successful exporters but want to sell more products or reach new markets. Others are yet to take the leap and export for the first time.

Whatever your story, our tailored support, expertise and international network is here and ready to help you maximise your ambitions and sell to the world.

The strategy – titled 'Made in the UK, Sold to the World' – will see government work hand-in-hand with business to help them to succeed in the global marketplace through a first-class export support framework.

It will help replicate higher levels of exporting seen in the South East of England across all parts of the country to deliver on the Prime Minister's ambition to level up the UK, and transform the country into a high-wage, high-skill, high-productivity economy.

The 12-point strategy includes:

- Launching the 'Made in the UK, Sold to the World' campaign, championing the UK's priority sectors through an innovative, localised marketing campaign that will promote the best of British goods and services in our towns and cities.
- The Export Support Service provides a single point of contact for

exporters to Europe. Since launching in October the new export hotline and online service has helped hundreds of businesses to get exporting (4).

- UK Export Academy expansion to offer SMEs in all parts of the UK, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the chance to learn how to navigate the technicalities of exporting and how to find new opportunities in overseas markets.
- A new UK Tradeshow Programme will be bigger and better targeted to give UK companies, especially SMEs, a leg-up to exhibit their first-class products at the world's biggest tradeshows.
- UK Export Finance – our world-leading export credit agency – will expand its offer with new products and a wider delivery network that will make it easier for UK exporters to secure business from overseas buyers.
- Export Champions, ensuring businesses can build and learn from exporting successes through business-to-business networking and peer-to-peer learning
- Internationalisation Fund, open to SMEs in England, will aim to grow international sales, and has facilitated £4 million of support to SMEs attending Trade Fairs.

CBI President, Lord Karan Bilimoria said:

The UK economy is at an inflection point. While current challenges in global trade persist and business continue to adjust to the UK's new relationship with the EU, firms need to have an eye to future opportunities. The government has stepped up to provide greater practical support for exporters, and we now need to work together to get more British businesses thinking global for growth.

The new Trade in Services Council (TISC) – called for and coordinated by the CBI – reflects the sector's importance to the UK economy. It is crucial we better understand and articulate the value of this vital sector as we seek to level up, build globally competitive regions, and develop the goods and services which will drive decarbonisation.

British Chambers of Commerce Director-General, Shevaun Haviland said:

More than 60% of Chamber members export overseas compared to just 10% of all businesses UK-wide. To turn the UK into the global economic powerhouse it deserves to be that has to change, and the launch of the DIT's export strategy is a really positive step toward making that happen.

We are keen to work with Government to lift export-led growth in sustainable goods, services and technologies for companies the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. We are uniquely placed to help with our unrivalled expertise in trade facilitation, the advice, training and brokerage services of Chamber Customs and the

extensive market access provided by our 76 international chambers. Once you open the door to international trade the possibilities for expansion are endless.

Federation of Small Businesses National Chair, Mike Cherry said:

As the voice of the UK's small business community, FSB has been pleased to help develop today's Export Strategy. For too long small firms have been faced with difficulty getting onto the exporting ladder, so we're pleased to see many of these fundamental issues tackled head-on in this export plan.

In our recent export report, we proposed simplifying how small firms can export, improving access to tradeshows support service and information on FTAs, as well as boosting trade skills. These will go a long way to seeing the numbers of exporters rise. Increasing small business exports will drive prosperity and growth, protecting the economic recovery from COVID.

Further information

Sources

1. Source: [ONS UK Trade September 2021](#)
2. Source (data is for 2019): [ONS Annual Business Survey](#)
3. Sources (data is for 2017): [OECD Trade by enterprise characteristics](#) and [OECD Structural and Demographic Business Statistics](#)
4. Source: DIT Management Information collected from ESS telephone and digital systems. Since operational to 5 November, the telephone helpline (operational 1 October) received 786 enquiries and the digital enquiry service (operational 22 July) received 785 enquiries. Data has had basic quality assurance checks and is subject to revision.