



December 2024 Newsletter

MHA+ Festive Message

As the festive season approaches, we'd like to take a moment to reflect on a year filled with change, growth, and collaboration.

We've welcomed new faces to the MHA+ team, each bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. Our dedicated team has been hard at work, driving service improvements, enhancing member engagement, and strengthening our financial performance.

Our Framework Manager, Lucy Cox, has also been getting out and about at conferences, exhibitions and events – as you will read below.

As we recruit to our support roles, Kay Smith can take on the role of Service Improvement Groups (SIG) Coordinator. This will release Julia May and Tina Langton to refocus on service planning, skills and development, and financial and performance management.



A particular highlight of the year was our Annual Event in September, focusing on “Skills and Digital.” We had a great programme of speakers and were thrilled to showcase the latest technological advancements and celebrate the outstanding work of our members, industry partners and suppliers. We also introduced the inaugural “best use of technology awards” in design, construction and asset management and maintenance.

These bite-sized presentations of shortlisted innovations were very well received so as we look ahead to 2025, we’re excited to announce our next Annual Event, centered around “**Digital and Environment.**” We invite you to join us as we explore the intersection of these critical areas and shape the future of our industry.

There is lots happening across the alliance and plenty of opportunity to get the most from your membership, raise your personal and organisational profiles, and offer fresh ideas and enthusiasm to help shape the alliance for the future. Please make it your New Year’s Resolution to get involved.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our members, partners, and the entire MHA+ team for their unwavering support and contributions throughout the year.

Wishing you a happy Christmas and a healthy and successful 2025.

Karen Notman, MHA+ Manager

MHA+ Award Winners



[Amey Consulting](#)'s innovative use of technology in restoring Chetwynd Bridge in Staffordshire has earned them the first **MHA+ Best Use of Technology in Design award**. Combining structural analysis, aerial surveying, and underwater scanning, Amey developed a sustainable solution that preserved this Grade 2 Listed structure.



[Staffordshire County Council](#) and Amey's commitment to sustainable design and technological innovation has ensured the long-term preservation of this valuable heritage asset.

Congratulations to [Chris Plant](#) who presented and accepted the award.

This was a particularly close final, as the awards were voted live by attendees at the MHA+ annual event, so congratulations also to the other finalists:

[AECOM](#) and [Herefordshire Council](#) and [WiCET - Wireless Charging of Electric Taxis](#) with [Nottingham City Council](#).

Congratulations to [Lancashire County Council](#) for winning the first **MHA+ Best Use of Technology in Maintenance and Asset Management award**.

Their innovative Member Dashboard allows elected officials to track road maintenance progress.

David Griffiths accepted the award at the MHA+ annual event, where attendees voted to recognise this achievement.



TextIt was a competitive field, with strong finalists from [Herefordshire Council](#) and [Sandwell Council](#), both collaborating with [AECOM](#), who also presented impressive technology solutions.



Congratulations to [Galliford Try](#) with [AECOM](#) and [Leicestershire County Council](#) for winning the inaugural **MHA+ Best Use of Technology in Construction** award.



This was for the use of the Vita Load Navigator on the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road (MMDR) project.

[Shaun Beales](#) from Galliford Try made the winning award presentation and collected the award.

Attendees at the MHA+ annual event voted for this award against a strong duo of shortlisted finalists from [John Sisk & Son Ltd](#) and [Taylor Woodrow](#).

Introducing MHA+ Women in Engineering

MHA+ Women in Engineering held its inaugural meeting to share current challenges and experiences across the Alliance and offer support. The group is planning to meet monthly initially and explore further where the group can best make a difference.

Contact [Teresa Hylton](#) or [Lucy Cox](#) if you are interested in being part of this exciting new initiative.

Thematic Groups

MHA+ has a clear overview of the important industry cross cutting themes of Carbon (via the Carbon Steering Group), Social Value and all things Digital via its Thematic Groups.

If you want more information about the Thematic Groups, to contribute, or learn more, please contact MHA+ Support, [Ian Bamforth](#) or [Kay Smith](#).

Below is a short update on 'what's happening' in each of the MHA+ Thematic area:

Carbon Steering Group (CSG)



The CSG continues to provide a focus point for all things carbon reduction and net zero MHA+. So, what's going on in the CSG?

Carbon News Bulletins

Want to delve deeper into past discussions, case studies and insights? Check out the archived CSG Carbon News Bulletins, available on the [MHA+ website](#).

OCL Regeneration/Aggregate Industries

Stuart Greedy from Aggregate Industries/OCL Regeneration shared valuable insights into their wide range of services, particularly those focused on carbon reduction and efficiencies they deliver.



Learn more about their on-site and depot recycling, foam-based products, and case studies by reviewing the [link to this immersive presentation](#).

LiveLabs2

Jake Murgatroyd from **Transport for West Midlands** provided an update on the **LiveLabs2 Centre of Excellence (CoE)** and its ongoing initiatives. The CoE is developing a Material Log and Knowledge Bank to support innovation and best practices.

Carbon Reduction Through Technology workshop at the annual event

It was standing room only at the "Carbon Reduction Through Technology" workshop which highlighted the potential of digital innovation to address carbon challenges. Two cutting edge presentations from **Highway Data Systems** and **Galliford Try**.



Ruairi Charlesworth from **Highway Data Systems** showcased the use of digital tech in asphalt production and installation: Read more: [HDS Digital Tech in Asphalt prod/Install](#)

Jamie Missenden and Luke Winch from **Galliford Try** highlighted the innovative use of QFlow technology for managing carbon reduction data on Melton Mowbray Distributor Road Construction Scheme. Further information can be seen here: [Galliford Try QFlow better data management/decision making](#).



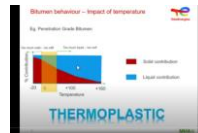
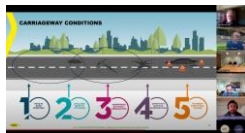
Carbon Management Task & Finish Group (CMTFG):

The CMTFG is working to establish a standardised approach to carbon management for MHA+ Medium Schemes Framework 4 projects.

Simon Wilson from the **Future Highways Research Group** presented on the **ADEPT/FHRG Carbon Calculator Assessment Standard** and its potential application to MHA+ schemes.

LiveLabs2 (LL2) supplier events:

The first supplier event in September included presentations from Gary Schofield, Head of Technical at **Total Energies** on the use of Polymer Modified Bitumen (PMB) and Justin Osbourne, Business Development Manager at **Stabilised Pavements Ltd** (SPL) who covered in-situ pavement recycling. [View this webinar here](#).



The second LL2 Centre of Excellence supplier event was in November. The topic being the LL2 trials on Asphalt Rejuvenation (AR). Presentations were from **Roadtech** and **Colas** which highlights the respective benefits of Reclamite and PenTack. This event is now available to [view on MHA+ YouTube channel](#):

Stay tuned for more updates and events from the CSG as we continue to drive sustainable practices and reduce our carbon footprint.

Social Value Working Group (SVWG)



The SVWG works collaboratively with MHA+ stakeholders to leverage the opportunities and resources available through our highway services provision to the benefit of MHA+ member authorities, local and regional communities.

Farewell and thanks to Julie Cartwright

The SVWG continues to meet monthly and has been guided by our expert Chair, Julie Cartwright (AECOM). We extend our heartfelt thanks to Julie for her outstanding leadership. Julie's professionalism, enthusiasm, and expertise have been instrumental in guiding the group's work on the Social Value agenda. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.



Procurement Act 2023

Procurement Act 2023 Update

The government has announced the implementation of the revised Act 2023 will come into effect **on 24 February 2025**.

The Act aims to leverage public procurement to deliver greater value for money and social impact. This delay allows for the strengthening of the National Procurement Policy Statement, with a focus on enhanced social value.

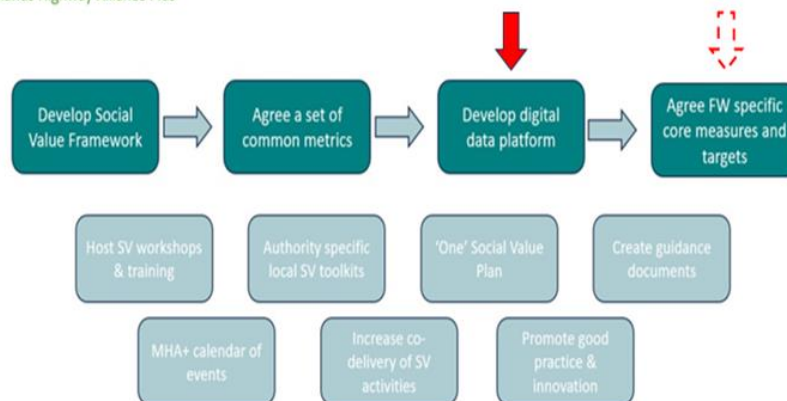
Essentially this means that we can continue to run procurement during this period, but we must continue to procure under the current regulations until the new go live date.

Please take some time to read the [Procurement Act 2023 Announcement](#) and detailed [frequently asked questions](#) provided by the Cabinet Office. MHA+ has also produced a wide range of supporting material on the [Social Value section of our website](#).

Prepared for the Future - MHA+ Social Value Framework

The SVWG has been proactively developing a Social Value Framework to address upcoming changes, putting MHA+ members in a strong position to adapt.

The MHA+ SVWG are already well positioned to respond to this with our work to implement a Social Value Framework. The chart below indicates the group's journey to achieve this:



Be a part of the social value conversation!

Do you have a Social Value coordinator in your authority? We'd love for them to join the SVWG. Please contact [Kay Smith](#).

Digital Working Group (DWG)



The DWG meets regularly and brings together MHA+ contractors, suppliers, and members to explore the exciting world of digitalisation. We focus on:

Raising awareness/ Identifying digital tools and opportunities across MHA+ project activities.

Building expertise. Upskilling members on the technical aspects of digital technologies.

Building a network. Connecting you with peers facing similar challenges and fostering collaboration and mutual support.

Recent DWG Highlights

- **National Underground Asset Register (NUAR):** Marissa Hayes from Geospace discussed this government project building a digital map of underground utilities across the UK.
- **Streetworks, Location Finding, and Data Accuracy:** Engaging discussions explored Unique Street Reference Numbers (USRNs), Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs), and data accuracy within Gazeteers.



Geospace would be interested to know from MHA+ members how they present the list of streets? Their website www.findmystreet.co.uk can be tailored to your highway authority area with a free and bespoke “widget” to link from your website.

This enables the public to check the status of a street based on the data captured within the **National Street Gazetteer (NSG)**.

Find out more about this and about DataVia - your NSG available as a free WFS/WMS feed. If members are interested in taking this up get in touch with [Marisa Hayes](#) at Geospace.

Kerry Blakeman, **Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)** Accountable Drone Manager, presented on the benefits of drone technology in projects. He suggested that drones can improve:

Safety: Minimizing risks for personnel working near roads.

Security: Providing real-time situational awareness.

Response times: Allowing faster assessment and resource allocation for incidents.



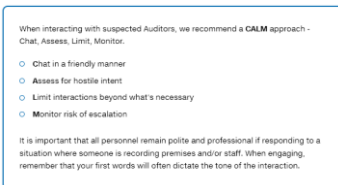
TfWM has won national awards for their innovative use of this digital technology in the transport sector (including **ADEPT** and **National Transport Awards** this year). If you are interested to know more about what TfWM and drone technology can offer please contact [Mr Kerry Blakeman](#).

Join the DWG! We welcome new members who share our passion for digital innovation. Contact [Kay Smith](#) to get involved. New members are welcome.

Dealing with the rise of social media auditors

The National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) has released guidance on the small but increasing trend of individuals who attend premises with the aim of capturing staff and property on video, using cameras, phones and drones.

Auditing activity is mostly harmless, except when they attempt to provoke staff and security when premises are being filmed. Controversial content to post online generates interest and responses, and could go viral. Don't give it to them.



The NPSA has [provided guidance on their website](#) and a [video on YouTube](#). When interacting with suspected Auditors, they recommend a **CALM** approach - Chat, Assess, Limit, Monitor.

MHA+ Learning, training and development

MHA+ is committed to supporting your highways team's professional development. We offer a range of learning and development (L&D) opportunities to equip them with the latest skills and knowledge.

Register your interest for potential **NEC 4 Contract Management Continuing Professional Development (CPD) accreditations**. Gain in-depth expertise in managing NEC4 projects with our accredited programmes:

- **NEC 4 Term Service Contract (TSC) Service Manager Accreditation:** This 4-day classroom-based programme equips delegates with the skills to excel as TSC Service Managers. [Read the NEC page here for more information.](#)
- **NEC 4 Engineering Construction Contracts (ECC) Project Manager Accreditation:** This 4-day program empowers delegates to manage NEC4 ECC projects effectively. [Head over to the NEC site for more information.](#)



MHA+ Skills Matrix

We use a comprehensive **Skills and Competencies Matrix (MHAF)** to identify common highways roles and potential skills gaps across member authorities. This empowers us to:

- Establish "centers of excellence" for specialised expertise.
- Tailor training needs assessments.
- Design targeted programs to address identified skill gaps.
- Facilitate career development, succession planning, and career path planning within the highways sector.

MHA+ Learning and Development Funding

MHA+ offers funding to support essential training needs across member authorities. This funding can be used for programmes that:

- Enhance skills and knowledge necessary for building capacity and capability.
- Are directly relevant to highways operations and management.
- Are offered free of charge to member authorities.

We have a [MHA+ learning and development policy](#) to ensure equity and delivery efficiencies in provision. [Email Julia May](#) to register your interest and advise on potential numbers of participants.

MHA+ Learning Gateway Content

Latest content from our [MHA+ framework suppliers](#) on the MHA+ YouTube channel to access valuable content from MHA+ framework suppliers. This includes recent updates such as:

- **Amey Consulting Lunch & Learn Sessions:**
 - [Smart Local Energy Systems](#) presentation
 - [Public realm engagement & Biophilic Design Interventions](#)
 - [Blending datasets with Mobile Network Data and carbon tools](#)
- **Partnering with Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT):**
 - We work with CIHT and commission accredited events and content, using CIHT subject matter expertise. [Head over to the website](#) to access and refine your search using the search bar.

Register Your Interest

MHA+ member organizations can register interest and indicate potential participant numbers for upcoming L&D events by contacting [Julia May](#).

Don't miss this opportunity to empower your highways team with the skills they need.

Carbon Literacy Training (CLT)

MHA+ members via the Programme Board and Carbon Steering Group had raised the issue that there was limited Highways-specific CLT available for members. After some research we identified that the Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) had a suite of bespoke Highways-focused training, which is relevant to our members.

MHA+ has put in place arrangements (working in partnership with CIHT) for our members to have free access to the following three online courses:



1. **Carbon Literacy - Accounting.**
2. **Transport Decarbonisation – Introduction.**
3. **An Introduction to the FHRG Carbon Calculation and Accounting Standard (CCAS).**

You can request to complete these modules via the MHA+ Learning Management System (LMS). If you do not have a MHA+ LMS account and want to complete these learning modules: head to <https://mhaplus.vc-enable.co.uk>

If you already have a MHA+ LMS username and password, click [login to your MHA+ LMS account](#).

Technology Showcase presentations



Members of the MHA+ digital group developed content for a Technology Showcase. These presentations are available to view on MHA+ YouTube channel and you can watch view them by clicking on the links below:

Wordnerds [presentation by Steve Erdal](#)

NatureMetrics [presentation by Fraser Morgan](#)

FYLD [presentation by Hazel MacMahon](#)

FlyThru [presentation by Michael May](#)

Alchera Technologies [presentation by Matt Pick](#)

The Digital Working Group would like to bring together a collection of case studies to host via MHA+ which would allow MHA+ Members to benefit from information and best practice in the digital space. So if you have any if you have any digital successes you would like to share we would be pleased to hear from you. Please send your case studies in to [Kay Smith](#).

Service Improvement Groups (SIG)

Highway Asset Management

- **Key Findings and Funding:** Discussed the National Audit Office's [condition and maintenance of local roads](#) report – on local road conditions and maintenance, focusing on funding and data usage by DfT.
- **De-carbonisation and Supply Chain:** Explored **Derby City Council's** engagement with suppliers to reduce carbon emissions.
- **Road Condition Monitoring:** Reviewed and compared PAS 2161 to other methods, discussing **DfT** requirements and local authority perspectives.

Street Lighting

- **Technology and Innovation:** Explored advancements with presentations by **Telensa** and **Clearview**, and discussed updates from **Ofgem** (DNO).
- **Operational Challenges:** Addressed issues like asbestos, health and safety, EV charging, and third-party lighting column attachments.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Shared insights from **LiveLabs2**, **London Lighting Engineers**, **Institution of Lighting Professionals** and **Highway Electrical Association**.

Highways Records and Searches

- **Best Practice and Standardisation:** SIG members discussed work to support development of best practice in the List of Streets and Highway Terms (updating the 2008 version) and discussed feedback from the **County Council Local Land Charges Group**.
- **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** Explored potential contributions from **MK Council (Redways)**, **Land Registry**, and **National Highways**.
- **MHA+ Platform Use:** Discussed making the most of MHA+ tools for learning, training and development.

Casualty Reduction

- **Road Safety Priorities:** provided updates on authority road safety education, engineering activities, funding priorities, and data management practices. Awaiting **DfT** road safety plan priorities for next five years.
- **Targeted Interventions:** SIG interest in supporting mature drivers to build confidence and skills and addressing the significant rise in motorcycle RSI/fatalities.

- **Collaborative Working:** Agreed to work with city authorities to analyse accident data. SIG terms of reference was considered and will be amended to reflect the road safety engineering and education remit of group members. Agreed to schedule face-to-face meeting in June 2025, with agenda topics to be submitted by SIG members.

Development Management

- **MHA+ platform use:** Explored using the MHA+ SIG site functionality for technical queries and operational issues for **East Midlands Development Control Forum**, to encourage engagement for practitioners.
- **Planning Policy and Practice:** Discussed the perspectives and feedback on [NPPF consultation](#), DNA interviews, and shared the 'appeals of interest' the increase in [Class Q](#) submissions and legislation change.

Transportation Data & Analysis

- **Data-Driven Insights:** Presentation from **Clearview Intelligence** and the discussed their Insights suite and the application's potential use.
- **Pilot Projects and Innovation:** Explored opportunities for MHA+ members to participate in pilot projects and access MHA+ test bed funding.
- **Use of intelligence:** Breakout rooms were used to facilitate smaller group discussion on challenges and opportunities including apprentice offer for data analyst to support/enable other teams use of intelligence in programmes.

Flood Water Management

- **Lessons Learned:** Discussed the **PFR(G) task and finish group** and agreed action plan to share lessons learned on the scheme - as there was broad consensus on key issues/grievances and need to lobby to ensure subsequent schemes are fit for purpose.
- **Regulatory Challenges:** Discussed Land Drainage Consents appeals process, watercourse regulation best practices and sharing of culvert policy.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Shared updates from **ADEPT, Flownet, and Trent Regional Flood & Coastal Committee** - and advised on upcoming conferences and events.
- **Technical Q&A session:** Potential session on consenting and enforcement activity

Highway Structures

- **Network Rail (NR) Collaboration:** Identified areas for improved collaboration, including possessions to support maintenance, public liability insurance, use NR ACE system, and access to documents from NR's NEST system.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Discussed inspection of walls and boundaries, closed churchyards, and sharing of contemporary case studies. Discussion on the protocol for external loads and the need for consistency across highway authorities.
- **Training and Development:** discussed water-related training and potential joint events.

Winter Services

- **Industry Standards:** Participated in **National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG)** practical guidance review working groups and chapter reviews.
- **Innovation and Technology:** Discussed **Cold Comfort 2024** that could be progressed as part of the SIG group. This included the potential of AI in winter services decision-making - and involvement of MHA+ member authorities in any trials.
- **Winter Readiness:** Shared updates on authority preparations for the upcoming winter season.

New Service Improvement Group (SIG) – Vegetation Management and Biodiversity Group (VM&B)

There has been a request for registrations of interest in MHA+ members for joining a new SIG. This will be an opportunity to network with peers to encourage effective and efficient delivery of Vegetation Management and Biodiversity across the MHA+ member authorities. The SIG will offer support, guidance, sharing of data and information through to implementation.

Scope of the **Vegetation Management and Biodiversity SIG** will include

- **Section 154 Highway Tree Enforcement Inspections**
- **Contract Management and Procurement**
- **In-house Delivery of tree works.**
- **Management of customer enquiries**
- **Vegetation management and SuDS features**
- **Promoting or managing biodiversity on the highway asset.**

Read more about our [SIG network](#) which has recently been upgraded with more functionality.

AIA ALARM survey notes, by Paul Binks, Highways Asset Manager at Lancs County Council & Vice Chair MHA+ Carbon Steering Group

The AIA ALARM survey for the last couple of years has asked extra questions around the use of recycled and low carbon materials.

The survey is showing that the top Authorities are all committed, or say they are committed to tackling climate change. But as we get to the reality of realising this, whilst there is some positivity, some barriers or reluctance to optimise the potential for reducing carbon around confidence in materials and knowledge of carbon impact. AIA have kindly given us the national results and the results specifically from MHA+ members, some of which can be seen below:

Percentage of responses including, or combinations of:

- **Use Warm Mix Asphalts: 79% (MHA: 90%)**
- **Select surfacing materials with longer life: 72% (MHA: 95%)**
- **More efficient working to reduce emissions: 69% (MHA: 80%)**
- **Specify other recycled material content: 48% (MHA: 55%)**



On balance, it can be seen that MHA+ members are perhaps a further advanced than the national picture when being more confident and bolder in using lower carbon materials and processes.

In summary the results show that:

- There has been a significant move towards the use of Warm Mix Asphalts and Recycled Materials, although there is still room for improvement.
- Contract specifications perhaps could be broadened to allow for use of low carbon materials.
- The mutual use of a common type of Carbon Calculator along with requesting materials EPDs will benefit all.
- There should be more emphasis on Whole Life Costing and Durability.
- There is a continuing need for more high-performance product Case Studies to demonstrate durability/longevity. These will become more widely available over time and can be assisted by engagement with our industry supply chain.

As we move into that time of year again when we get asked to fill out the ALARM survey and consider our Capital Programmes for the next financial year it would be a good time to reflect how far we've come but also perhaps about how much further we can go towards lower carbon highway maintenance.



Out and about with Lucy, MHA+ framework manager

Procurement Powerhouse

I recently attended the **Local Government Procurement Expo** in London and delved deep into the intricacies of the new **Procurement Act 2023**, attending insightful talks and workshops. This valuable knowledge will equip MHA+ members to navigate the evolving procurement landscape and support our colleagues when the Act comes into force in February.



MSF Framework Community Board wrap up

Our final **MSF Framework Community Board** meeting of 2024 was a festive affair, complete with Christmas jumpers and friendly competition. Congratulations to Sam Edwards for winning the quiz! We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts in the new year.



A Night at the House of Lords

I was honoured to be invited to the **Institute of Collaborative Working** award ceremony at the House of Lords. This event allowed us to connect with key sector members and explore future collaborations. We're committed to fostering strong partnerships and driving innovation in the sector.

MHA+ Roadshows: Coming to a Local Authority Near You

Get ready to connect with MHA+ in person! We're planning a series of roadshows to visit Local Authorities across the country. Want to learn more about how MHA+ can support your organisation? Reach out to us to schedule a visit.

Share your thoughts and ideas with the MHA+ Framework Manager, [Lucy Cox](#).

For enquiries about this bulletin or to suggest any future articles, please contact us. If you have any colleagues who may not have received this email, please share it with them, so that they can contact us directly to confirm they wish to receive our bulletin. Alternatively, if you wish to unsubscribe from this bulletin, email [Midlands Highway Alliance Plus](#).