

APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar 2026

To: all UK authorities

1 Focus of the Seminar



On Thursday 19 March, we welcomed local councils and industry leaders from the transport, highways and street lighting sector to our 2026 [Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar](#). This year's event, held at St James' Park Football Stadium in Newcastle, focused on the challenges of delivering a high-quality service against a backdrop of local government reorganisation and decarbonisation.

Chaired by Cllr Simon Letts, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at Southampton City Council, the Seminar explored the current landscape of the service, with expert insights from local authorities, as well as the Road Surface Treatments Association, Universal Matter, NY Highways, KaarbonTech and the Institute of Highway Engineers.

1.1 Newcastle's Transport Transformation

Cllr Juna Sathian, Cabinet Member for Climate and Transport at Newcastle City Council, opened the Seminar with an exploration into Newcastle's transport transformation journey, from public consultation to project delivery.

Cllr Sathian shared the results of the Movement Strategy Public Consultation, including the public's desire for better public transport, safer roads and better access for people with a disability. Cllr Sathian also highlighted the transport projects taking place across the city, from the restoration of the Tyne Bridge and the introduction of the Clean Air Zone to School Neighbourhoods and the £50m Highway Investment.

1.2 Decarbonising Highways



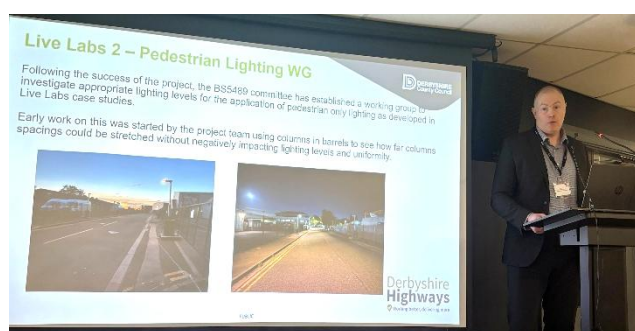


Mike Hansford, Chief Executive of the Road Surface Treatments Association (RSTA), examined the role of surface treatments in decarbonising highways, the lifecycle of asphalt road surfaces and the methods available for maintaining roads.

As well as exploring the findings of the Department of Transport’s 2026 Road Safety Strategy and RAG rating, including the potential for High Friction Surfacing to reduce road collisions, Mike also examined the financial impacts of the US-Iran conflict on surface treatment implementation.

1.3 Challenges and Innovation in Street Lighting

Rob Baines, Electrical Assets Commissioner at Derbyshire County Council, outlined the current challenges facing the street lighting sector, including funding, skills and experience, and local policy.



Rob highlighted the innovative work taking place across Derbyshire and shared insights into their implementation of the ADEPT Live Labs 2 decarbonisation project.

1.4 Adapting Winter Service Delivery

Carl Gillyon, Head of Highway Network Management, and Ben Towse, Senior Engineer at East Riding of Yorkshire Council, highlighted the importance of innovation and adapting winter service delivery in line with climate change.

The authority has won several industry awards for their highways and climate resilience service, and was recognised at the **APSE Performance Networks Awards** held in Blackpool in December last year for the **Most Improved Performer** in Roads, Highways and Winter Maintenance.



They explored innovative techniques such as pre-wetting and brine production which improved resilience and service delivery.

1.5 Innovative Collaboration with ADEPT Live Labs 2

Elaine Nicol, Road Maintenance Manager at North Lanarkshire Council, presented their work on the Live Labs 2 project, including pothole repair, surface treatment, road marking and resurfacing trials.



Elaine shared North Lanarkshire Council's Knowledge Bank project, produced in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads. The digital platform gives local authorities access to carbon data and acts as an evidence base for local authority innovation and excellence across the UK.

1.6 UK-First Innovation in Pavement Technology

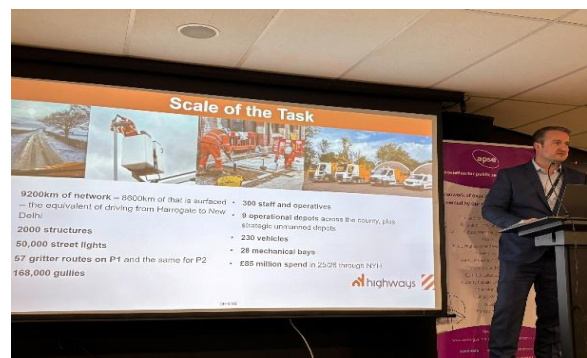
Andrew Curry, Universal Matter, shared their innovative approach to decarbonising highways and outlined the UK-first implementation of their pioneering product, Genable Pavement, in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Council.



Andrew discussed the various field trials carried out across the UK and USA, including at the National Centre for Asphalt Technology test track, and highlighted the potential of the product to increase pavement lifespan by up to 40%.

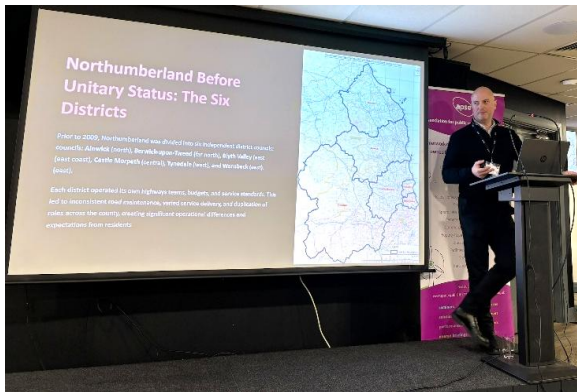
1.7 Delivering Through Teckal Partnerships

Martin Duffy, Chair, and Jamie Crumlish, Managing Director of NY Highways, explored **the journey towards their** Teckal partnership with North Yorkshire Council and how the structure enables them to deliver innovative road solutions to the region.



They discussed the scale of supporting road maintenance across North Yorkshire, covering 92,000km of network and 50,000 streetlights, as well as the success they have had in improving efficiency and supporting local economic development.

1.8 Reorganising Road Service Delivery



Kris Westerby, Northumberland County Council, explored the impact of local government reorganisation on Northumberland’s roads, maintenance and service delivery, including the operational benefits of transitioning from a two-tier to a unitary structure, back in 2009.

This was a pertinent presentation for all those authorities that are set to undergo this journey in the coming years, with many valuable lessons

learnt.

Kris highlighted the positive impact of unitarisation, from workforce integration and policy standardisation to asset consolidation and long-term infrastructure planning.

1.9 Examining the State of the Market

Bonni Jee, APSE Principal Advisor, examined the results of the latest Highways State of the Market report which explored budget challenges, recruitment and retention issues and energy saving techniques. Bonni outlined the sustainable techniques being implemented by councils across the UK, including low carbon construction materials, Integrated Highways Asset Management systems and AI for highways inspections.

The issue of flags on streetlights was also explored, with a comparison of how councils have handled the issue from last year to this year, issues around safety of workers in the face of resident complaints and abuse, and alternative approaches including those who had installed their own banners, such as Nottinghamshire County Council and St Helens Council.



1.10 Data-Driven Resilience



Graeme Forward, Managing Director at KaarbonTech and our event sponsors for the day, outlined the importance of resilient leadership and the need to take a collaborative approach to tackle the challenges of climate change.

Graeme highlighted the need for councils to transition from a reactive model to an intelligence-led model, harnessing their existing data to proactively manage drainage issues.

1.11 Lessons in Leadership with John Mundell, OBE

Delegates enjoyed a thought-provoking keynote address provided by APSE Associate, John Mundell, OBE, reflecting on his time as an operational and strategic lead in Highways, and having worked through Scottish Local Government including the approaches developed in response to compulsory competitive tendering and successfully transforming organisational culture, improving governance, financial management and driving efficiency, across three Scottish unitary Councils.

When asked during a 'fire side' chat session with APSE Chief Executive, Mo Baines, on the secrets of his successful delivery of change John highlighted the importance of honest working relationships, and his empathetic leadership style, alongside his commitment to mentoring.

1.12 Preserving, Preventing and Protecting

Richard Hayes, APSE Associate and Principal Consultant to Institute of Highway Engineers, led an engaging health and safety clinic, exploring local authority funding challenges, the risks of inadequate cleansing and the benefits of preservation techniques.

Richard also highlighted the importance of preventative maintenance such as slurry sealing, micro asphalt and carriageway sealing, as well as the importance of protective measures, such as improved drainage design, damage inspections from heavy rain and specialised waterproofing materials.

1.13 Navigating Flood Risk



Laura Morrison, Flood Risk Engineer at Wigan Council, highlighted the inevitability of floods and the increasingly common risks associated with climate change and extreme weather events.

Laura examined the disruptive impact of flooding on our roads, and the innovative steps Wigan Council had taken to combat this, including the introduction of their 'Hello Lamppost' flood reporting initiative.

APSE Comment

Through our training suite, advisory groups, research programmes and benchmarking service, membership of APSE can bring significant benefits to those who work in local government – from officers to directors to elected members to chief executives – by helping them comprehensively get to grips with the latest policy and technological developments.

All APSE members can sign up to APSE's Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Network, which is an online network providing at least four learning events across the year, with expert speakers from across local government. You can sign up to the network using [this link](#).

You may view the slides that were presented at the seminar here: [Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar](#)

Beatrice McKenzie
Communications Officer, APSE

Bonni Jee
Principal Advisor, APSE

Sign up for APSE membership to enjoy a whole range of benefits

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular network meetings, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The networks are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Networks are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE Network meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk.

Our national networks include:-

- FM and Building Cleaning
- Catering (School Meals)
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance
- Social Value, Procurement and Commercialisation Network
- Parks, Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Roads, Highways and Street Lighting
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Veterans and Military Champions Network
- Local Government Reorganisation Network
- Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing

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