

ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



Safe roads, reliable journeys, informed travellers

Introduction

The Highways Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT). Created in March 1994, its role is to support the UK economy by operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network of approximately 4,300 miles of motorways and trunk roads in England.

While this represents only two per cent of all roads in England by length, it carries a third of all traffic by mileage which includes two-thirds of all heavy goods and freight mileage, making the Agency network the economic backbone of the country.

The network is operated through a National Traffic Information Service which supports the National Traffic Operations Centre and seven regional control centres. Uniformed traffic officers serve in control centres and

patrol the key areas of the network, helping to manage and clear incidents as quickly and safely as possible.

The Agency sets and maintains technical standards for the network's roads and structures and which are referred to by many local and other national authorities for the roads that they manage.

In July 2013, the Government published a command paper, Action for Roads: A network for the 21st century, which sets out plans to change radically the way strategic roads are funded and managed, including investing £15.1 billion in strategic roads by 2021.

This includes plans to transform the Highways Agency into a Government-owned company (GoCo) to improve efficiency and reduce running costs, with tax payers expected to benefit from savings of at least

£2.6 billion over the next 10 years. These reforms are underpinned by legislation and the delivery expectations of the new GoCo up to 2021. These will be set out in the Government's 2014 Autumn Statement.

The Highways Agency has set itself the challenge to become 'the world's leading road operator', with five clear goals towards achieving that vision:

- provide a service that customers can trust.
- set the standard for delivery.
- deliver sustainable solutions.
- have the safest road network in the world.
- ensure the network is a dynamic and resilient asset.

Delivering professionalism

The Highways Agency's declared values are to:

"Deliver a professional and affordable service through innovation and partnership working, to communicate the behaviours required of staff and contractors to ensure the delivery of our goals and the fulfilment of our organisational objectives."

Project, programme and portfolio management is a clearly acknowledged essential requirement to improve business performance and manage the overarching strategy to invest £15 billion over five years in England's strategic road network. The Project and Programme Delivery (PPD) Community is fundamental to achieving these objectives and in developing the Agency in line with DfT expectations.

"This profession is a key enabler of successful implementation of policy, and of organisational change," said Neil Owen, Head of the Centre of Excellence. "Project delivery professionals turn policy and business strategy

into operational reality – we are people who make things happen and get things done. Our mantra is to deliver outcomes and benefits on time, within budget, and to specification."

The Action for Roads obligations underpins the Agency's commitment to increasing professional competence, to provide a more efficient, effective and value for money service for the UK tax payer. This is reflected in the tangible investment in PPD capability and in achieving APM corporate accreditation.

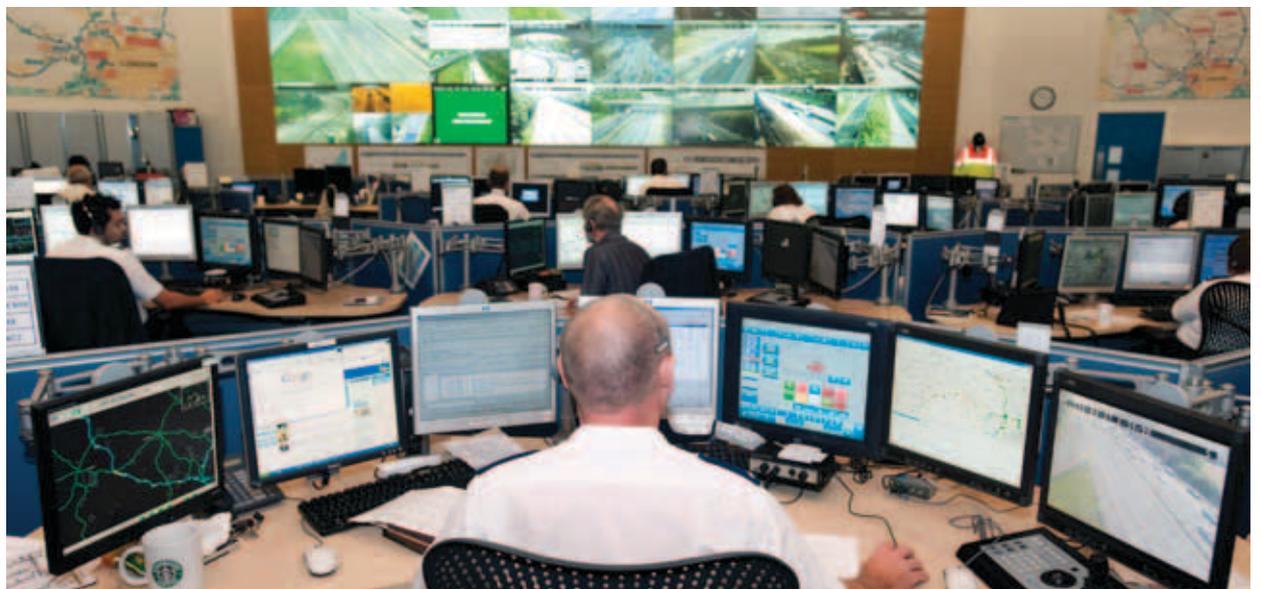
The Agency's PPD Community comprises 548 staff in project, programme and portfolio roles across five directorates with an additional 300 staff in affiliated roles. This community will increase further under the existing investment programme.

Working with a large, complex supply chain and accelerating project delivery timetables has increased the need for collaboration across the Agency's delivery partners, designers and consultants which has been supported by the Major Project Delivery Hub established in 2012. The Hub aims to increase collaboration across project teams to achieve a 20 per cent efficiency target across major roads schemes.

The Highways Agency has also set up the Roads Academy – an innovative people development programme targeted across the industry sector. It is designed to ensure a significant change in how the industry thinks, behaves and performs to help meet the challenges ahead.

The Agency is working with European partners, too, through the Common Highways Agency Rijkswaterstaat Model (CHARM). This partnership of the Highways Agency, Rijkswaterstaat in the Netherlands and the Flemish Department of Mobility works to share knowledge and approaches to solve common problems and deliver common solutions to meet future technology requirements.

The Agency has a close working relationship with the



Major Projects Authority and has the delegated authority to manage its own low, medium and high risk Gateway Reviews.

Agency ongoing reforms and investment plans will increase the focus on professionalism supported by training and development with strong support from Peter Adams, Executive Board member and Director of Major Projects, and Head of Profession Andy Watson, Smart Motorways Programme Director. The Agency is also working closely with other Government and private sector communities and APM to develop joint best practice initiatives.

High standards for high performance

The Centre of Excellence (CoE) is the guardian and custodian of all PPD activities within the Highways Agency. It maintains the PPD Community database, the career pathways and the competency framework, which are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect both internal and external changes. It also approves any PPD training requirements and career assessments.

The strategy to deliver the PPD profession has been aligned to the Highways Agency's Roads Reform Transformation Journey, as part of a High Performing Organisation and will operate with the transform principles that whatever we do we should work at pace, with focus constantly on improvement and act with utmost integrity by:

- developing media and social networks that will support all levels of the community for programme and project management
- ensuring an evidence-based, tangible process of knowledge transfer is in place to support the programme and project delivery partners
- ensuring the coaching capability within PPD is supported and developed and provides evidence of its return on investment to the community
- using the new Competency Assessment Tool (CAT), to provide an accurate view of the current skills and capability of community members, their future aspirations to improve and develop individually and to support business on its transformation journey
- using the CAT's extensive reporting capability to support resource planning, skills and capability deployment and future talent management.

The interactive career pathways map covers portfolio, programme and project career paths, starting as a Learner, progressing on to Proficient, Practitioner, Professional and Expert Leader, all aligned to appropriate IPMA levels and APM qualifications from the Introductory Certificate to Registered Project Professional (RPP), as well as PRINCE2, Managing Successful Projects, Management of Risk and

Portfolio, Programme and Project Offices (P3O).

Along each of these three career routes are five role profiles, and between each of these on the journey are suggested learning activities, competencies required and guides for progression. The process is supported by additional training in a wide range of specialist areas such as risk, benefits management, agile techniques and change management.

The pathway is supported by a webinar facility called Learn@Lunch, which is targeted to address development needs. Members of PPD staff have welcomed the careers pathways, describing it as 'the missing link' to understanding their competencies and creating their self-development plans.

The competencies are based on the 47 competencies within the APM Body of Knowledge 6th Edition. The 17 key Civil Services competencies have also been mapped where appropriate to the APM competencies.

The self-assessment competency tool reflects these competencies and allows individuals to see where they are on their career journey, identify skills and capability gaps within their current roles as well as what is needed to progress.

"Our CAT also has an emphasis on experience rather than knowledge (qualifications), which aligns with APM's Five Dimensions of Professionalism – Commitment, Accountability, Breadth, Depth and Achievement," said Malcolm Mitson, CoE PPD Community Practice Manager.

"This is where we want to be for the future success of the business, empowering all of our people to help drive success and the future we all want."

Individuals are responsible for their own development, but are supported by their line managers in identifying and meeting their development needs. All personal and self-development plans are reviewed at least every six months by PPD line managers.

Staff are expected to make the most of a range of development opportunities aimed at helping them realise their potential at work. More than 85 per cent of PPD staff are registered with Civil Service Learning, which provides an array of training opportunities and includes an extensive PPD curriculum.

All PPD staff are expected and encouraged to take APM project management qualifications. The CoE has held



Malcolm Mitson,
CoE PPD Community Practice Manager



road shows at all sites accompanied by an APM representative to inform PPD staff of the opportunities available, encourage them to take advantage of these and to join APM as individual members. In addition, funding is available for those who have been assessed as being able to meet the requirements of the RPP standard.

Continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities are available to all PPD staff who are positively encouraged to undertake and record their training and development. This includes at least two, one-hour webinars each month with regular tool box talks on a range of subjects, from health and safety to staff management. A coaching and mentoring programme is also being further developed and there are clear signposts towards APM events to encourage participation.

"APM and our Centre of Excellence for project and programme management have been working together for some time to embed the importance of the profession within our business," said Peter Adams, Director of Major Projects.

"The wider reforms proposed by government will enable us to approach how we deliver investment in a more effective way than today's project-by-project stage-by-stage approach to decision making. This will require us to build on what we have already achieved and to develop new skills and ways of working in the areas that will enable us to fully deliver on this potential.

"Continuing to develop the skills and capability of our people as we proceed along our transformational journey I see as crucial to our success."



Peter Adams,
Director of Major Projects



Personal story

Paul Unwin MAPM, Senior Project Manager,
Major Projects

Paul is responsible for a portfolio of highly complex, high value schemes of around £200 million each.

As well as typical motorway improvement projects, he is involved in innovative 'smart' and technology schemes, including introducing the first hard shoulder running solution to the motorway congestion on the M42 in 2006.

A background in procurement with the Department of Environment and latterly the Department of Transport led him to project management in 2004.

"I was able to bring my governance, cost control and supply chain skills to projects at a time when many major projects were overrunning," he said. "Schemes are now coming in on time, under budget, to quality and safely – my personal four point mantra.

"I gained a lot of experience on the job, but there had been no real way of knowing the preferred career route. People were doing different things and didn't know what the business would support.

"Since the introduction of the Career Pathways and Competency Framework, together with the close alignment with APM qualifications and membership, you now have a clearer picture of career progress, with the flexibility to choose the best route for you and what you need to achieve to get there. We are all on board with it now and it shows a commitment by the Agency which we didn't have before."

As well as contributing to the PPD improvement process, such as the Learn@Lunch webinars and working closely with young graduates, he is also an enthusiastic advocate of collaboration with others in the wider industry.

"It gives you a wider view of the whole sector and to 'steal with pride' – taking and sharing good ideas and practices."

Already a member of the Chartered Institute of Highway Engineers and vice-chairman of its West Midlands branch, he became a full member of APM in 2014 and has the full support of the Agency as he works towards achieving Registered Project Professional status.



Client testimonial

"The Highways Agency sets out clear expectations of what is required of us in helping to deliver projects as part of one team. Suppliers' employees are seconded into the HA's delivery unit that pulls the programme of schemes together, with best practice, past experience and our input informing the best way to deliver these schemes.

"Compared to a few years ago, the Agency's skills in managing a constantly changing programme to match forward spending and priorities – particularly relating to governance – have increased significantly. Collaboration forward spending and priorities – particularly relating to governance – have increased significantly. Collaboration and communication with suppliers have also improved, helping us to better resource the forward programme because we have first-hand knowledge of any issues.

"As a Roads Academy delegate about to graduate, I believe it is a real benefit to the industry. I will gain a postgraduate certificate in leadership and management and have applied the learning in my role. It is also an excellent opportunity to work closely with people from the Agency, consultants and other suppliers.

"Part of the course included working in small project groups looking at industry issues. My group looked at Highway Agency reporting requirements, aligning them with what is needed, how it's done and if the money could be better spent. This had never been measured before by the HA's own suppliers and partly as a result, the Agency has looked to slim down the amount of reporting on both major projects and maintenance contracts.

"Becoming a Government owned company will bring further changes in forward programme management and scheduling. Balfour Beatty, together with other suppliers, has been invited to work with the Agency on the best ways of doing this. It will give us even better forward visibility and benefit everybody."

David Neal, Project Director, Major Projects, Balfour Beatty Construction Services UK

Association for Project Management and the Highways Agency

The Highways Agency is a corporate member of APM and a member of the APM Corporate Members Leadership Group. All PPD Community staff are actively encouraged to join as individual members and to aspire to obtain RPP status. The CoE road shows have also included an APM representative to create awareness and as a result the number of APM members has steadily increased.

The *APM Body of Knowledge 6th Edition* and *Competency Framework* are used as the basis for the Agency's own Career Pathways and competency framework, with career levels directly linked to APM qualifications.

A link to the APM website and events calendar has been incorporated into the Centre of Excellence portal page and APM events are actively promoted. The Agency aims to maintain and develop contact with the association to support its aims in increasing professionalism.

I am delighted that the Agency has gained APM Corporate Accreditation for its Project and Programme Delivery community professional development scheme.

The Agency now joins an elite group of major organisations to achieve such accreditation. This external validation demonstrates the importance we place on project management to deliver our work efficiently and effectively."

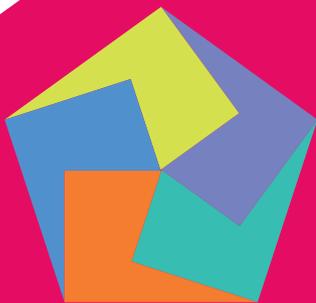
Graham Dalton,
Chief Executive,
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FIVEDimensions of Professionalism

APM Corporate Accreditation

APM Corporate Accreditation will help you stand out as an exemplar in the development of project management professionals. It provides assurances to your customers and suppliers and allows you to attract and retain the best project management talent in the country.

APM Corporate Accreditation recognises the commitment of organisations and professional development services to the defined APM FIVE Dimensions of Professionalism, each of which is supported by an APM standard:

Breadth

The *APM Body of Knowledge* defines the knowledge needed to manage any kind of project. It underpins many project management standards and methods including the National Occupational Standard in Project Management.

Depth

The *APM Competence Framework* provides a guide to project management competences. It is part of your professional toolkit; mapping levels of knowledge and experience to help you progress your skills and abilities.

Achievement

APM qualifications take your career in new and exciting directions. They are recognised across the profession and aligned with IPMA's 4 level Certification Program.

Commitment

Continuing Professional Development helps develop your project management practice. A targeted development plan will enhance your project management career.

Accountability

The APM Code of Professional Conduct outlines the ethical practice expected of a professional. Becoming an APM member shows your commitment to the Code and sets you apart from others.