



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER GARETH RHYS WILLIAMS CB

Gareth Rhys Williams CB was appointed Chair of National Highways in April 2024, which is responsible for the Strategic Road Network in England and which employs 6,500 staff, overseeing a spend of c£5.5bn per annum. He was recruited from the private sector in March 2016 as the UK Government Chief Commercial Officer, based in the Cabinet Office.

In his 8 years in that role he led the transformation of the Government Commercial Function, upskilling and integrating 6,000 professionals across government, delivering improved contract delivery and savings of £3 - 4bn a year, while working with the supplier base on a number of high-profile restructurings and governance issues. He saw through the passing of the Procurement Act 2023, bringing wide ranging legislative reforms to the UK's annual procurement spend of c£300bn, promoting policies to improve transparency and the social value that can be delivered on ESG, Net Zero, and Prompt Payment.

Before joining the Civil Service, Gareth was CEO of PHS Group, a leading provider of workplace services in the UK, restoring the business to growth while resolving a number of reputational issues and executing a complex refinancing. He was previously CEO of Charter International, the FTSE listed engineering group, until its successful sale to Colfax Corporation in 2012; CEO of Capital Safety Group Ltd, now part of 3M Corp; and was CEO of Vitec Group plc, the London listed global supplier of broadcast and photographic equipment and services for 7 years. His early career included running international businesses within Rexam and BPB.

Gareth serves as a Trustee and Companion of the Chartered Management Institute, and as a NED at Purple Sector Ltd, a Formula 1 spin-off. He served as a Non-Executive Director of Crown Commercial Service from 2017 to 2024 and as a member of the UK Financial Reporting Council's advisory panel. He is a Fellow of the UK's Institute of Mechanical Engineers, and of the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

He has a long standing personal commitment to sustainability, having served on the Council of FFI, the world's oldest international conservation organisation, from 2012 to 2020. He is currently one of FFI's Vice-Presidents, sitting on their audit committee.

He is married with 3 children, living in the UK, and enjoys travel and playing and watching cricket. He was awarded the Companion of the Order of the Bath in the 2024 New Year's Honours list.