



Annual Report  
2017/18

# Introduction

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I took over the mantle of Chair of the Midlands Highway Alliance (MHA) Executive Board at the September Board meeting, following the retirement of Phil Crossland. Phil was Chair for four years and his contribution to the alliance was significant. I wish him well in his new life in Cornwall. His last MHA function was the highly successful annual event, with the theme of Celebrations and Aspirations, and that is a pretty apt description for the year as a whole.

Celebrations, because the alliance celebrated its tenth birthday in November. When the Alliance first started with nine members in 2007, who could have foreseen how it would develop into the organisation it is today with 21 member authorities, with estimated savings of £6-7 million each year? It was also the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Midlands Service Improvement Group, which I also chair.

Aspirations, because there was an ambitious programme of major activities, it was a very busy year for the MHA. In March 2017 Executive Board approved the start of work

on the next generation of medium schemes frameworks and this procurement continued throughout the year, involving staff from eight member authorities in an excellent example of working collaboratively. The impact of the collapse of Carillion on the procurement timetable shows that there is a need for the industry to improve, as highlighted in the Farmer report.

The New Engineering Contract 4 was launched in July 2017, at a NEC Users' Group meeting attended by over 400 people. Peter gave a presentation on how MHA were using the NEC extensively. The launch of the updated contract has meant the Skills Community have had to look at the training provided. Working closely with NEC, they put together training that got everyone up to speed.

**Together we stand, divided we fall  
Come on now people, let's get on the  
ball and work together  
Come on, come on let's work together,  
now now people  
Because together we will stand, every  
boy every girl and a man**

Canned Heat 1970

The annual event held in September in Nottingham had some excellent speakers, covering topics such as combined authorities, successful frameworks, skills, term maintenance and professional services. The result was a very successful event attended by 140 people and a fitting way to celebrate the 10th birthday.

Executive Board also gave their backing to the development of better links between MHA and the Midlands Service Improvement Group (MSIG) and it is pleasing to note that the two organisations have worked together to promote joint working on issues such as self-assessment, and risk based approach to infrastructure maintenance

The MHA Collaborative Charter has really started to make its mark, with it being introduced into Staffordshire and Derbyshire. Survey software is being developed that will allow the development of changing cultures to be monitored.

In the following pages you will find details of the successful work of the alliance and its partners.

Mike Ashworth

“I’m delighted to introduce this annual report which celebrates the continuing success of the MHA”

Mike Ashworth,  
Chair of the Executive Board



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# Sharing information

## SharePoint

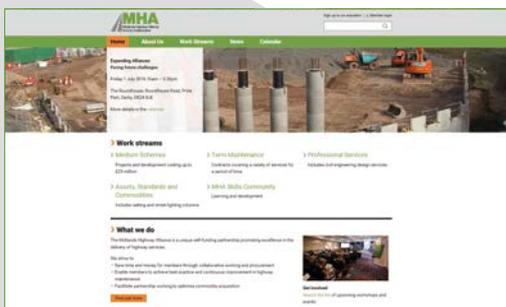
With the access issues on our SharePoint collaborative platform resolved, we have been consulting with MHA members on their long term requirements for the system to continue building capacity and support collaborative working.

Work continues to ensure all key working documents and reports are available on SharePoint and virtual training sessions / demonstrations were offered to all MHA members by our partners AECOM/Waterman.

## During 2018/19 we will:

- Consult with MHA members on their future requirements for the system in light of the launch of MSF3

- Explore the options available to the MHA regarding the future hosting of the MHA SharePoint site to ensure uninterrupted access for members and a seamless transition if a new host is required.



## Learning Management System (LMS)

The LMS continues to play a key role in delivering the MHA's vision of integrated learning, training and skills development opportunities for members and their supply chain. With over 480 registered learners now accessing e-learning, face to face and offline learning via our secure, cloud-based system supported by Virtual College the

LMS goes from strength to strength.

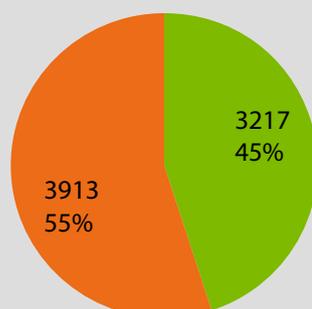
It also effectively supports the MHA's scrutiny role in the development of learning and training opportunities by providing comprehensive data on how participants' knowledge, skills and confidence (KSC) improve during their learning journey (see pages 14-15 for further details).

## MHA website

During 2017/18 there were over 7,200 sessions on the website (a session is when a user is actively engaged with the website) this represents a 10% increase on last year. First time visitors accounted for 55% of these sessions.

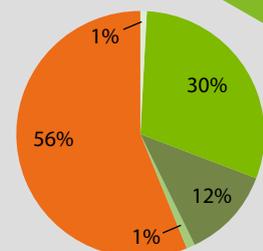
## Breakdown of sessions on MHA website 2017/18

- Returning visitor
- New visitor



## How visitors arrive on the MHA website

- Direct (i.e. have typed the web address after seeing elsewhere)
- Referral (i.e. have come via another site)
- Social (i.e. Twitter)
- Organic search (i.e. via google)
- Email



Organic searches (i.e. via google) for the MHA website remain the most popular way for visitors to find the site, as the detailed breakdown shows.

# MHA member authorities



The MHA now has 21 member authorities.



# Finance

In March each year the MHA Executive Board consider the annual business plan, which sets out the key outcomes required from each work stream. The plan details what funding is available to support that work and where it will come from.

## INCOME

Medium Schemes Framework:

**£115,254**



Sponsorship for annual event:

**£3,080**



Governance, Development and Advice:

**£144,500**

“The income from the two frameworks indicates how successful they are at delivering projects.”

Peter Barclay, MHA Manager

Professional Services:

**£116,938**



FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18  
INCOME TOTAL:

**£379,772**

Expenditure remains at a similar level to last year, with the main focus being the work of the Term Maintenance Group.

## EXPENDITURE

“Expenditure on developing MSF3 will give significant returns.”  
Peter Barclay, MHA Manager

Professional Services  
**£44,843**

Skills Community  
**£44,022**

Staffing  
**£195,835**

Medium Schemes  
**£57,816**

Financial year 2017/18 total:  
**£477,066**

Assets,  
Standards &  
Commodities  
**£25,983**

Leicestershire  
Financial  
Support  
**£3,000**

Term Maintenance  
**£83,785**

Communications  
**£20,901**

Governance  
**£881**

# Medium Schemes

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## Procurement of MSF3

At the beginning of 2017/18 the MHA Executive Board approved the business case for the procurement of Medium Schemes Framework 3 (MSF3).

Over 40 colleagues from ten different authorities have been involved in developing contract documentation and model projects. Once again, the procurement lead has been Leicestershire County Council (Ann Carruthers) and a steering group (chaired by Mark Kemp) has led a number of working groups. MSF3 will be one of the first frameworks to use the newly published NEC4, whilst retaining many of the features successfully developed during the previous two frameworks.

Following a prior information notice published in the summer, the process attracted significant industry interest, with a large number of contractors attending our annual event in September to find out more about the existing framework and our proposals for its replacement.

A notice in the Official Journal European Union was published in October with a potential total value of £½ billion. The framework will run from 2018 – 2022, the scope of the works will include all types of highway, civil and municipal engineering, there will be no restrictions on the size of individual package orders. Four contractors will be appointed to a single lot.

Contractors were required to submit information by November to be selected for the tender list. Following an initial assessment the MSF3 tender documents were sent to eight contractors in February and are to be returned in May 2018 with the award expected in July.

**“MSF3 will offer a modern, collaborative framework with a proven track record.”**

John Hooper, Midlands Highway Framework Manager

**MSF2 financial reporting and procurement savings**

The closing date for new contracts to be awarded using MSF2 is 3 June 2018. However, the total value and success of projects already awarded through the framework is set to exceed the benchmark established by the MHA's first framework.

By the end of March 2018, 18 of the 21 MHA member authorities have used either MSF1 or MSF2. More authorities awarded more work through MSF2 than through its predecessor. The total value of work awarded through MSF2 is now £165,000,000. Newcomers to the framework during MSF2 include:

- Lincolnshire
- Buckinghamshire
- Derbyshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Oxfordshire

MSF2 has been the chosen procurement route for 34 infrastructure projects delivered across the Midlands in the last four years.

Available funding from NPIF, HIF and SIF has secured projects to drive both economic growth and housing development. The MSF2 projects have included junction improvements, and new roads to ease congestion, improve air quality and accommodate growth in local communities.

Other projects to deliver more sustainable travel and maintain the existing highway infrastructure have also been delivered using MSF2.

These projects have seen earlier contractor engagement during the design process and increased collaborative working between the different delivery partners; leading to record savings during MSF2 being delivered. These are now more than double the savings made in our first framework.

**Number of Projects**



**SAVINGS**

PROCUREMENT

**£985,324**

**ECI**   
**+£22m**

 **GAIN SHARE**  
**£3.5m**

**The total value of work awarded through MSF2 is now £165,000,000.**

John Hooper, Midlands Highway Framework Manager

# Term Maintenance

The Term Community Board (TCB) continues to save time and money for members through collaborative working and procurement and enables members to achieve best practice and continuous improvement in highway maintenance

With a regional annual spend on Term Maintenance by MHA members exceeding £300 million we are proud that the savings made by our members through common improvements, support in instigating best practice in current contracts and through procurements now exceeds £7 million.

**SAVINGS**  
FROM MEMBERS  
EXCEEDS  
**£7m**



## Defining Best Practice and Benchmarking

The overarching goal for the TCB is transparent and open communication between all MHA members and their providers to ensure informed delivery from sharing experience and lessons learnt.

*“We all carry out the same operations, let’s all learn from others improvements and not make the same mistakes.”*

*“Building on our success so far our goal is to increase savings for our members to £10m by 2020.”*

Stewart Corbett, Chair of the  
Term Community Board

**“The MHA Collaborative Charter has enabled us to work more closely with partners in our key supply chain, and will help us to achieve our Council Plan priority to work more efficiently and effectively.”**

Geoff Pickford, Derbyshire County Council





# Assets Standards and Commodities

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It's been a quiet year for the work stream with the continued discussions over the future of the Highway Design Guide affecting the group's work on the MHA standard specification, which has now been halted, until the need is better defined.

AECOM Waterman facilitated a joint workshop with MSIG on the Risk based Approach to Maintaining Infrastructure (RBAM). This was very well attended and provided very useful data on where each member authority is placed on this issue. Using this data a gap analysis was put together, and a working group convened who will use this information to plan how we move forward during the coming year.

From the 36 recommendations UKRLG published in its code of practice the 'Well managed highway infrastructure' the MHA RBAM data analysis immediately identified six recommendations that will be developed into future workshops and discussions.

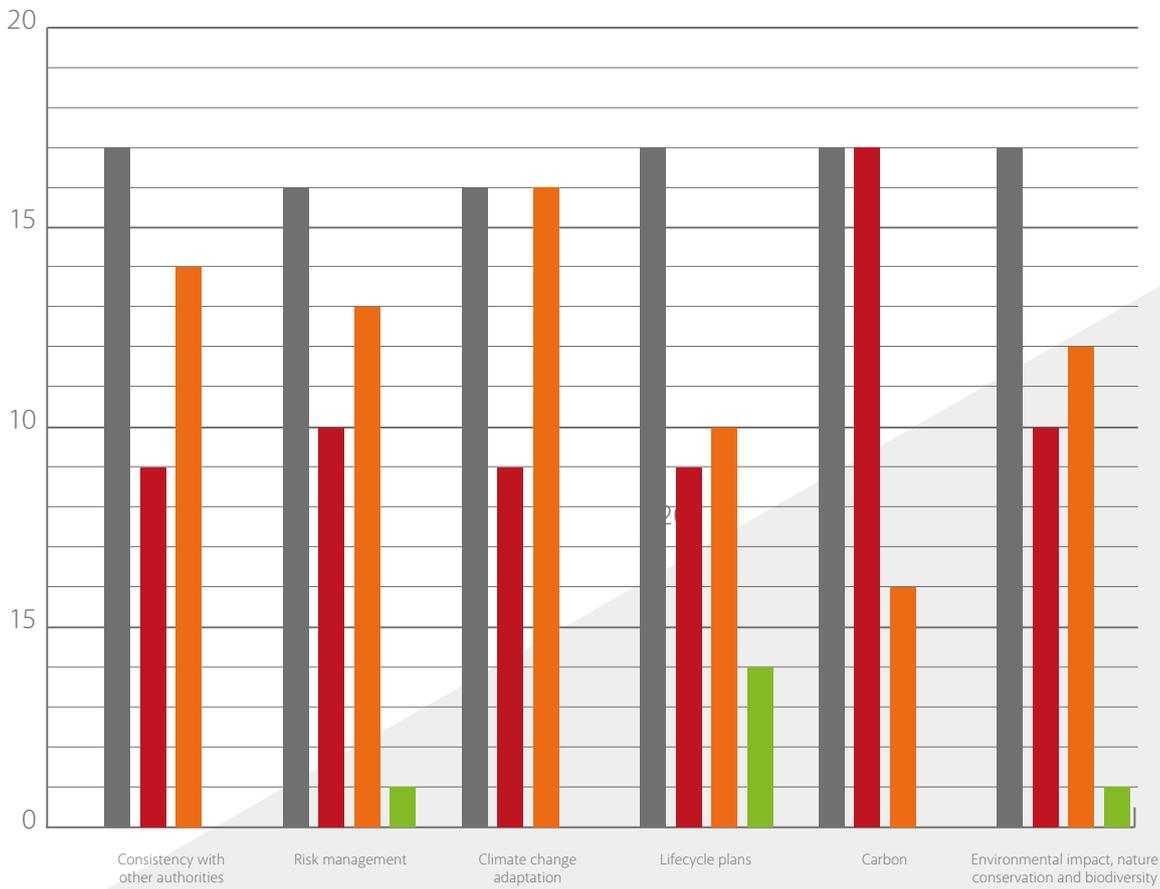
They are:

- Consistency with other authorities
- Risk Management
- Climate change adaptation
- Lifecycle Plans
- Carbon
- Environmental impact, nature conservation and biodiversity

The Self-assessment workshops facilitated by Atkins were also well attended.

Another area where there is wide ranging interest is to look at the process of defining commuted sums, and a project will be set up to look at this.





	The authority has a basic understanding of key areas and is in the process of taking it forward.
	The authority can demonstrate that outputs have been produced that support the implementation of recommendations in key areas that will lead towards improvement
	The authority can demonstrate that recommendations have been achieved in key areas as part of a continuous improvement process



**“The workshops helped me see the relevance and necessity of the standards. They were both engaging and relevant for my current role.”**

# Skills Community

The Midlands Highway Alliance (MHA) is continuing to make excellent progress towards a programme offering integrated working and creating opportunities to build capacity and capability in the highways and transportation sectors.

The Skills Community provides learning, training and development opportunities that underpin all of the MHA workstreams and uses the MHA website [www.mhaweb.org.uk](http://www.mhaweb.org.uk) to enable easy access to the learning gateway.

Learning and development priorities are identified as part of the annual planning and review process by all workstreams. The Executive Board, along with workstream leads, provide oversight so that skills and development objectives are achieved.

The early work undertaken to establish a Skills Academy, based on city employment and skills planning has been augmented by a range of other activities to enable the realisation of the MHA's ambition to develop a broader workforce development remit – building both capacity and capability.

Priority is given to supplementing the existing skills and knowledge of MHA members, their supply chain and framework contractors. In 2017/18 the skills community has evolved to work to support delivery of MHA programmes, shared priorities with Midlands Service Improvement Group (MSIG) projects and schemes, via the MHA learning management system that will:

- offer construction/ highways learning events
- deliver content that will address skills gaps
- deliver content that will support delivery of key guidance/imperatives
- enable access to graduate and trainee scheme opportunities

all in conjunction with partners such as Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Transport Planning Society(TPS).

Skills and development resource planning activities include:

- comprehensive evaluation for all learning to evidence either an increase in or acquisition of skills, knowledge and confidence (see graph)
- analysis of the current and future workforce skills that are needed
- the expansion of the learning, training and development opportunities
- building our workforce – to support entry to a construction career and pertinent training opportunities
- providing a competencies framework (MHAF) that is linked to the MHA portfolio, priorities and professional guidance
- procuring a MHA Learning Management System (LMS) <http://mhskills.virtual-college.co.uk> that provides access to online learning; workshops; face to face events -supporting continuous professional development – there are now over 480 registered learners

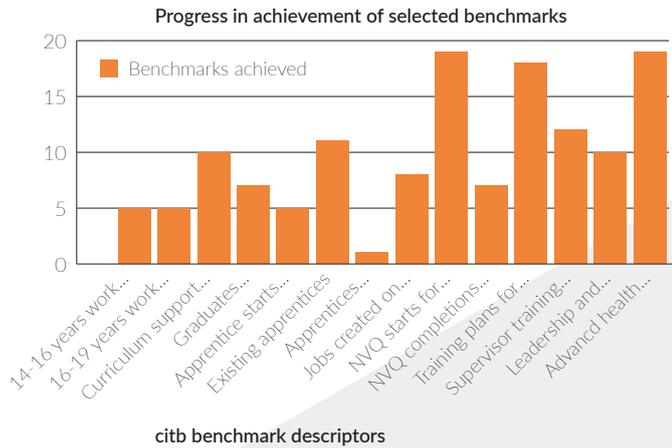


**Other skills and development planning**

A shared aspiration of the Alliance is that every effort is taken to organise, maximise and develop resources. At an early stage in the Alliance’s development, a high priority was placed in National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAfC) client based Employment and Skills Plans (ESP). This approach secured accreditation as a citb skills academy and embedded best practice principles across all Medium Scheme Framework (MSF) projects

MSF2 schemes incorporate Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) and performance management processes initiate discussion and subsequent identification of relevant benchmark targets and develop an ESP. These are reported on a bi-monthly basis.

MONITORING IN 2017 SHOWS  
**137 ESP TARGETS ACHIEVED**

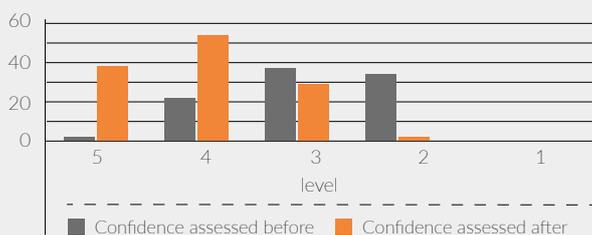


**MHA learning, training and development**

The MHA continues to undertake its scrutiny role in relation to learning, training and development opportunities they commission. Data collection has been expanded in 2017/18 (as part of an MHA performance management programme) - to determine the extent to which the MHA skills community is contributing to improving the knowledge, skills and confidence (KSC) of participants. The graphs show that there is a perception of an increase in the levels of KSC for participants in our learning events in 2017/18.

During 2017/18 our learning and development programme has been extended - in particular our ‘virtual learning programmes’ available direct from the MHA LMS. Some virtual learning replicated face to face content – both negating the need to travel to a venue and enabling learners to access content at their own pace. Other virtual learning content is mandatory - ensuring learners are assessed as ‘competent’ prior to accessing higher level training - so that participants’ fully benefit from the higher level learning content.

In addition, we have provided workshops, learning and development events to over 210 members and their supply chain partners to promote upskilling, re-skilling and conversion to maintain an agile workforce, with transferable skills.



# Professional services partnership

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The prime purpose of the group is to maintain a well performing professional services framework with strong governance.

Awarded to AECOM Waterman in 2015, the PSP2 framework is now into its third year and has increased its turnover to £8 million a year. Quality scores continue to be excellent, averaging 8.8 for client/consultant and 8.7 for consultant /client; and the estimated savings to date are in the region of 15%.

Strong governance comes in the form of a Strategic Board which sets the agenda by developing a business plan for the partnership, and monitors progress against that. The Operational Board provides a forum where all the client authorities can meet with AECOM Waterman to discuss performance against the business plan and across the entire workload of the partnership.

With delivery managers visiting every authority, AECOM Waterman is ideally placed to identify collaborative opportunities across the Alliance. One of the benefits of having a single supplier framework is the ability to encourage innovation by sharing expertise and developing collaborative projects such as BIM ( which stands for Building Information Management but is perhaps better described as Better Information Management) , and the carbon footprint project. Both these projects were developed this year and reports are available on the MHA website.

Staffordshire volunteered to be the pilot authority for the BIM project, and have had a BIM audit which has identified where they are strong and areas that need thinking about. The aim of the project is to provide a route map for other authorities to gain Level 2 compliance.

Another major piece of work was the carbon footprint project which has produced guidance on Developing a Carbon Management and Reduction Business Case. A protocol for the supply chain has also been included.





Having a single provider also allowed work to be started on supporting client capability by developing integrated delivery teams with the Medium Schemes Framework contractors. As part of this work, relationship management plans to BS11000 are being put together with three member authorities working with AECOM Waterman.

This also manifested itself in the supporting of client staff in attaining professional qualifications, with 15 members of Leicestershire's staff gaining Eng. Tech qualifications.

For the first time all 21 authorities used the framework, which is excellent news. A good

pipeline of future work exists and the total value of work that has gone through exceeds the OJEU limit. Because of this, work has started on the successor to PSP2, which will undoubtedly be called PSP3. Because of the strong market place, with several other large procurement exercises being worked on at the same time, a soft marketing exercise has begun to make sure that the contractual package offered by PSP3 appeals to the market.

# Case study: Collaboration

## Background

The Strategic Employment Site (SES) is located near J21, M1. This development brings new jobs to the area and incorporates a new village and amenities. With the creation of the new junction for access from Leicester Lane, the assessment concluded that the B4114 / Leicester Lane junction also needed improving to allow for greater capacity.

Local consultations highlighted concerns with works creating a potential disruption to the local conservation village and retail park.

It was also identified that key public services would also be affected by the works including:

- Leicestershire police headquarters (PHQ) site at the B4114 junction
- Enderby park and ride
- Fosse Park (retail park)
- Local bus service to Enderby
- Farmer's premises, whose access was immediately adjacent to the site
- Local commuters

The works started in September 2016 and completed in May 2017, incorporating the Christmas embargo.

## Objectives

To carry out these works effectively, by ensuring:

- all team members had the right skills and experience to deliver the scheme
- public services continued to run effectively
- complete the works on time and clear the network of disruption

*Our overall goal, of delivering an effective scheme within the constraints of this particular site, placed as much emphasis on consultation and team working as design innovation and solving engineering challenges.*

Project:

**The Strategic Employment Site (SES),  
Lubbesthorpe, Leicestershire**

Client:

**Leicestershire County Council (LCC)**

Design consultant: **Leicestershire County  
Council, AECOM Waterman (PSP2)**

Contractor: **Eurovia**

Contract value: **£5 million**

Length of project: **9 months**

Completion date: **May 2017**



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## ECI

The Principal Contractor, Eurovia, was selected from the Medium Schemes Framework (MSF2) on a call-off, which allowed an advanced ECI of 9 months. This provided cost savings from initial draft designs of £391,110 (12.7% of target).

Due to the importance of maintaining traffic flows, the Traffic Management contractor was

commissioned 8 months prior to site works. They were included in ECI meetings to provide input and prepare for all phases – updates of proposals were communicated to all public services affected and they were invited to give their input.



## Community Engagement

Statutory providers were notified early and updated continually throughout the design. Site walk-throughs were carried out to discuss programme and sharing work elements, to enable efficient delivery within the programme.

After 9 months of continued communication, and valuable liaisons from the public liaison officer, starting on site came with no issues from the locals, affected public services or the police force... all were prepared.

A good relationship was developed with the local farmer by keeping them informed of water switch off periods, alongside help with additional water supplies for their cattle to minimise any disruption.

From the creation of jobs and safe routes to work to the replanting of trees and the protection of bronze-age fields, the project has demonstrated how collaborative working can contribute towards long-term sustainability.

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### Key achievements

The B4114 is the busiest road in Leicestershire and part of LCC's resilience network. It was recognised that standard temporary signals wouldn't suffice at this location, so a hardwired system was identified. This allowed for the junction to operate efficiently, incorporating the 'hurry-call' for the Police HQ and enabled the traffic information to be sent to the area traffic control office.

Exceptional collaboration between all parties was essential for the complex switch-over to these temporary signals. Due to unfamiliarity of the technical elements, it was evident that great trust was put in each party to deliver their specialism. Traffic was assessed to establish the correct time of day on the lead up to the switch over, which was carried out without any issues and greatly appreciated by all parties concerned.

A water main identified on a ground penetrating radar survey was not on the provider's plans. This created a delay to a

water mains diversion and became a risk to the programme. The client, contractor and subcontractor carried out meetings with the utility provider, and their operatives, to facilitate their diversions and assist with sharing the work within the programme.

A flooding issue was identified on Leicester Lane. Surface water discharge from the M1 and fields was too great for the existing infrastructure and periodically flooded the highway. This caused road closures and huge amounts of traffic being diverted. Although outside the scope of the project, it was an opportunity to find an effective way to alleviate some, or all, of this flood water. Local stakeholders were eager to see if this re-occurring flooding could be eradicated.

*“Relationships were built through months of team working - information, opinions, ideas and questions were communicated at all levels and no-one was afraid to voice their opinions, which gave a sense of the scheme working almost organically.”*

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### **Innovation**

Throughout the project there was a sense of excitement when something had to be reviewed and a solution created. Ideas to keep construction moving were often ideas that couldn't come from a book, this encouraged trust in people's thoughts and suggestions and was extremely effective and successful.

To tackle the flooding issue the onsite drainage was designed to slow down the surface water run-off heading down-stream using the Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) principles of source control and infiltration. A cascaded attenuation system was designed, which allowed for additional surface water storage within the chambers.

A crate attenuation system was proposed for retaining the water and utilised existing drainage and ditches. This SuDS system isn't a usual highway adoptable system in Leicestershire, but liaison with the drainage maintenance team enabled a system to be designed to meet with their approval.

The supplier created a system to be effective in its surroundings and allow safe access for monitoring and maintenance. This will enable LCC to determine if this could be an adoptable highway drainage solution in the future. Meetings between the contractor, designer and manufacturer continued during construction to monitor the installation process. This allowed changes to the next elements to be manufactured; such as suggestions made by the contractor for easier installation. The manufacturer has updated the standard product warranty in line with LCC's requirements.

The system has been shown to deal with surface water runoff from all additional hard paved areas, prevent the flooding issues identified and reduce flow rates in the existing drainage system 20-40%, dependant on the storm event.

## **Lessons Learned**

This scheme has benefited from the long-term relationships developed by all team members. The planning and communication, amongst all involved and affected, has shown how people benefit from being involved and take pride in how they deliver the scheme. We were all fully aware of what to expect and what the outcome should be. Effective team working allowed us to manage all constraints and risks and a communal feel throughout design and construction was felt by all.

The use of the on-line system, Conject, to upload drawings, record instructions, raise early warnings, technical queries, and payment documents meant that everything was dealt with efficiently.



# MHA Future

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Looking ahead, the only certainty is the uncertainty. With the development of the West Midlands Combined Authority, England's Economic Heartland and Midlands Connect it is clear that the way schemes are identified and developed, and funded will change dramatically over the next few years. It is vital that we make sure that they are all looking to the MHA as their main delivery vehicle, and to do that we have to demonstrate that we can deliver, both in projects and efficiencies.

Having had two very successful medium schemes construction frameworks, it is safe to say that we are well placed with the next generation framework MSF3 being developed. An example of excellent collaboration across the MHA member authorities, MSF3 will include new issues such as social value and BIM. Despite the success of the first two frameworks, lessons have been learnt and taken on board in the development of the new framework. It is intended to award the framework in July 2018. Our membership of the national Association of Construction frameworks means we are able to compare how our frameworks perform against other regional frameworks (albeit property based)

The Professional Services Partnership will come to an end in April 2019. Now used by all 21 member authorities it looks as if the OJEU limit of £30m will be exceeded shortly, so work on its replacement has begun. Soft market testing has started, with industry being asked to comment on how the contract should be configured to give the best outcome. Should there be more than one supplier, with multiple lots split either geographically or by discipline? Encouragingly 15 responses were received and Executive Board has asked for further discussions with the market, before deciding on an option in June 2018.

Other priorities identified for the coming year are the Risk Based Approach to Maintaining Infrastructure, the DfT self-assessment, and the skills shortage. The first two are very much a joint issue with MSIG and it is clear that the two groups will move closer together over the next year. A working group is looking at how the two organisations would combine without losing any of the characteristics that make each a success. There are many difficulties to address but the rate of progress is very encouraging.

The skills shortage is still high on the agenda, with many authorities looking at their recruitment and retention strategies. The MHA Learning Management System is now well embedded in the MHA way, and various initiatives are being discussed on how we can support staff across the MHA to achieve professional qualifications.

It's clear we are well placed to support the new funding regimes, and we must make sure we stay that way.

‘I can see  
for miles  
and miles’

The Who



# Contacts

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Or visit our website at: [www.mhaweb.org.uk](http://www.mhaweb.org.uk)

