

National Highways to inspire next generation of talent through world's best-selling video game



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Launching today (Monday 6 September) students across the country will be able to jump in and explore three of National Highways (formerly Highways England) proposed schemes that have been created in the game.

They can learn about everything road designers have to take into account when they're planning schemes like the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements and the A303 past Stonehenge.

Through the in-game activities students will get a sense of the range of skills used by National Highways to build some of the biggest road projects in a generation, including: archaeology, biology, ecology, civil engineering, communications technology and coding.

Five games and a creative mode have been developed, along with lesson plans that teachers can use with their students aged 7-11 (key stage 2) and 11-14 (key stage 3).

Natalie Jones, National Highways Talent Delivery Lead, said:

We want to inspire the next generation of talented engineers and scientists, on whom the country's infrastructure and national economy will one day depend. Our ambition is to seek out the next James Dyson or Dame Sarah Gilbert and help put them on the path to a fascinating life and career.

With the help of Minecraft and the in-game activities, students will get first-hand experience of what would go into building a huge bridge or digging a giant tunnel. In real life these are

multi-million pound structures that are carefully designed and then built by experts. These skills and expertise help to create the motorways and main roads that keep us all moving, whether going to work, delivering goods or keeping families and friends connected.

The educational package is aligned to the national curriculum and is available to all teachers and schools, the only requirement is that they have access to Microsoft Education Centre. The five activities include:

Lower Thames Crossing – Tunnel Digging: Students will be using a Minecraft model of the proposed LTC tunnel to learn about tunnelling and excavate and build a portion of the tunnel.

Lower Thames Crossing – Signs game: Using a model of a different section of the planned LTC scheme, students will be using MakeCode to programme road signs to respond to different scenarios, including severe weather and flooding.

A428 Black to Caxton Gibbet improvements – Natural Habitats game: Students will be using a section of the Caxton Gibbet roundabout to create a new stretch of road whilst keeping animal habitats safe. (*Not available at launch)

A303 Stonehenge – Across the Ages: Students will be taken on an historic journey through different time periods with Stonehenge as the backdrop, including; Mesolithic Era, Neolithic Era, Bronze Age, Roman Britain, WW1, present day, and the planned A303 Stonehenge road scheme.

A303 Stonehenge – Biodiversity game: Using a Minecraft model of a green bridge section of the proposed scheme, students will explore the biodiversity of the area by photographing the flora and fauna in the landscape.

Each proposed scheme also has a Creative Mode aimed for use by schools during lunchtime or after school clubs. The creative game will ask a different set of questions, and students can spend as much time as they want building and designing things in relation to the questions.

The Minecraft maps and games were created by Blockbuilders C.I.C, an expert company aimed at engaging young people into planning, the environment and local history using Minecraft.

Megan Leckie, Co-Director at BlockBuilders Youth Engagement, said

We are very proud of the unique educational games we have created with National Highways, using Minecraft Education Edition. Creative platforms such as these open up a whole new world of learning for young people, where they can be directly engaged with their local environment and find out more about engineering.

To discover more about National Highways Minecraft STEM learning package, to receive the educational resource pack or register interest in National Highways holding a Minecraft workshop with the developers at your school, visit the Minecraft STEM learning page

To keep up to date with the latest news from National Highways follow @NationalHWays on Twitter or visit theNational Highways website

General enquiries

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

Media enquiries

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

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