

Appointment of

Director of Legal Services (Planning & Property)

June 2026

Project code: QBRVD

Introduction

National Highways (NH) is the government company which plans, designs, builds, operates, and maintains the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The Company has a single shareholder in the Secretary of State for Transport and is a government-owned arm's length body (ALB), established under the Infrastructure Act 2015.

National Highways plays a vital role in managing and improving the strategic road network to make journeys safer, smoother, and more reliable. The strategic road network is the backbone of the country, enabling businesses to transport products and services, providing access to jobs and suppliers, and facilitating trade and investment across the country. Investment in the SRN directly supports at least 65,000 jobs and 5,000 apprenticeships. More widely, companies that rely on the SRN contribute over £400bn in Gross Value Added to the economy.

Beyond that, National Highways is working hard to meet the government's commitment to zero carbon. National Highways also needs to exploit the full potential of the digital revolution, both in delivery of its activities, and in its communications with road users and stakeholders.

National Highways' three main overarching imperatives are:

Safety – everyone who uses and works on National Highways roads should get home safe and well. Fatalities and injuries can only be reduced by planning and designing roads that meet the highest levels of safety.

Customers – with more than four million daily journeys, National Highways' roads play a vital part in connecting the nation. National Highways knows the value of customer feedback and works closely with Transport Focus and others to seek its users' views on a range of fundamental matters including journey time, surface quality, roadworks management, roadside information, and safety.

Delivery – it is the job of National Highways to deliver safe and reliable roads. Since 2015 it has invested billions in new routes and extra capacity.



Looking ahead

This is an important period for National Highways as they deliver the government's multi-billion-pound strategic roads investment programme, continuing to set highways standards for the UK, and embarking on a digital future, which is also net zero carbon.

National Highways receives funding from DfT in five-year cycles called Road Investment Periods. This enables National Highways to plan for the long term, and provide excellent value for money for its customers, the taxpayer and the country. The Government has recently developed a draft third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3). The RIS3 will apply to the third Road Period (RP3) covering the five years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031. This follows a 1-year Interim Settlement covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The five-year funding settlements offered by Roads Reform¹ have provided stability and allowed a renewed and long-term focus on customer satisfaction and better outcomes for users of England's motorways and trunk A roads (the Strategic Road Network). For more information, please see the Road Investment Strategy [here](#).

National Highway's outcome areas:

- **Improving Safety for all:** We want National Highways to strive to improve the safety of those that use, work on and are affected by the network. Like RIS1 and RIS2, we ~~We~~ want to set a robust and ambitious safety target, ensuring that the network consistently maintains its status as one of the safest.
- **Fast and reliable journeys:** Users highly value the ability to complete journeys faster and with greater reliability, which has

considerable economic advantages. Prioritising improvements in this area should be a key focus of National Highways in RIS3. Additionally, we want to improve connectivity with other road networks to minimise disruptions for users, regardless of the road they choose to drive on.

- **A well maintained and resilient network:** National Highways is the steward of a valuable public asset. A key part of the performance specification will be to keep the network in good condition and to develop the capability of the organisation as an asset manager.
- **Being environmentally responsible:** We want to continue the progress made in RIS2 to improve the monitoring of environmental outcomes. For RIS3, this outcome area will include monitoring National Highways' actions to avoid damage to and improve the natural and historic environments, reduce carbon emissions, removing litter and support human health.
- **Meeting the needs of all users:** Ensuring user satisfaction will remain a vital aspect of performance. Ongoing Transport Focus surveys will continue to provide a greater degree of insight. We are also keen to maintain an understanding of satisfaction among, and issues faced by specific customer groups.
- **Achieving efficient delivery:** Ensuring RIS3 delivers best value for money for the taxpayer. Like RIS2, we will require National Highways to demonstrate that they are efficient and deliver schemes on time and to budget.



Job Purpose

The Director of Legal Services (Planning & Property) for National Highways is primarily responsible for leading on and managing the provision of effective and pragmatic legal advice to several Directorates, ensuring that the best interests of National Highways are always protected.

Key Accountabilities

1. Leads the Planning and Property legal divisions leading on complex strategic legal matters affecting the business. The role reports to the General Counsel and is part of the legal leadership team managing the directorate.
2. Responsible for providing legal advice on all planning and property matters (contentious and non-contentious) and related legal challenges. This includes:
 - a) planning law including development consent orders, local and special development orders, highways agreements, Town and Country Planning Act advice, highways law, and environmental law; and
 - b) property law including acquisitions, disposals, major projects, leases and property litigation.
3. Lead on and provide legal expert advice on reputational risk (within subject areas set out above), pulling together conflicting priorities and managing expectations of a range of stakeholders.
4. Lead, manage and develop the performance of the division, building a team of highly experienced lawyers to deliver the plan and ensuring the division is aligned with the strategic aims of the business.
5. Contribute to the leadership and development of the wider Legal Services Directorate, by working collaboratively with other Directors where required.
6. Responsible for the effective operation of the divisions set out above, ensuring that they operate in accordance with internal processes, deadlines and external regulatory requirements.
7. Attend senior level (including Executive level) meetings, project/programme boards and provide specific advice when needed, ensuring that they achieve buy in from senior stakeholders to ensure advice is taken on board.
8. Accountable for ensuring that guidelines, legislation and regulations are kept to, providing high quality, in-depth advice.
9. Develop and maintain strong collaborative working relationships with senior stakeholders across National Highways and externally (e.g. external panel firms, the DfT) to champion the divisions work, provide expert advice and guidance in areas of expertise to resolve complex issues.



People management responsibilities

- Direct management of 4 employees
- Indirect management of 16 employees

Budget management responsibilities

- This role will have responsibility for divisional budgets.

Key contacts/ relationships/stakeholders managed

- Project Boards
- Directors/Executive Directors
- Senior Stakeholders
- Government Departments
- External Lawyers



Person Specification

Business Knowledge and Experience

- In-depth understanding of either planning or property law and a working knowledge of the other specialisms.
- Able to build a good working relationship with the Executive Management team, the General Counsel, the other Legal Directors and the wider business as needed.
- Understanding National Highways, and the implications of actions.
- Understanding the role that Legal Services play in the business.
- Ability to build constructive relationships, communicate and influence stakeholders at a range of levels, including Executive Management.
- Ability to foster a collaborative working environment.
- Ability to lead expert teams and deliver results under pressure.
- Proactive, practical and robust, with a “can-do” mindset.
- Committed to business improvement and ability to develop a learning mindset culture.
- Excellent client handling skills.

Functional / Technical Skills

- Qualified Lawyer, regulated by Solicitors Regulation Authority
- Excellent experience of planning law or property law and an understanding of highways law, environmental law and judicial review
- Considerable experience as a lawyer
- Good leadership and interpersonal skills

Values and Behaviours

Embrace the organisation’s values and model associated behaviours:

- **Safety:** Keep ourselves and others safe, above all else
- **Passion:** Deliver with energy and pace, care about what we do, continuously improve and innovate, provide great service in everything we do
- **Integrity:** Open, honest and professional, respect and value the contribution others make, do what we say, always do the right thing
- **Teamwork:** Work together effectively to achieve our goals, work efficiently and flexibly, listen to others and communicate clearly
- **Ownership:** Take accountability, learn from failure and celebrate success, agree stretching goals and delivering them, maintain focus on our imperatives

Terms of Appointment

Job Title: Director of Legal Services (Planning & Property)

Reports to Job Title: General Counsel – Executive Director

Directorate: Legal Services

Remuneration: Competitive

Location: this role can be based at any National Highways office and there will be an expectation for travel around the country.



How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the National Highways on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at roles.saxbam.com using code **QBRVD**. Alternatively email Belinda.beck@saxbam.com.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 17 July 2026.

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.



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