

Speech: Foreign Secretary speech at the British Chamber of Commerce

Good afternoon everybody, it is absolutely fantastic to be here in front of an audience of people who are dynamic, energetic, can do, and actually get out there make and sell things. Because sometimes I get a bit impatient when I hear people droning and moaning about the state of the world, and I hear them warn that the sky is about to fall on our heads, and I feel like saying come off it sunshine.

Every generation hears its prognostications of gloom, and yet look at us today. We are living longer than ever before. We are healthier than ever before. The air quality in London is getting better steadily, thanks to decisive action by the previous mayor, and for all I know by the current mayor.

Thanks to the miracles of commerce, the energies and enterprise of everybody in this room, we have access to technological comforts, some of which you're using to take pictures of me or indeed consult in the hope of something more interesting. We have access to comforts that previous generations would have found absolutely mind boggling, and it is entirely thanks to free market capitalism that our food is better than ever before, and you are unbelievably full of beans and healthy.

And I am sure you all ate fruit for breakfast. Can you cast your mind back to breakfast? You're all so young and thrusting that you probably don't remember the time that I do, when pineapples came only in a tin with a gloopy syrup. And pineapples were thought so generally exotic 100 years ago that architects would place them as finials on the top of the top of railings or pillars or other architectural features. There are plenty of examples of those fruits outside this room on the streets of Westminster.

But today there is a force that brings the pineapple, the papaya, the guava and the melon to London every night on the 10.30 flight from Accra in Ghana. And actually I caught that flight myself in the last couple of weeks, I literally physically sat on top of 13 tonnes of chilled fruit, packed and ready to be distributed to the stalls of London, and I can tell you authoritatively that the same sliced fresh pineapple, retailing at rather different prices depending on whether it is going to Aldi or to Waitrose, is turning up in our shops the following morning. There's nothing wrong with the differential in prices, by the way, it's called branding isn't it?

And what is the benign force of the wind beneath the wings of that plane? What's allowing that to happen? Globalisation.

And today globalisation is a word that is acquiring negative overtones and it's become a sort of taboo word in the political lexicon. And so this afternoon I want to reclaim globalisation. I want to show you all that this is a positive force and that a global Britain is a prosperous Britain. And

the agenda of the Prime Minister Theresa May and the government is a cause that is more important than ever. Because trade for the first time in decades is declining as a proportion of the growth of global GDP. And for the first time we are seeing protectionist measures on the rise across the world. And as everybody knows and has been endlessly discussed, we are seeing a series of related but by no means identical political events, in which populations are said to be rebelling, against what had been seen as a settled consensus.

And people feel that they aren't getting a fair suck of the sauce bottle, as they say in Australia, the wealth gap is growing. And so there's been a temptation amongst some politicians to respond in what I think is the wrong way, by hauling up the drawbridge and to call time on globalisation. And I think that instinct is profoundly wrong and it makes no economic sense as I'm sure everybody in this room today understands.

Those pineapples are good business for Africa, and indeed the British company that exports them to London is the single biggest private sector employer in Ghana. It's putting food on the tables of some of the poorest families in the continent of Africa. And those pineapples are good for this country too, good for the supermarkets that sell at whatever price they determine. Good for the hauliers that distribute them, the airlines that carry them that might not otherwise have much in their in their holds. Good indeed I might say for every parent who has been unable to persuade their kids to eat pizza unless it has been profaned with pineapple chunks as they now so often are.

History teaches us, and all the economic evidence shows, if we close our markets, if we put up barriers, then we raise the costs for those who can least afford it. We make our industries uncompetitive. We entrench complacency. We discourage investment in capital and technology. We stifle innovation. And of course we breed suspicion and mistrust between nations. And we should never forget the old truism that when goods and services no longer cross borders, then troops and tanks do so instead.

And by rebelling against globalisation we endanger a system that has been associated with 70 years of post-war peace and prosperity, and that has allowed billions to lift themselves out of penury by toil and enterprise. Back in 1990, 37% of humanity lived in absolute poverty. Today, thanks to globalisation, that figure is less than 10%, and that figure is all the more stunning when you remember that over the same period the world's population grew by 1.8 billion people. And it's no coincidence that this astonishing success of the global economy coincided with a period in history of unparalleled tearing down of trade barriers. You'll remember with the completion of the Uruguay round and all that followed.

We are determined to bring back that moment, that inspiration. And under this government led by Theresa May, Britain is preparing once again to be the leading campaigner for that liberating and enriching force. And let me be absolutely clear, as I know you'll want to ask questions about it afterwards. We can be that great free trading nation again. And we can be ever more internationalist, and indeed we can be ever more European.

But we can change our relationship with the EU from one of membership, to one

of friendship and partnership. And to use that opportunity to create a regulatory environment that members of the British Chambers of Commerce have been crying out for, for decades, that precisely suits the needs of British business and commerce, of people in this room. And to be able, for the first time in 44 years, as I say, to fulfil the Prime Minister's vision, and be the world's leading campaigner for free trade. Because I don't want a rerun some of the old arguments. Let me remind you that for all of this period of 44 years of membership, we consecrated our trade policy entirely to the EU Commission. An excellent body of men and women. But it is a melancholy fact that today Britain represents 20% of EU GDP, 12% of the population and yet we have only 3% of the bureaucrats in Brussels. And I'm afraid I can't pretend to you that we've been turning it around in the last few years. In the last year, in 2016, the last year leading up to the referendum, only one UK national actually succeeded in passing the concours, the exam for EU services in Brussels. And with all due respect, how can those bodies expect to have the necessary understanding of the needs of UK business and commerce to do the deals that we need? So now we need to work with our friends and our partners to ensure that we have a strong EU and a strong UK, connected by a fantastic free trade deal, and one that is manifestly in the interests of both sides, and you will be familiar with the arguments there.

There's a massive net balance of trade in favour of our friends and partners on the other side of the channel. We are not only the biggest single consumers of German cars but also of course of French champagne. And as I never tire of telling you, Italian prosecco as well. We are pro-secco and by no means anti-pasti. We're absolutely relentless in our consumption of EU products and that will continue. But we will we remain supportive of the EU in all the other important respects in which the UK is currently supportive: on defence cooperation, on foreign policy coordination, on counter-terrorism, on intelligence sharing, rather as a flying buttress supports a cathedral. And it is simultaneously our task, and the historic task of global Britain, to create the conditions for free trade and prosperity, not just in Europe but across the world. And above all that means global security the bedrock of economic success.

You'll have seen the Prime Minister's recent successful trip to Washington where she and President Trump reaffirmed their 100% commitment to NATO. It means we have a vital interest in freedom of navigation and open shipping lanes. And that is why we will shortly have two giant aircraft carriers, 70,000 tons apiece, capable of projecting British power worldwide – including through the Malacca Straits, which channel over 25% of global trade. It means helping to fight corruption and bad governance across the world. Because that is the way we encourage companies to invest in countries like Ghana and to help drive those populations up the value chain. And my point to you this morning about global Britain is that it's right for Britain too. As other nations rise out of poverty and become more prosperous, so they buy more goods.

And of course it's right that we spend 0.7% of GDP on overseas aid, but it's also a way of spurring on the growth of our export markets. And I can tell you of all the things that I've seen in my time as Foreign Secretary, one of

the most moving things has been the way we are helping kids to go to school in some of the toughest environments in the world. And we are helping literally millions of girls to be educated in the Punjab. Six million are being supported through a DFID program. Everybody in this room should be incredibly proud of what we are doing. But it's also a massive benefit not just to the people in that part of Pakistan. It means that you promote economic growth, you reduce infant mortality, child marriage, help to contain a rising population and drive up prosperity. But that support is also good for our country as well.

I was in the classroom, I asked the girls, I said who's your favourite author? And what do you think they said? That's right. Congratulations to the front row for paying attention. They all as one virtually shouted out J.K. Rowling. I then asked them various other questions to which I'm sure you all know the answers about who is the headmaster and so on and so forth, and they all knew that stuff. I hope I'm not being vulgar if I say that more sales of Harry Potter worldwide mean more business for UK publishing. Don't they? And I hope it's not too crude to say that means more jobs for people in this city, indeed more probably for all I know, more publishers lunches in Soho. I'm not saying that you can draw a straight line from an overflowing classroom in the Punjab to an overflowing restaurant in Dean Street, but the connection is there.

Nor by the way am I saying that the UK can solve all the world's problems. Certainly not on our own, but we can and we do make a huge difference. And we set a moral and intellectual lead for others to follow, because there is another feature of the UK which I think people sometimes forget. And that is that Britain is the most global of all the developed economies. You know there are six million Brits, one in ten of the British population who currently live and work, who are permanently resident, abroad. I don't know – perhaps it's the legacy of Empire, or some strange wanderlust – but whatever the cause, Britain has a bigger diaspora as a proportion of our population, than any other large rich nation. They're bankers and diplomats and peacekeepers and aid workers scientists and ski instructors and oilmen and teachers, snooker players, movie stars, rock musicians, artists, poets, water slide testers chicken-sexers, and for all I know perhaps the odd pirate and scoundrel as well. But their presence means that Britain is more plugged in to events in distant countries than any other nation of our size and wealth.

And my point to you this afternoon is that historic global quality of Britain linked umbilically not just to our friends and partners in Europe, but also to the 93% of the world that do not live in the European Union – shortly to be 94 % of course. That global quality of the UK is a fantastic benefit and potential future economic benefit to our country, and our task obviously is to ensure that the British people are ready to take advantage of the opportunities that are opening up. We have a government determined to make sure that Britain works for everyone, to ensure that everyone feels the benefit of our economic success and we're concentrating on skills on education, extending the ladder of opportunity to kids who have been failed by previous reforms. We're seeing the biggest program of infrastructure investment for more than a century: nuclear power stations, cross rail, high

speed rail and HS2. We're finally getting to grips our aviation crisis so that we come up with the right idea, in the wrong place in my in my view, but nonetheless we're making progress. And I know that Philip Hammond, the Chancellor, is determined to keep taxes low and the business environment as friendly as possible.

I think we have every reason as a nation to be confident. Many of you were wise enough not to believe those pre-referendum forecasts of economic calamity and since June 23rd the sky has obstinately failed to fall in.

The IMF predicts we will have the fastest growing economy for 2016. We have the fastest G7 economy although that didn't last, with slightly changed figures. Like the Oscar ceremony, Germany seem to have scooped it for the time being, but we we're right up there and the investment continues to flood in. Huge multi billion pound investments into our country. And of course we are getting the export ball back over the net. Who'd have thought this 20 years ago? Thanks to the efforts of people in this room we have a £1.1 billion trade surplus with, guess where? South Korea. It's British cars being sold in ever growing quantities to that market. We export tea to China, bikes to Holland, boomerangs to Australia and sand to Saudi Arabia. We do still export wine to Italy and, I'm delighted to say, Nigel Farage to America.

It is the miracle of globalisation combined with British branding genius that means we not only, every night, import pineapples from Ghana but guess what? We take those pineapples and we chemically transform them, and we actually export pineapple jam to America. Can you believe that? Americans. And that's even before we've done a free trade deal. It is an incredible fact that we have a trade surplus running with the United States of more than £30 billion. But they still don't buy our beef, and indeed they refuse to eat haggis from Scotland so far. I think you'll agree with me that if they can eat pineapple jam, they can certainly manage haggis.

I want to conclude with this thought: Britain is at its best, and all our history teaches us this, Britain is at its best when were at our most global in our outlook. And in my time as your Foreign Secretary it's been almost overwhelming to discover that we have links and friends around the world that we have built up for centuries and in some ways and in some places that we have almost forgotten. Not least in those rapidly growing commonwealth economies but also elsewhere.

And of course we remain committed to our European markets, perhaps more so than ever, but we need to think globally again. Because a global Britain is a safer Britain and a more successful Britain. And above all a more prosperous Britain. And the same, in my view, goes for the rest of the world.

Speech: Shrove Tuesday reception 2017: Prime Minister's speech

I am delighted to welcome you to Number 10 and to have this opportunity as Prime Minister to thank you all for the service you give to our country and for the difference you make to so many lives, day in and day out.

There was some discussion about when in the Christian year we might hold this reception. I thought you might appreciate Shrove Tuesday, not just because of its position before the start of Lent – which is such an important time for all of us as Christians.

Today we have on display in the State Dining Room some historical records from Shrove Tuesdays in Britain dating back over 550 years. And I am grateful to Patricia Humphries from the National Archives who has come here today to talk us through them. Although I'm not sure all our pancakes will quite match the Shrove Tuesday feast held in Edinburgh for Mary, Queen of Scots in February 1564!

I am delighted in particular that we have here with us today people from all parts of the church and the United Kingdom – including the Black Majority Churches, the Network Churches, Parliament's own church, St Margaret's Westminster, and church leaders such as Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop Sentamu, and the Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, who is standing down after more than 20 years.

Can I just say, Richard has been one of the great leaders of the Christian faith in our country – he is not just someone with an extraordinary presence and richness of thought who has in 20 years almost doubled church membership in his diocese and established over 30 new churches. I am sure you will join with me in paying tribute to his outstanding leadership and service – and wishing him well in the years ahead.

As Prime Minister I am hosting an annual reception for each of the main faiths in our country – and this one is of particular importance to me personally.

Growing up in a vicarage, I know first-hand the many sacrifices involved and the hard work that so many of you do, from the services and ministry in your churches to the comfort and guidance you provide to millions in our country at some of the most difficult moments in their lives.

Whether it is visiting the sick or bereaved; delivering faith-inspired projects, like the Christmas Day lunch that I join in my constituency each year; or acting as volunteers and aid workers in war-torn parts of the world – we owe you all a huge debt of gratitude and as Prime Minister, on behalf of the whole country, I want to say a very big thank you.

I also believe it is right that we should celebrate the role of Christianity

in our country. We have a very strong tradition in this country of religious tolerance and freedom of speech, and our Christian heritage is something we can all be proud of. We must continue to ensure that people feel able to speak about their faith, and that absolutely includes their faith in Christ.

I also believe that Christianity has an important role to play in making Britain a country that works for everyone.

Now, the Church will not always agree with everything that the government says – and the government will not always agree with the Church. But I think there are many areas where we can work together.

One is in addressing the persecution of Christians and religious minorities around the world which has been mentioned to me by some at the reception here today. It is hard to comprehend that today people are still being attacked and murdered because of their Christianity. We must reaffirm our determination to stand up for the freedom of people of all religions to practice their beliefs in peace and safety. And I hope to take further measures as a government to support this.

For all these reasons, I am delighted that we can take this moment today to celebrate the work that you do – and that we can do so much at such an important moment in the Christian calendar.

In the weeks ahead, as we look beyond Ash Wednesday to Easter, let us draw confidence in our Christian faith. And let us renew our determination to work together in the service of others, today and in the years to come.

So thank you again for coming here and I hope you will carry on and enjoy the rest of the reception.

Press release: Australian wheat 'investment' scam directors reap lengthy disqualifications

The High Court of Justice has made an order for the disqualification of Robert Ross White for 8 years from 15 February 2017. The allegations made out in Court were that he had failed to keep, preserve, or deliver up Agri Firma's records and that he had evaded his responsibilities as a director.

The Secretary of State previously accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Richard John Lyon Henstock for 9 years, from 19 July 2016. Mr Henstock had not disputed both the above allegations. His avoidance of his duty as a director allowed the company to mislead its investors to believe a legitimate and valuable lease had been purchased for them for farmland in either

Lithuania or Australia, when there is no evidence that any land was purchased in respect of Lithuanian investment and the land purchase in Australia was never completed.

Assurances regarding the Australian wheat investment of 9% farming income and 11-15% capital gain were given, despite professional advice being received that this was unachievable and investor capital being reduced by undisclosed 65% up-front marketing and other fees.

The company was incorporated on 4 July 2011, traded from Bond St, London and went into liquidation on 9 July 2014 with an estimated deficiency of at least £538,667 and AUD\$661,500.

Proceedings are being contested by a third alleged director, with a trial expected in February 2018.

The disqualification prevents Mr White and Mr Henstock from directly or indirectly becoming involved (without the permission of the Court) in the promotion, formation or management of a company for the duration of their disqualification terms.

Commenting on the disqualification, Mark Bruce, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

In this case, the pooling of investors' funds with that from other associated investment vehicles has prevented any ability to trace most of Agri Firma's investment capital through various offshore accounts. Regarding Mr Henstock, even without records it has been possible to shed light on a number of claims made to investors and evidence that these were materially misleading.

Both registered directors have abrogated their duties, facilitating the scam which this investment became. These disqualifications should give a clear message regarding such behaviour.

Notes to editors

Agri Firma Capital Ltd (CR0 No. 07692576) was incorporated on 4 July 2011 and traded from Mayfair House, 124 Bond St, London W1S 1DX.

The Company went into liquidation on 9 July 2014 with an estimated deficiency of at least £538,667 and AUD\$661,500.

Robert Ross White's date of birth is in October 1957 and he resides in Worcester.

The High Court of Justice ordered the disqualification of Robert Ross White for 8 years from 15 February 2017. The allegations made out in Court were that Robert Ross White (Mr White) failed to keep, preserve, or deliver up

Agri Firma Capital Ltd's (Agri Firma's) records. As a consequence, it is not possible to:

- identify all company assets. For example; a loan of AUD\$94,318 was made from Agri Firma to an offshore company on 15 July 2013. Without any company records, it is not possible to test whether the loan was ever repaid
- ascertain the full scale of its liabilities, identify all investors, or trace the disposal of unidentified investor monies
- trace the disposal of estimated investor monies, put aside for product purchase, of at least £126,582.23 and AUD\$93,471.08
- ascertain the causes of its failure

In addition Mr White abrogated his responsibilities as director of Agri Firma Capital Ltd from 2 August 2013 to 9 July 2014, with the result that it was controlled by his co-director, who was not appointed as a director. His co-director was subject to a disqualification under The Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 and did not have leave of the court to act.

Richard John Lyon Henstock's date of birth is in November 1937 and he resides in South Northamptonshire. The Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Mr Henstock, effective from 19 July 2016, for 9 years. The matters of unfitness, which Mr Henstock did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that Richard John Lyon Henstock failed to keep, preserve, or deliver up Agri Firma's records. As a consequence, it is not possible to

- identify all company assets. For example; a loan of AUD\$94,318 was made from Agri Firma to an offshore company on 15 July 2013. Without any company records, it is not possible to test whether the loan was ever repaid
- ascertain the full scale of its liabilities, identify all investors, or trace the disposal of unidentified investor monies
- trace the disposal of estimated investor monies, put aside for product purchase, of at least £126,582.23 and AUD\$93,471.08
- ascertain the causes of its failure

In addition Mr Henstock abrogated his responsibilities as director of Agri Firma Capital Limited from 4 July 2011 to 9 July 2014, in this period it:

- was controlled, without the leave of the Court, by an individual subject to a ban, under The Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, from acting directly or indirectly in its management
- misled investors, contributing to their losses estimated at £508,667 and AUD\$661,500. Marketing material, as well as a lease document issued to investors, led them to believe that a legitimate and valuable lease had been purchased for them for farmland in either Lithuania or Australia. However, there is no evidence that any land was purchased in respect of Lithuanian investment and the land purchase in Australia was never completed. The company brochures made assurances of Agri Firma's extensive farming experience and 16% returns received by customer in the previous quarter, when there is no evidence from available records that

it ever purchased any land, upon which it could carry out farming. Regarding the Australian investment, assurances of 9% farming income and 11-15% capital gain were misleading, when investor capital was reduced by 65% up-front marketing and other fees. The proposed agents for the Australian investment had advised the company that the 8-10% envisaged return to investors was achievable. A direct association between investors and a service provider was implied, misleading investors regarding their level of involvement in the investment. Follow-up communications in June 2014 indicated that the project had value and the plantation was progressing. However this was not the case and the land purchase had fallen through.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: Foreign & Commonwealth Office statement on the Tunisia Inquests

We welcome the thorough work by the Coroner and his team for more than a year on this important investigation, resulting in today's conclusions.

The Sousse attack was the largest loss of British life to terrorism since 7/7, and devastated the lives of so many. Our deepest sympathy remains with all those people caught up in this horrific attack and we hope that the Inquest process has been of some help to the families.

Press release: Winners of Highways England Supplier Recognition Awards announced

The combined efforts of Highways England contractors who worked tirelessly to repair and rebuild a storm-damaged road in Cumbria have been honoured at the company's annual Supplier Recognition Scheme awards. Pulling out all the stops, this vital route was repaired, making a real difference to an area where tourism plays a vital part to the local economy.

Kier Highways, and Cubby Construction JV with the local supply chain completed the work three weeks early, under budget and without a single incident. It meant the local community had the A591 back in action in time for the start of the tourist season and Highways England could notch up a 'first' by delivering improvements on a local road network.

The Cumbria nomination was among 130 entries in this year's awards which also recognised companies for achievements in various fields including safety, customer service, sustainability, capability, value and inclusion. The supply chain – ranging from small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to international organisations – carries out around 90 per cent of Highways England's work.

Jim O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England said:

We need and value the expertise, ambition and innovation our supply chain partners bring, because without them we cannot deliver the £15 billion Government investment.

We have achieved a great deal since April 2015, and there is much more to do. We are responsible for the largest road building programme in a generation, and have thousands of miles of road network that need to be maintained to a high standard. It is imperative that we achieve this while keeping our network open to traffic, and ensuring the safety of our customers and workforce.

That is what our awards are all about, recognising the contribution our supply chain partners make to the important work we do.

Safety, health and wellbeing

Awarded to suppliers who show industry leading commitment to improving organisational, workforce and road user health and safety.

Winner: A-One+ and Postpullers UK Ltd for a collaborative approach to the development of an innovative solution to remove embedded safety barrier posts. The system reduces the safety risks faced by the workforce: requires

only one operator, not two or three; reduces the amount of machinery needed to remove the barrier posts and gets the job done more quickly.

Highly commended: HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd; Manchester smart motorways (Balfour Beatty, Carillion, Costain & Bam/Morgan Sindall JV); Carnell Support Services Ltd

Customer Experience

Awarded to suppliers who have demonstrated industry leading commitment to customer service.

Winner: Costain for the work they did to get to engage with communities, stakeholders, road users and community teams working alongside the construction team on the A556 Knutsford to Bowden scheme. The work they did demonstrated a clear understanding of our customer service strategy, and enabled them to build upon the basics to improve customer service. To achieve this, they used a wide variety of communication channels from VMS to social media to communicate with customers, alongside using commercial providers such as TomTom and ABTA.

Their whole ethos was to think about things differently. That pro-active, customer focused, lessons learned approach was what elevated this submission into the winning bid.

Highly commended: Carillion Morgan Sindall JV

Communities

Awarded to suppliers that have engaged with community groups from the outset, understood what really matters to them and identified ways in which they can work differently.

Winner: Carillion Morgan Sindall JV for work on the A1 Leeming to Barton widening and motorway upgrade. They showed a dedication for changing the face of construction by revolutionising their commitment to social responsibility across the industry, by: proactively working with media to talk about the work they do; health-checks for HGV drivers; showcasing archaeological findings and targeting donations that will positively impact on local communities.

Delivering sustainable and environmental solutions

Awarded to suppliers who have integrated environmental, social, economic and management aspects of sustainable development into the delivery of Highways England contracts.

Winner: Interserve Construction for empowering communities through social value mapping. The company worked alongside an environmental regeneration charity, Groundwork, to track their key objectives. This method enabled a better understanding of the key factors impacting communities where Interserve Construction were operating and their influence on employment, job

creation and supply chain spend. This method has ultimately helped Interserve Construction to better identify how they can help Highways England meet their sustainability targets. For example; M3 Black Dam Improvement and M11 Stansted schemes.

Highly commended: Graham Construction

Inclusion

Awarded to suppliers that have created opportunities to bring people into the workplace, developed skills and created an environment where differences are valued and utilised.

Winner: Skanska UK Ltd for their work to initiate and encourage daily conversations with their colleagues, partners, clients and the wider sector about becoming more diverse and inclusive; how together there can be a culture in which everyone feels they can be themselves. They have tracked the impact of this work over the last six years, and have seen an increase in diversity and inclusion engagement scores from 66% to 82%.

Highly commended: VINCI Construction UK Ltd – Taylor Woodrow

Building capacity and capability

Awarded to suppliers that have developed their employees' skills and capabilities through delivery of Highways England contracts.

Winner: HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd for their work in building an employment and skills infrastructure. They actively managed the supply chain, bringing on board people from local SMEs, having a commitment to accessible entry level employment (for people from all backgrounds) and offering training opportunities for local people and SMEs – this includes apprenticeships and a self-funding skills development academy.

Highly commended: Costain M1 smart motorways

Managing down cost/improving value

Awarded to suppliers who have demonstrated significant achievement by delivering Highways England contracts in smarter, more efficient ways.

Winner: A-One+ and Urbis Schreder Ltd for taking an existing lighting unit, used on 24 overhead gantries in Yorkshire to display information to road users, and adapting it to meet Highways England specifications. The result was an improved LED lighting unit, which is more visible to road users (especially at night). In addition, by making these changes, the whole life costs of the units was lowered, disruption to road users reduced (the control gear for the units is installed in the hard shoulder, meaning future maintenance can be done from there, without the need for lane closures) and road worker safety is improved (reduces the need for working from height).

Highly commended: Carnell Support Services Ltd

Supply chain management

Awarded to suppliers that demonstrate Highways England's strategic agenda, values and principles through supply chains.

Winner and Chairman's Award: Kier Highways and Cubby Construction JV with local supply chain for the "Reconnecting Cumbria" Project. This saw national, regional and local organisations working together to repair Cumbria's local road network following an unprecedented series of devastating, severe weather events in December 2015. Through collaboratively working with its supply chain, other contractors and stakeholders including Highways England, Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park and United Utilities, the winning companies enabled Highways England to deliver works on Cumbria's local road network – a first for the government company – three weeks early, under budget and without a single incident.

Winner: Kier Highways for their work with BSI and ToweyDuffy in Area 3 to unlock a new certification process which saw the largest number of SMEs achieve the national standard for Collaborative Business relationships (BS11000) as part of a single assessment. Not only did it reduce costs and result in efficiency savings for Highways England, but it has helped promote collaborative working, improved how information is shared and better delivery.

Highly commended: Costain, Aggregate Industries and Walters; Chevron Traffic Management and Kier Highways, HTM, Golden Orb Solutions, Consillium

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.