

**A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project
TR010062**

**2.7 Environmental Management Plan
Annex B12 Skills and Employment
Strategy**

APFP Regulations 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

**Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and
Procedure) Regulations 2009**

Volume 2

June 2022

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed
Forms and Procedure)
Regulations 2009**

A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project
Development Consent Order 202x

**2.7 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
ANNEX B12 SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY**

Regulation Number:	Regulation 5(2)(a)
Planning Inspectorate Scheme Reference	TR010062
Application Document Reference	2.7
Author:	A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project Team, National Highways

Version	Date	Status of Version
Rev 1	13 June 2022	DCO Application

CONTENTS

B12 Skills and employment strategy.....1

B12.1 Introduction1

B12.2 Strategic objectives1

B12.3 Recruitment.....1

B12.4 Local training infrastructure2

B12.5 Opportunities for unemployed and the under-represented.....3

B12.6 Inspiring the next generation3

B12.7 Open procurement and supporting local enterprises.....4

B12.8 Delivery, governance and monitoring6

B12 Skills and employment strategy

B12.1 Introduction

B12.1.1 This essay plan sets out how the Skills and Employment Strategy to be produced as part of the detailed design and construction planning. This essay plan sets out the Project objectives around Education, Employment and Skills (EES) and sets out a series of activities and key commitments to deliver those objectives, which will be monitored and evaluated regularly.

B12.1.2 The Principal Contractor (PC) will update this essay plan to include detailed information about how the objectives will be achieved and further detail about the specific activities and proposals to be implemented during construction. The final strategy will be produced in accordance with the commitments within the EMP and with this essay plan.

B12.2 Strategic objectives

B12.2.1 The scale of the Project means it is a significant investment, and with a likely peak workforce of over 500 people creates both a significant challenge, at a time of expansion in the construction sector, and an opportunity to, in partnership with stakeholders, develop a regional construction supply chain and workforce with the right capabilities, skills and knowledge.

B12.2.2 The strategic objectives for EES are as follows:

- Open procurement and supporting local businesses through the Project supply chain where practicable
- Inspiring the next generation
- Providing opportunities for unemployed and under-represented groups
- Developing local training infrastructure
- Developing a workforce with the right skills.

B12.2.3 The remaining sections will detail the approach and programme of activities to deliver these objectives.

B12.3 Recruitment

B12.3.1 A workforce profile will be established to understand what skills are required to deliver the Project, with an expected set of skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled labour and plant operative roles.

B12.3.2 Capacity and capability in the workforce will be met through appropriate recruitment processes and the offering of short to medium term training programmes.

B12.3.3 Given the rural nature of much of the area, it is recognised that there is likely to be a limited available labour pool local to the Project. The PC will work with strategic partners within the employment and skills sector, their supply chain and local employment brokers to attract suitable

workforce. An 'employment outreach' service will be provided to facilitate people becoming 'work ready' and 'job ready' for the Project and enable them to take the opportunity for wider construction and highways sector opportunities in the region.

- B12.3.4 Where appropriate, this approach will be supported by available industry initiatives, for example, the National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAfC) Application and an Inclusion Action Plan to seek to recruit a diverse workforce.
- B12.3.5 Our provision of training will cover a variety of prospects both formal and informal (i.e. training that will lead to formal qualifications and other appropriate training to increase skills in the workforce such as on the job learning and mentoring) and will consist of a range of opportunities from work experience for local students and unemployed, apprenticeships, on-job and on-site training to specific Health & Safety and technical training. We will be seeking to attract and encourage local people to participate in relevant training programmes, providing opportunities to re-train after a period of unemployment or upskill into a different trade/occupation.
- B12.3.6 This section of the Skills and Employment Strategy will set out the key objectives and specific activities that will be undertaken to ensure that the processes in place for recruitment encourage and maximise local employment.

B12.4 Local training infrastructure

- B12.4.1 The PC will aim to deliver a set of skills and employment outcomes to be defined as part of this strategy, in consultation with the Local Authorities within which the Project will be constructed. This will follow guidance set out in the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and will be informed by skills identified as being required by the Project.
- B12.4.2 The PC will implement a comprehensive Training Management System which includes a Health, Safety, Wellbeing, Environmental and Operations Training & Activity Matrix. This matrix will provide a guide to identifying the minimum standards of skills and competencies required for a team member to conduct their role safely and efficiently.
- B12.4.3 A list of appropriate training modules and courses will be rolled out to support teams in recognising and undertaking the right training packages, along with dedicated resources to assist in the identification and booking of relevant courses.
- B12.4.4 An early audit of existing local training provision will be carried out in the local area. The PC will consider opportunities to better align the training and skills offered and provide training for highway construction and maintenance operatives. The PC will look to work with all local training providers over the course of the Project to deliver the most appropriate training for our current and future workforce.

- B12.4.5 A plan will be developed specifically for Apprenticeships, defining the number and scope of Apprenticeships that the Project will support, and setting out the training and support provision to be provided.

B12.5 Opportunities for unemployed and the under-represented

- B12.5.1 The Project will directly employ a large workforce and also generate a large number of additional indirect jobs through, for example, service provisions. The construction team and its supply chain will promote access to jobs generated by the Project to local workers and encourage activities in areas of disadvantage and with groups under-represented within the construction and highways sectors.

- B12.5.2 The PC will undertake engagement with key stakeholders within the employment and diversity sectors to build connections and better understand the local employment market and diverse groups. This will enable the implementation of effective activities to attract, train and recruit locally unemployed and under-represented groups. Specific measures will be set out within the final Strategy in order to maximise the opportunities afforded by the project and ensure under-represented groups have full access to, and support in applying for, the jobs created by the Project.

- B12.5.3 Such groups may include ex-armed forces, ex-offenders and those on long term unemployment or disability living allowance. An Inclusion Action Plan will be developed as part of this Strategy to support this approach.

B12.6 Inspiring the next generation

- B12.6.1 The PC will aim to engage with schools and colleges in the local area to help attract young people into the training available through the Project and ensure they have the right skills and qualifications to apply for longer term opportunities in the construction and highway sectors. Wider government objectives relating to increasing student interest in Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects to raise awareness of careers in scientific and engineering based fields (which will include civil engineering and construction), will be met through the development of Education objectives (as part of this Strategy), which will target engagement with local schools.

- B12.6.2 The PC will also aim to support local careers fairs and work closely with STEMNet, schools and colleges to help inform pupils and parents alike about the Project, and to identify pathways and opportunities presented by the Project.

- B12.6.3 A programme of events will be developed to ensure a broad spectrum of ages, geographical coverage, school type and educational attainment levels are targeted.

This section of the Skills and Employment Strategy will set out the specific activities and events that will be undertaken to maximise the benefits of engagement through local schools and other education establishments.

B12.7 Open procurement and supporting local enterprises

Supply Chain Overview

- B12.7.1 The PC will develop (and specify within this Strategy) a set of objectives for Procurement and Supply Chain management, which will aim to support the development and involvement of local businesses on the Project. It is recognised that the Project has the potential to create opportunities for local suppliers to grow and develop, attract new businesses to the region and support and develop small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which will all contribute to the region's local economy and economic prosperity.
- B12.7.2 The PC approach will align to two key themes of open procurement and supporting SMEs which are outlined in the following sections.
- B12.7.3 This section of the Skills and Employment Strategy will set out the key objectives and specific activities that will be undertaken to maximise the potential for local SMEs to engage with and benefit from the Project.

Open procurement

- B12.7.4 Open procurement has been defined as an accessible, fair and transparent approach to tendering and securing the services for the Project's supply chain.
- B12.7.5 SMEs in particular may not have the resource to track tender opportunities, or once identified, have the ability to respond to a tender opportunity at short notice. By increasing the visibility of contract opportunities businesses can assess their capability and plan to put in place necessary resources to tender for such opportunities. This will increase awareness of the breadth of the opportunities available and allow a level of forward planning by the potential supply chain.
- B12.7.6 The improved visibility will be delivered, as a minimum, through the following:
- Using local resource and project-wide communication mechanisms
 - Development and use of a common portal and sign-posting service
 - Procurement events
 - Addressing quality and standards within tenders to allow SMEs time to assess their capabilities and putting in place support for accreditation where practicable
 - Responding to all tenders and providing feedback to allow businesses to develop.

Scoping contractual commitments and approaches to contracting including providing a level of good practice standards such as paying subcontractors and suppliers on time, within terms agreed at the outset of the contract, encouraging good practice to be passed on by subcontractors through their own supply chains and giving subcontractors and suppliers the opportunity to raise poor payment practices with National Highways.

Supporting SMEs

Background

- B12.7.7 It is acknowledged that SMEs often face entry barriers which preclude them from accessing contracts.
- B12.7.8 As part of the secondary tender process as set out by the PC, all potential contractors will be required to set out their approach to supporting access to contracts for SMEs, with a particular focus on their communication strategy for SMEs and new entrants.
- B12.7.9 Developing an awareness of the constraints faced by SMEs and putting in place simple measures will significantly improve their ability to access contracts associated with the Project.

SME key principles

- B12.7.10 This Skills and Employment strategy will seek to promote and support the engagement of SMEs including businesses in the local area, maximising opportunities arising from the construction and related support sectors for the Project.
- B12.7.11 The approach to engagement with SMEs will be underpinned by the following principles:
- Provide a fair and transparent procurement process which is cascaded through the supply chain
 - Ensure that local businesses are informed about opportunities
 - Ensure requirements in relation to tender opportunities and contractor framework requirements are communicated and fully understood by local businesses
 - Ensure that contractors are made aware of the capacity and capability of the local supply chain
 - Provide early visibility of contract opportunities enabling SMEs to work in partnership to respond to tenders, including through the development of local consortia
 - Proactive identification of tender opportunities and dialogue with SMEs
 - Ensure business support activities are coordinated to maximise effectiveness
 - Provide fair contractual terms to SMEs.

Potential approaches to maximising SME engagement

- B12.7.12 There are a number of activities or approaches that can support the ability of SMEs and local businesses to benefit from a project of this scale. Examples are provided below, and the final Strategy will set out specific proposals, activities and timescales.
- B12.7.13 *Procurement processes:* Ensuring that the complexity of the procurement process is proportionate to the size and scope of the potential tendering opportunity, keeping documentation as concise and jargon free as possible, asking only for accreditation and standards

where required and limiting the use of Pre-Qualification Questionnaires to where necessary. Ensuring procurement exercises are commensurate to the size of the contract and are not just the standard terms used for main contractors.

- B12.7.14 *SME-friendly procurement lots*: Often the scale of lots and how they are bundled precludes small businesses from tendering. Taking a proactive approach to identifying low value tender opportunities can open procurement to businesses with specific specialisms.
- B12.7.15 *Innovation*: A focus on innovation necessarily opens the market to new entrants and SMEs. The use of Dragon's Den-type forums for example can contribute to the identification of new ideas.
- B12.7.16 *SME consortia*: Giving consideration to consortium arrangements of SMEs, setting out the expectations in relation to management and delivery, with guidance provided on capability, contract and governance, as well as payment arrangements.
- B12.7.17 *SME assessment*: An assessment will be undertaken to develop an understanding of the capacity and capability of the local business base and help in developing a strategy which might focus on strengths and address weaknesses in the supply chain.
- B12.7.18 This section of the Skills and Employment Strategy will set out the key objectives and specific activities that will be undertaken to ensure an open approach to procurement is implemented, supporting SMEs to access the opportunities available.

B12.8 Delivery, governance and monitoring

Delivery

- B12.8.1 The PC will set up an internal EES Working Group which will include external partners in the education, training and employment sectors.

Governance and monitoring

- B12.8.2 The implementation of this Strategy will be reviewed and assessed by National Highways.
- B12.8.3 Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be developed in relation to skills and employment, and these will be monitored alongside other key commitments on at least a quarterly basis.