



News Bulletin, Spring 2026

Welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of the MHA+ Resilience, Efficiency and Carbon Steering Group (RECSG) bulletin, chaired by Peter Wells from Via/Nottinghamshire County Council.

This bulletin is your regular update on resilience, efficiency and carbon reduction work across the highways and transport sector. With 39 Local Authority members, MHA+ is well placed to make a real difference in these areas - and this edition is packed with updates, learning opportunities and news from across the sector.

If you'd like to contribute to a future edition, or find out more about the RECSG, please contact [Ian Bamforth](#) or [Kay Smith](#).

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Steering Group Update

Here's what the RECSG has been working on over the last three months.

Carbon Leadership Programme (Future Highways Research Group/ADEPT/DfT)

Many Local Highway Authorities (LHAs) have now completed their carbon assessments, with a further 30 underway across all three types of local authority. A report on current good practice and key findings will be published shortly, followed by a Future Highways Research Group (FHRG) webinar for members.

Simon Wilson from FHRG also shared progress on their work with the University of Nottingham, which is modelling the use of biochar - produced from green waste in housing development. Early trials suggest it could deliver significant carbon savings while also generating a revenue stream.

ADEPT Live Labs 2 - Year Four.

The ADEPT Live Labs 2 programme has entered its fourth year, shifting focus from piloting and testing towards embedding new approaches as business as usual across local highways. Central to this phase is a [new monthly triage service](#) - thought to be the first of its kind in an innovation programme.

Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads (CEDR) [Knowledge Bank](#) has also launched, offering a shared resource for the sector.

[Previous RECSG bulletins](#) are available on the MHA+ website if you'd like to revisit earlier updates.

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Regional and National Organisation Updates

A round-up of useful news and developments from key organisations across the sector.

Future Highways Research Group (FHRG)

The FHRG spring meeting covered several significant topics.

The ongoing Value for Money Peer Review programme continues to give Local Highway Authority (LHA) members the opportunity to assess how effectively and efficiently they are managing and delivering their highways services.

Devon County Council presented fascinating research carried out with Exeter University, examining the impact of climate change on roads and structures. The study analysed assets across A, B and C roads and modelled how weather trends could affect them over the next 40 years. Rising air temperatures and increased flooding emerged as the most significant threats. Devon is now exploring options for more detailed scenario modelling as a next step.

Miles Smith, Head of Climate Change Adaptation at the Department for Transport (DfT), outlined the [National Adaptation Programme](#) and the [DfT's Climate Risk Assessment Guidance for Transport](#).



**Climate Risk Assessment
Guidance for the Transport Sector**

Key points included:

- Current data suggests 38% of roads are at risk of flooding, rising to 46% by 2050.
- The DfT's vision is a well-adapted transport system that is resilient to a changing climate.
- The strategy rests on three pillars: a systems thinking approach, mainstreaming adaptation, and building robust evidence.

- The case for action is built around three dividends: avoiding future losses through early investment, dynamic market benefits, and environmental and social gains.

For more information, contact [Ian Bamforth](#).



**INNOVATION
& LEARNING**
Festival 2026
Where Roads & Technology Meet

Local Council Roads Innovation Group (LCRIG)

The LCRIG Innovations and Learning Festival 2026 is fast approaching, with a packed two-day agenda covering topics including preventative maintenance, AI-linked asset management, in-situ recycling and whole-network resilience.

LCRIG also continues to offer a wide range of webinars and events throughout the year. [Visit the LCRIG website for the latest programme.](#)

Institute of Asphalt Technology - East Midlands Branch

The Institute of Asphalt Technology (IAT) East Midlands Branch is running a series of events in 2026, with sessions covering carbon reduction, recycling and PAS 2080. [Find out more on the IAT East Midlands Branch website.](#)

Local Government Association (LGA)

The [LGA Sustainability Hub](#) has been updated with a range of new resources, and you can sign up to receive their regular news bulletin directly.

Sustainability hub



Recent highlights include:

The Met Office has upgraded its Local Authority Climate Service (LACS), offering higher resolution data and richer local insights. Local Partnerships features LACS in its new [Climate Adaptation Toolkit](#) to support councils with climate risk and adaptation planning. Read more about the Met Office [enhanced Local Authority Climate Service](#).

The LGA has also published new [Renewable Energy Good Practice Guidance](#) to help councils reduce their carbon impact and long-term costs at depots and key buildings. It covers solar PV installations, policy changes, and practical advice. [Explore the LGA Climate Change Support Hub](#).

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Member Visit - Rettenmaier's Mansfield Production Facility

Via East Midlands colleagues recently visited Rettenmaier's UK production facility in Mansfield to learn about the role of cellulose fibres in road surfacing materials.

The visit focused on Rettenmaier's use of cellulose fibres in Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) production - a technique that delays binder oxidation and improves durability and service life. Representatives from Breedon, which operates a local asphalt plant in Mansfield, also attended and contributed to the discussion. Via is grateful to Matt Gelsthorpe and Sarah Neale from Breedon for their input.



A significant highlight was learning that Rettenmaier has recently published its Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) certification - a first for any fibre supplier in the UK. This is a notable step forward, giving customers improved data to support carbon accounting and reporting.

The visit concluded with a facility tour, offering a valuable opportunity to see how paper byproducts are recycled into functional additives that enhance asphalt performance - a compelling example of circular economy principles in practice.

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News and Developing Best Practice from Across the UK

A curated round-up of the latest innovations, case studies and policy developments relevant to the REC agenda.

Resilience and Adaptation

- [Cambridgeshire County Council has installed a new solar-powered flood warning system to improve road safety.](#) (Highways News)
- [A consultation has launched on expanded resilience and emergency standards for the highways sector.](#) (Highways Magazine)
- [Introduction of hydrogen production at the Port of Tilbury on the Thames in Essex:](#) (Highways News)

- [Wigan Council has introduced a real-time flood reporting tool, giving residents the ability to report flooding directly and strengthen community response.](#) (Safer Highways)



- [Ordnance Survey has introduced new biodiversity net gain \(BNG\) mapping, providing local authorities and developers with improved tools for environmental planning.](#) (The Construction Index)
- [The Institute of Asphalt Technology has published a commentary on building resilience into highways infrastructure.](#) (Highways Magazine)

- [National Highways is set to open a pioneering heathland green bridge over the A3 in Surrey, an example of integrating nature into highways infrastructure.](#) (Safer Highways)



Efficiency

- [Cambridgeshire County Council has deployed an AI-based inspection regime following successful trials, offering a more efficient and data-driven approach to highway condition monitoring.](#) (Highways Magazine)
- [Advances in 3D printing technology are opening up new possibilities for efficiency in construction and manufacturing.](#) (The Construction Index)

- [Transport for London has digitised its highways licence application forms in partnership with Fix My Street, streamlining the process for applicants.](#) (Highways News)
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Material and Maintenance

- [Somerset Council and Heidelberg Materials have delivered a circular economy surfacing scheme at Cheddar Gorge, demonstrating how recycled materials can be used effectively in high-profile road schemes.](#) (LCRIG)
- [A Welsh quarry has produced the UK's first hydrogen-fuelled asphalt, marking a significant step forward for low-carbon materials in road construction.](#) (The Construction Index)
- [An electric paver using recycled materials has been successfully deployed on a section of the A47, combining low-carbon equipment with sustainable surfacing.](#) (The Construction Index)
- [Lincolnshire County Council is set to adopt the JCB Pothole Pro machine following an extensive trial, with the authority confirming it represents good value for money.](#) (Highways News)



Carbon

- [National Highways has delivered a low-carbon project on the A26 and A259, using 100% recycled aggregate with cold bitumen technology to cut carbon on a live scheme.](#) (Safer Highways)
 - [The Welsh Government is progressing plans for a zero-carbon building, with GTC appointed to deliver carbon reduction across the Cosmeston development.](#) (The Construction Index)
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Electric and Hydrogen Vehicles, and Supporting Infrastructure

- [JCB has introduced a new renewable fuel option for its excavators, offering operators a lower-carbon alternative without replacing existing equipment.](#) (LCRIG)
- [Local authorities are calling on the Government for clearer guidance on EV charging accessibility.](#) (Highways News)

- [The Government has announced a £1 billion scheme covering zero-emissions trucks, van grants and depot charging infrastructure.](#) (Highways News)



Active Travel

- [The government has announced a £10 million funding boost for active travel, including cycle training and walk-to-school programmes.](#) (Highways News)
- [A new survey suggests that rising fuel prices are encouraging more people to choose active travel options.](#) (Highways News)
- [Northern Ireland has launched its 2026 Active Travel Challenge, aiming to boost public health and reduce transport costs through increased walking and cycling.](#) (Safer Highways)



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Carbon Learning and Related Content - MHA+ Learning Gateway

Free training and resources are available to MHA+ members.

MHA+ and CIHT Partnership in Carbon Literacy Training (CLT)

The Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) has 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 3 online courses:

- **Carbon Literacy - Accounting**
- **Introduction to Transport Decarbonisation**
- **Introduction to the FHRG Carbon Calculation & 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 then [create a LMS account](#). If you already have a MHA+ LMS username and password, click [login on your MHA+ LMS account](#).

Other learning and training content

A wide range of training content and lunch and learn webinars from MHA+ framework suppliers is also available through the [MHA+ Learning Gateway](#). Recent highlights on our YouTube channel include:



Aecom

- The winner of the MHA+ Best use of Technology to improve health, safety and well-being award 2025: [The use of a GIS-based landslide susceptibility model for](#)

[Derbyshire County Council](#)

- [Quantifiable Carbon Guidance](#) (QCG) for local transport interpreting [DfT guidance](#) and use of VECAT.

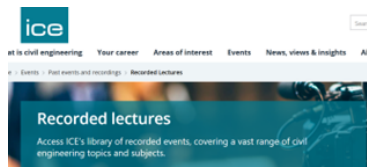
Amey Consulting

- [Research-led innovation in winter service operations](#)
- Delivering [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) webinar
- [Flood risk management and SuDS](#) webinar

Waterman Aspen

- Lunch and Learn on [Riparian Liability](#), presented by Ryan Thomas of Waterman Aspen and Ian Quayle of IQ Legal Training
- Highways England's [Water Risk Assessment Tool \(HEWRAT\)](#), a presentation by Josh Wilce
- [Delivering our net zero commitments](#), a presentation by Dave Allen.

Please check out the full range of our [suppliers learning content](#) on our website.



[ICE provide a series of lectures](#) covering a vast range of civil engineering topics and subjects.

Use the search bar to refine, but there are over 165 carbon related lectures.

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Service Improvement Groups (SIGs)

With 16 SIGs (see below) and over 500 members, there is massive potential to tap into our collective expertise and increase resilience, efficiency and reduce carbon across all areas of highway services.



If you want to find out more about what our SIG groups are doing contact our SIG co-ordinator [Kay Smith](#). New members are always welcome.

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



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