



February 2024 Newsletter

New in 2024

2024 is already delivering a fresh start with new learning opportunities for a few members of the MHA+ team.

Over the next month or so, we will be saying farewell to Alice Russell and John Hooper. Both have had a significant impact on the development and success of MHA+ over the last nine years or so. John has done a great job in managing the Medium Schemes Framework. Alice has brilliantly co-ordinated the Service Improvement Groups and both have been involved in supporting the Alliance overall.

We will certainly miss them, but they have both been actively helping to put in place plans to ensure continuity of service in both areas.

Welcome to Lucy Cox and Tom Baker - our new Framework Managers. They are settling into the team and over the next few weeks they will be developing their understanding of both frameworks. I am sure you will bear with them as they become more familiar with their new roles.



Lucy Cox



Tom Baker

Also welcome to Tina Langton - our new PSP4 Support Officer. An interim arrangement for the Service Improvement Groups and SIG Chairs is being put in place whilst we recruit the new SIG Co-ordinator role which we intend to advertise shortly. Julia May and Tina Langton will be supporting this.

With our own emphasis on training for the start of this year, we have focused this newsletter on training opportunities that may be of interest to our members.

[Karen Notman, MHA+ Manager](#)

The Procurement Act 2023

The new Procurement Act 2023 is expected to come into force this autumn. Guidance can be found from the [Government website](#). The Procurement Act 2023 will consolidate over 350 different procurement regulations into a single regime that applies to most central government departments, the wider public sector, and contracts awarded by utilities companies.

The Act doesn't change the fundamental requirements for procurement or the principles and objectives of delivering value for money, maximising public benefit, transparency and acting with integrity that must underlie the awarding of a public contract. It does, however, introduce some additional flexibility which will be helpful in letting new contracts and in renewing our frameworks in the future.

We will of course review any guidance issued on good management practices and assessment of supplier performance to assist in meeting our aspirations for continuous improvement.

The Cabinet Office has developed a short guide outlining the comprehensive, centrally funded learning and development package for contracting authorities. The [update](#) on the official learning and development offer for contracting authorities will help you decide which of the learning and development options are most suitable.

New ADEPT/COLAS employee retention guide

A new guide has been published to offer insights and help to encourage staff retention in local authorities across the country.

Employee Retention

A [great practice guide](#) has been developed in partnership with ADEPT/Colas. The guide includes examples from MHA+ member authorities that featured as part of the 2023 MHA+ annual event. The MHA+ Skills and Development Lead undertook an analysis of workforce data and retention was highlighted as a key issue, particularly at senior engineer and team manager levels.

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ISP Refresh

We have now moved to a new look ISP. Registered ISP users should have received a notification asking you to reset your password, so please update this to continue easy access.

The ISP will continue to offer our registered users access to more secure information that is pertinent to their areas of interest such as:

- Membership of key MHA+ Boards
- Participation on MHA+ working groups that have a specialist subject matter.

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Please take the opportunity to look at your profile and update it if needed. You can click on your content preferences and follow certain 'tags' to receive updates on any new content posted:

Professional Services Partnership 4

Where can I find information about the MHA+ Professional Services Partnership PSP 4 framework?

Most of the information you need is available (for download) on the MHA+ website, including:

- [PSP 4 Value and Skills](#)
- [Overview of the PSP 4 framework offer](#)
- [PSP 4 Commissioning manual - Framework information](#)
- [PSP 4 Commissioning manual - supporting documents](#)
- [PSP 4 Commissioning manual - processes and activity notes](#)
- [PSP 4 Framework supplier contact card](#)

Information that needs to be either more secure or has a specific audience is available via the MHA+ Information Sharing Platform ISP:

- Lot 1 & 2 framework supplier 'band rate' information (by supplier)
- Lot 2 supplier choice form (to inform commissioning using Lot 2 selection procedure: option 3)
- Reports and documents supporting the PSP 4 Professional Services Framework and PSP 4 Framework Community Boards.

[Access](#) your MHA+ ISP account or [download how to register for an account](#).

Service Improvement Group (SIG) Update

There have been 8 Service Improvement Group meetings since the last update in October 2023. We continue to have excellent levels of attendance and participation from group members across the MHA Plus region. Agendas, minutes and presentation slides from all SIG meetings are available on the [MHA Plus SIG members website](#) along with benchmarking exercises and online discussion boards.

Highways Records & Services

The List of Streets (LoS) task group presented their initial findings from a country-wide survey about current practice in terms of maintaining and updating the

LoS. Group members agreed to undertake an update of a 2008 reference document on Highway Terms and make this resource available to all MHA Plus members

Third Party Claims

Group members discussed increases in claims for vehicle damage over the course of the year, particularly since recent wet and cold weather conditions. Discussions also took place around reviewing intervention levels in light of ongoing budgetary pressures and how to deal with and identify fraudulent claims.



Street Lighting

This meeting was held in-person at the TRT Lighting factory in Redditch, followed by a factory tour. Discussions took place on vandalism to lighting assets, energy costs, EV charging from lighting columns and the perennial issues with festive/seasonal attachments to columns.

Traffic Signals

Darren Capes from the Department for Transport (DfT) ran through the details of the £70m local authority funding for traffic signals recently announced. The funding is to replace obsolete signal equipment, reduce congestion by introducing smarter signals and put forward innovative solutions, such as the use of AI and machine learning.



Highways Asset Management

Group members shared their thoughts on how to meet the reporting requirements set out as part of the recent Network North Highway Maintenance uplift from DfT. Mark Evans provided a demonstration of how Leicestershire County Council are using Vaisala's Road AI software tool to manage assets across their highway network.

Term Maintenance

Presentations on Vaisala Road AI (Leicestershire County Council) and Lincolnshire's Operational Control Hub in collaboration with Balfour Beatty. Sharon Andrews from the National Highways & Transport Network attended to discuss how the group maximise the use of [NHT's CQC Efficiency Network](#) and Public Satisfaction data to drive service improvements and value for money.

Civil Parking Enforcement

Group members discussed the implications of the recently published the [DfT 'Plan for Drivers'](#). They provided updates on Moving Traffic Enforcement, parking charges, CEO recruitment, current financial pressures and whether they were planning to move to the National Parking Platform (NPP). A small sub-group will be set up to discuss the NPP and cost/service implications for local authorities.

Winter Services

Paul Wilkins from Devon County Council kindly provided a presentation on the cycleway winter treatment trials that had taken place in Exeter. A copy of the presentation slides is available on the [SIG members website](#).

Details of all upcoming Service Improvement Group meetings are available on the [MHA+ Calendar](#).

Carbon Steering Group (CSG)



The CSG continues to provide a focus for all things pertaining to Carbon Reduction & Net Zero for MHA+. A couple of items of interest are:

- **Carbon News Bulletin** – The first bulletin of 2024 is due out soon so watch this space for interesting items regional, national and beyond. The previous carbon news bulletins can be found on the [MHA+ website](#).
- **Journey to Net Zero presentation** – Paul Binks from Lancashire County Council & Vice Chair of the CSG provided a presentation over the journey to Net Zero for Lancs and referenced some interesting statistics from the national ALARM Highways Survey on where MHA+ Member Authorities are in relation to carbon. A key feature was the ‘Propensity to Change’ for local authorities and how this might be pursued in terms of progression in materials and efficiency etc.
- **The National Highways & Transport Network (NHT)** – Presented progress with their ‘Value of Carbon’ Tool in Highways for Local Highway Authorities in relation to MHA+ member LA’s who are also members of the NHT/CQC with a view for member LA’s to consider sharing their key successes and approaches where they scored well via the tool.
- **Live Labs 2** – Tracy Cowley from Transport for the West Midlands provided an update on progress with the Centre for Excellence & detailed that there will be an Expo event for Live Labs 2 on Low Carbon Adaptation hosted in Birmingham on 17 April 2024.

Social Value Working Group



The Social Value Working Group (SVWG) covers a wide range of issues in relation to Social Value.

- **Measuring Social Value** – A positive meeting was held with the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) team over progressing a way forward in adding to the effective measurement of social value in projects. A national working group is being set up to progress this with MHA+ with the SVWG having a direct input.
- **Employment & Skills** – Following on from the social value workshop at the MHA+ Annual Event the SVWG are looking at key elements in how MHA+ can help its members. This will be a main topic for the March 2024 meeting

Digital Working Group

The Digital Working Group (DWG) provides coverage on all things digital (including BIM activity), supporting members in their digital journey through its events and workshops in 2024, including:

- **The Big Digital Event** - A one day in person digital event in May 2024, which will cover digital in design, construction and maintenance, including 3D printing in construction & Highways Data systems/surfacing.
- **A series of short online workshops** - focussing on problem solving on key practical digital issues. The DWG is keen to use one of the workshops as an opportunity to liaise with a major project team to understand how best to utilise digital tech to further enable project development and delivery. If you have a project and would like to work with the DWG members and would welcome hosting/taking part in a workshop please contact either Ian or Kay on the emails below.

The MHA+ has a clear overview of the important industry cross cutting themes of carbon, social value and all things digital via its thematic groups.

If you want more information about the thematic groups and the information below, to contribute or learn more, please contact our MHA+ Support, Ian Bamforth (ian.bamforth@leics.gov.uk) or Kay Smith (Kay.A.Smith@Leics.gov.uk)

MHA+ Skills Community – MHA+ website

In addition to access to online courses and booking onto face-to-face learning events provided by the MHA+ Learning Management System (LMS), the [Building our workforce page](#) provides links to a range of useful sites to support.

Attracting talent

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) provides information on how you can access opportunities to become an [apprentice](#).

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) provides [information](#) on many ways to become involved, enhance your knowledge and become professionally qualified.

Choosing construction as a career option

An online portal: [goconstruct](#) provides information and access to career options in construction and the qualification routes that are available.

Find a local learning provider

An easy way to find a local courses that meet your needs has been developed by the [National Careers Service](#).

Asset Management efoundation accredited learning



What does the online Foundation award involve?

The Foundation Award is delivered using our learning platform and provides interactive learning modules and recommended reading. You can complete modules at your own pace. It prepares participants to take the Institute of Asset Management (IAM) Knowledge Test with certification if passed.

The learning content covers:

- basic asset management concepts, principles and terminology
- the breadth of asset management activities
- common characteristics of good asset management
- some commonly used techniques
- the types of benefits organisations can realise
- potential next steps for individuals who wish to continue with their asset management journey

Target participants

The content has been designed for anyone who requires a basic introduction to the concepts, language and benefits of asset management.

If you do not have a learner account, you can register using the [Learning Management System](#).

Latest MHA+ supplier content on YouTube

[Roads Bitesize Training Programme video: Road restraints – part one](#)
[Powerpoint Presentation: Road restraints – part one](#)

[Roads Bitesize Training Programme video: Road restraints – part two](#)
[PowerPoint Presentation: Road restraints – part two](#)

[Roads Bitesize Training Programme video: National Cycle Network Ireland](#)
[PowerPoint Presentation: National Cycle Network \(NCN\)](#)

[Roads Bitesize Training Programme video: Designing for pedestrians 2023](#)
[PowerPoint Presentation: Designing for pedestrians](#)

[Roads Bitesize Training Programme video: Plan Engage – Digital Reporting](#)
[PowerPoint Presentation: Plan Engage](#)

We have over 90 webinars from our subject matter experts available as part of the [MHA+ Learning Gateway](#). A fresh programme of seminars for 2024 is currently being delivered.

Amey Consulting recently presented their first lunch and learn session regarding people movement insights for transport operations. The session is called [Using Mobile network data to increase bus patronage in Plymouth](#). During the session there was a specific focus on their award-winning project in Plymouth where they helped the local bus operator (Go Ahead) better understand passenger needs. This enabled them to adjust their bus operations accordingly.

Save the date: 14 May 2024 Digital event in Birmingham/Hybrid

The MHA+ Digital Working Group invite members to a one-day event. The aim of the day is to make connections with people interested in the digitalisation of highway works across the MHA+ and to help MHA+ members and supply chain partners on their digitalisation journey.

There will be 4 talks delivered by MHA+ contractors, designers and authorities. They are called Value in Digitalisation of Design, Value in Digitalisation of Construction, Value in Digitalisation of Handover and Digitalisation of Highway Testing. There will also be talks from three innovative companies that are winning awards for their work in this space:

- Cloud Cycle - who have technology that eliminates the slump test and provides a golden thread for readymix concrete

- Changemaker3D – who have worked out how to make 3D concrete printing relevant to highways
- Highway Data Systems – who have technology that eliminates the need for technicians when surfacing

Bookings will be taken via the [MHA+ Learning Management System](#).

Farewell to Alice

February sees the departure of our Service Improvement Group Co-ordinator, Alice Russell to pastures new.

She joined us some 9 years ago with a background in Environmental Science, local highway authority traffic management and water and flood management.

She has used her considerable organisational skills, her natural curiosity and interest in all aspects of highway services to support the development of MSIG.

Her counsel, input and support ensured a seamless transition to MHA Plus and led to her wider involvement in MHA Plus.

Her background and disposition have ensured successful, continued collaboration to improve highway services, with knowledge spanning many technical subject areas.



Her versatility to work effectively across them all, supporting and developing the 16 service improvement groups, is evidenced through the SIG website.

Alice is returning to her main technical specialist area and all of us at MHA+ wish her every success in her new role as a Senior Consultant in water and flood water management with AECOM. We will miss her.

If you think you may be interested in the Service Improvement Co-ordinator role, then please feel free to contact the [MHA+ Team](#). The post will be advertised shortly.

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 the [Midlands Highway Alliance Plus](#).