

# APSE Scottish Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2026

## Report Back Briefing (Fleet)

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

**Notice:**

On 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026, APSE held its annual Scottish Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar in Aviemore. This briefing provides a short summary of the seminar’s fleet speakers and the topics covered at discussion forums. There are three separate briefings for the fleet, waste, and grounds sections. Links to all of the presentations can be found [here](#).

### 1. Presentations

**Managing the insurance risk for prescribed medication, drugs and legal highs**

Ruth Kydd, Insurance Manager, City of Edinburgh Council

	<h2>Managing fitness to drive</h2>
	<p>Policy in place relating to employee and driver behaviour – needs to be updated to include all types of drugs</p> <p>Very challenging to manage the risk of using or driving for the organisation</p> <p>Balance to be struck as illness and disability are protected characteristics</p> <p>Even with the best policy in the world, incidents may occur</p> <p>Need to support drivers to be open / honest about medication / drugs and share the potential outcomes as part of toolbox talks and be part of HR training for all staff</p> <p>Consider a testing programme: all staff or just drivers?</p> <p>Insurers expect full management of fitness of employees by organisations, particularly those driving</p>

Ruth Kydd of the City of Edinburgh Council spoke about managing the insurance risks associated with prescribed medication, illegal drugs and legal highs within fleet services.

Ruth explained that, from an insurance perspective, the issue of impaired driving has evolved significantly. While it was once regarded primarily as an alcohol-related problem, there is now increasing concern about impairment caused by a much wider range of substances, including prescribed medication, illegal drugs and so-called legal highs. Ruth noted that, although impaired driving prevention and enforcement were historically focused on alcohol, legislative changes to the Road Traffic Act 1988 introduced roadside drug testing in England and Wales in 2015 and in Scotland in 2019, bringing the issue of drug-impaired driving into sharper focus.

Ruth highlighted that the growing use, across wider society, of prescribed medicines, illegal drugs and legal highs presents a significant and increasing risk for employers and insurers, particularly in roles involving driving. She provided an overview of how different substances can affect driver performance and outlined the legal framework that applies to them. In particular, she noted that illegal drugs are generally subject to an almost zero-tolerance approach, whereas certain prescribed medications may be lawful if taken within the limits of an authorised prescription. This creates additional complexity for employers seeking to manage impairment risks and ensure that employees remain fit to work.

A key message from the presentation was the importance of having clear and robust HR policies covering alcohol, drugs and medication in the workplace. Ruth suggested that introducing a testing regime may be one of the most effective ways of addressing substance-related impairment among employees. She noted that there are now more testing providers operating across the UK, giving organisations a broader range of options when considering how to implement such policies. However, she also stressed that employers need to think carefully about the design of any testing regime, including the intrusiveness of different testing methods, how quickly results can be obtained, whether tests should be carried out privately or under supervision, and the circumstances in which testing will apply, such as mandatory, random or reasonable-cause testing.

Ruth concluded by underlining the importance of ensuring employee compliance with the Road Traffic Act 1988. She warned that insurers may refuse to cover claims arising from incidents involving impaired driving, which could leave drivers responsible for funding their own legal defence. Employers may also face the cost of repairing damaged vehicles themselves, alongside the wider consequences of increased insurance premiums, higher excess levels in future years, and reputational damage resulting from incidents linked to substance impairment.

As ever APSE suggests that all local authorities should review their own policies and procedures in line with their legal services and operational leads, and with employee and trade union consultation.

## [Driving change: Dundee's alcolock journey](#)

Fraser Crichton, Corporate Fleet Manager, Dundee City Council

APSE: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FLEET IN SCOTLAND

20 MAY 2026

# INTEGRATED WIRING LOOM

## Dräger Interlock 7500

Alcohol Ignition Interlock

- Alcohol ignition interlock device with quick start-up time
- Prevents vehicle start if driver is under the influence of alcohol
- Tamper-proof
- Optional data management
- Connectivity to a fleet management system



Fraser Crichton outlined Dundee City Council's experience of implementing a drug and alcohol policy alongside the introduction of vehicle interlock technology. He explained that in 2024 the EU introduced additional vehicle safety requirements through its General Safety Regulations, including alcohol interlock facilitation. This means vehicle manufacturers must ensure that new vehicles can accommodate breathalyser devices. The UK Government is currently considering whether to adopt these regulations, which could in future make such systems mandatory in all new cars sold in the UK. In anticipation of any possible legislative change, Dundee City Council took a proactive approach by launching a pilot scheme to breathalyse fleet drivers.

The pilot was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Fleet Manager, Waste Management Manager, Human Resources, Health and Safety officers, and trade union representation. Fraser emphasised the importance of engaging both employees and union representatives throughout the process to ensure that the policy was robust, proportionate, and clearly understood by those affected.

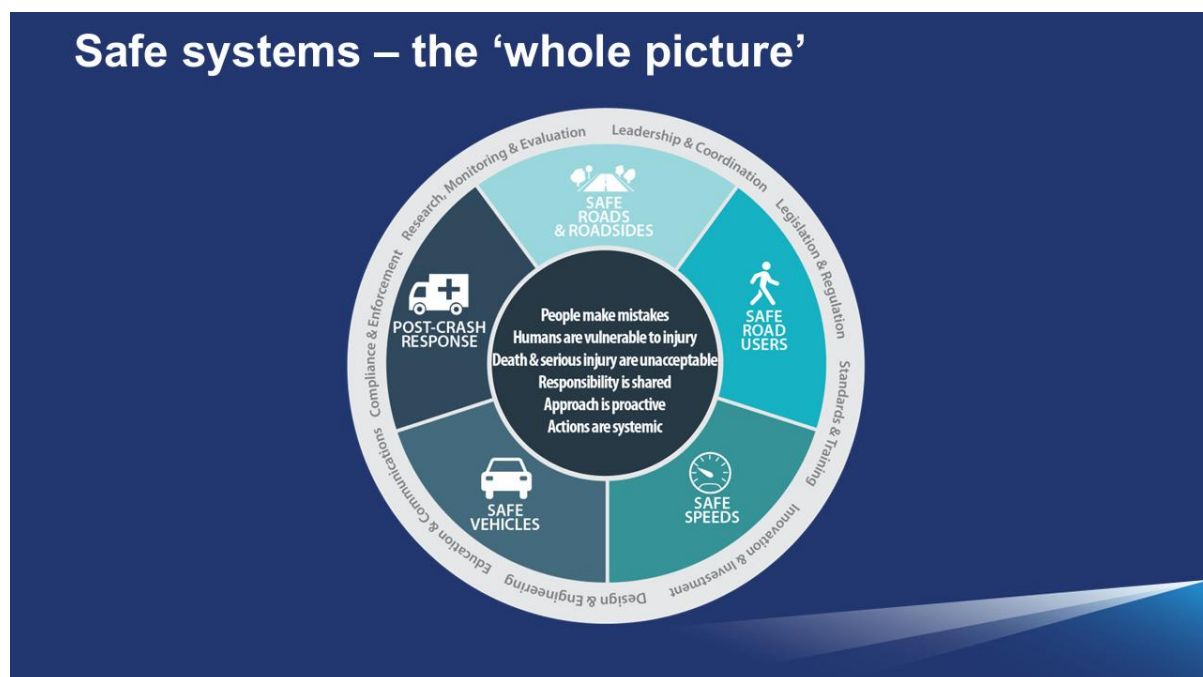
As part of the pilot, all new vehicles over 3.5 tonnes were fitted with the Dräger Interlock 7500 system. Fraser explained that this device was selected for a number of reasons, including its quick start-up time, its ability to prevent a vehicle from starting if alcohol is detected, its tamper-resistant design, and its capacity to record and analyse test data. The device can also integrate with wider fleet management systems, offering additional operational benefits.

Drivers using vehicles fitted with the interlock must first provide a breath sample before the vehicle can be started. A successful test is indicated by a green LED, allowing the driver to

proceed. If the initial test is failed, the device displays a red LED and requires a second breath sample. If that second test is also failed, the driver must report the result immediately to their supervisor, who records the time of the test and the alcohol reading shown by the device. The driver must then undertake an independent confirmatory breath test on site as soon as possible. Dundee City Council uses Hampton Knight alcohol testing for this purpose. If the independent test is passed, the driver may return to the vehicle and attempt the interlock test again. If the confirmatory test is failed, the Council's drug and alcohol policy is applied, and the driver is not permitted to operate the vehicle.

### DVSA – Safe systems and technology changes

Neil Barlow, Head of Vehicle Policy and Engineering, & Gordon Thomson, Head of Service Group Development, Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency



Neil Barlow, DVSA's Head of Vehicle Policy and Engineering, opened the session by setting out the Safe System approach to road safety, described as a 'whole picture' way of thinking about reducing deaths and serious injuries on the road network. He explained that the approach starts from the recognition that people will inevitably make mistakes and that there are physical limits to the force the human body can tolerate in a collision. Rather than placing responsibility solely on individual road users, the Safe System approach treats road safety as a shared responsibility across vehicle design, road infrastructure, speed management, road user behaviour, and post-collision response. The objective is to ensure that, when mistakes do occur, the transport system is designed to reduce the likelihood that they result in fatal or serious outcomes.

Gordon Thomson, DVSA's Head of Service Group Development, then focused on the technological changes that are shaping the future of vehicle testing, compliance, and

**enforcement.** He said these developments are part of the wider effort to move towards a transport system in which deaths and serious injuries are minimised. In the compliance landscape, Gordon noted that vehicle technology is evolving rapidly and that enforcement bodies must keep pace with developments in Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), electric vehicles and increasingly connected systems. He also highlighted that enforcement is becoming more data-led, more targeted, and more capable of being delivered through remote interventions.

A major area of change discussed by Gordon was the impact of ADAS on heavy vehicle testing. From 2 February 2026, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency began introducing basic visual checks of ADAS during annual tests as part of a data-gathering exercise rather than a pass-or-fail assessment. He explained that the systems currently in scope include Lane Departure Warning, Advanced Emergency Braking Systems, Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems, Blind Spot Information Systems, Moving Off Information Systems and Reversing Information Systems. These checks focus on whether cameras and sensors are secure, damaged, or obstructed, and whether relevant malfunction warning lights are showing.

Gordon reported that early evidence from this work is already identifying recurring issues. These include poor installation, insecure mountings, temporary repairs, cameras not properly bonded to the windscreen, sensors that are obstructed or misaligned, and systems requiring recalibration following repairs or windscreen replacement. His key message was that many of these defects are both visible and preventable through proper fitting, maintenance and post-repair checks. Although the current DVSA checks do not affect the outcome of the annual test, he stressed that operators still have a responsibility to ensure that these systems remain functional, and that the information gathered will help shape future policy, communications and training. This aligns with recent updates from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, which confirm that the new ADAS inspections are currently for data collection and future test development rather than formal test results.

He also referred to the possibility of ADAS requirements broadening over time, particularly as further safety technologies associated with newer vehicle regulations are considered. Gordon noted that this could include additional systems such as driver monitoring, and that further guidance may be needed where technologies are retrofitted to existing vehicles. He also touched on related developments in testing and classification, including ongoing review of laden brake testing data, possible further consideration of testing arrangements for certain trailer types, and changes affecting the vehicle testing classification of zero-emission vehicles up to 4.25 tonnes.


More broadly, Gordon highlighted the increasing use of digital and imaging technologies across the compliance sector. He referred to electronic maintenance records and driver defect reporting systems, and suggested that there may be value in exploring whether a more consistent industry standard for such systems would be beneficial. He also discussed the use of imaging technology during annual tests to identify dangerous defects, as well as successful

trials of under-vehicle inspection robots and the use of infrared cameras to help detect fraudulent or obscured registration plates.

In concluding, Gordon said that in the short term the priority is to continue evolving services in partnership with industry and to adapt testing and enforcement to reflect emerging technologies. In the longer term, he suggested that the direction of travel is towards a more connected, increasingly automated transport system, and that regulators, operators and manufacturers will all need to work together to prepare for that transition.




**HGV decarbonisation pathway for Scotland**


**Charlotte Taylor, Team Lead Transport Decarbonisation – Just Transition, Transport Scotland**



**Background: Skill Readiness**  
**94,000 of HDV Workers Will Require Training to Support Adoption of Zero Emission (ZE) HDV.**

**Workforce supply is under pressure**

-  **Aging Workforce**  
Large share of the HDV workforce is retiring.
-  **Diversity Challenges**  
HDV sector has remains narrowly male-dominated
-  **Job Transformation**  
Traditional HDV roles are changing and declining as ZE transition happens.



**Skills mix for HDV Sector is fundamentally changing**

Traditional Skills	Zero-emission Skills
Routine mechanical diagnostics and manual fault-finding	Digital diagnostics and software-enabled fault detection
Internal combustion engine maintenance	Electric drivetrain and power electronics maintenance
Diesel fuel systems and emissions controls	High-voltage battery and energy management systems
Mechanical safety procedures	High-voltage and hydrogen safety procedures
Workshop tools designed for ICE vehicles	Specialist ZE-HDV tools and certified workshop practices

**Charlotte Taylor of Transport Scotland spoke about the challenges of decarbonising heavy goods vehicles and the collaborative action needed to support the transition to a zero-emission public sector fleet.** She highlighted the scale of the challenge in Scotland, noting that HGVs account for a disproportionate share of transport emissions relative to their numbers on the road. Despite growing policy focus, only a very small proportion of Scotland’s HGV fleet is currently zero emission, and without further intervention emissions from the sector are projected to remain largely unchanged for many years. Charlotte emphasised that this underlines the need for faster progress if Scotland is to meet its wider climate ambitions.

Charlotte explained that Transport Scotland is preparing a draft Public Sector Fleet Decarbonisation Action Plan, intended to support the continued decarbonisation of public fleets and align with the Climate Change Plan for 2026 to 2040. She noted that publication of the draft will be followed by engagement with public sector fleet managers, including multiple workshops and discussion sessions, before a final plan is issued. This process is intended to

ensure that the actions taken are practical, coordinated and informed by the experience of those responsible for delivering change on the ground.

She also referred to the HGV Decarbonisation Pathway for Scotland, published by Transport Scotland's Zero Emission Truck Taskforce in 2024. Charlotte said the pathway identifies the main issues that must be addressed to enable the transition, including access to suitable zero-emission vehicles, the development of charging infrastructure, and the skills needed to support new technologies and operating models. She stressed that, because this is a system-wide change, progress will depend on close collaboration between government, industry, infrastructure providers and fleet operators.

One example of this collaborative approach is Transport Scotland's work with Heriot-Watt University to map where charging infrastructure will be needed to support HGV decarbonisation across Scotland. Charlotte explained that this work uses freight movement and traffic data to identify the routes where demand for charging is likely to be greatest and where additional infrastructure will be required. This type of evidence-based planning is intended to help prioritise investment and reduce barriers to adoption.

Charlotte also highlighted the importance of collaboration in building workforce capacity and addressing skills shortages. She pointed to examples of partnership working between the public and private sectors to develop local training provision and support the regional supply chain. In particular, she referenced work in East Ayrshire, where Emergency One has partnered with East Ayrshire Council to provide training for mechanics in response to the growing demand for specialist zero-emission vehicle skills. Charlotte encouraged local authorities to engage actively with these kinds of partnership opportunities as part of their own decarbonisation planning.

## 2. Transport Advisory Discussion Forum

The Transport Advisory Discussion Forum provided delegates with an opportunity to discuss current issues and challenges relating to fleet operations and vehicle maintenance. The session enabled participants to share experiences and consider common challenges facing local authority fleet services. The forum also included an update from Dundee City Council on its coordinated council-wide electric vehicle charging developments.

**Fraser Crichton of Dundee City Council provided the forum with information on the council's 15 year EV infrastructure journey.** This included the current make up of the council electric fleet, the different EV infrastructure options currently available within the city and some of the infrastructure innovations underway.

## INFRASTRUCTURE INNOVATION



Fraser then provided colleagues with an overview of the council’s fleet procurement strategy and discussed what the potential council wide overnight depot charging would involve.

## OVERNIGHT DEPOT CHARGING

**Charger allocation**

Access to public charge points will be restricted.

Each vehicle will be assigned to a specific depot charge point at Clepington.

Small groups of vehicles will share chargers on a rotating schedule.

The schedule will remain the same every week.

**Construction**

**Emergency chargers**

**Tayside Contracts**

**Solution 1 - Business as usual Downtime**

Registration number	Average session duration	Average number of weekly sessions	Downtime due to charging during the city (between 1 Dec 2005 and 12 Feb 2026)	Label (1)	Weekly charging schedule
SA23KUC	1h 4min	3.4	12h 13min	SA23KUC	Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun
SA23LHH	1h 16min	1.7	6h 19min	SA23LHH	Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun
SA23JKF	0h 58min	4.9	23h 32min	SA23JKF	Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun
SA23KTN	1h 0min	5.6	7h 52min	SA23KTN	Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun
SA23JKK	0h 52min	4.7	12h 20min	SA23JKK	Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun
<b>All vehicles</b>	<b>1h 2min</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>Total = 62h 16min</b> <b>Avg. 6h 14min per week</b>		

**Example of a proposed overnight charging schedule**

-36 working days are lost annually

### 3. APSE Comment

The seminar highlighted the significant challenges and opportunities facing local authority fleet services as they navigate increasingly complex regulatory, operational and environmental demands. While decarbonisation remains a central priority, presentations demonstrated that achieving a safe, compliant and sustainable fleet requires a holistic approach that places equal

emphasis on workforce wellbeing, risk management, technology adoption and organisational culture.

The presentations from City of Edinburgh Council and Dundee City Council regarding drug and alcohol policies illustrated the growing need for employers to address emerging risks associated with prescribed medications, legal highs and substance misuse. As workforce demographics change and medical treatments become more varied, local authorities must ensure that policies remain robust, proportionate and capable of supporting both employee wellbeing and public safety. Dundee City Council's experience with alcolock technology also demonstrated how innovative interventions can support behavioural change and reduce risk, whilst maintaining a positive safety culture.

The presentations from DVSA and Transport Scotland highlighted the interconnected challenges of maintaining compliance and safety while delivering fleet decarbonisation ambitions. As vehicle technologies continue to evolve, local authorities will be required to adapt to new regulatory requirements, operational practices and infrastructure needs. The DVSA's emphasis on a Safe System approach demonstrated the importance of embedding safety considerations throughout the transport network, while Transport Scotland's HGV decarbonisation pathway illustrated the scale of change required to achieve net zero objectives within the heavy vehicle sector. Together, the presentations reinforced that the transition to cleaner fleets cannot be viewed solely as an environmental challenge; it must also be supported by robust compliance frameworks, workforce preparedness, technological innovation and effective partnership working across all levels of government and industry.

Overall, the seminar demonstrated that the future of local authority fleet management will be shaped by the ability to balance safety, compliance and decarbonisation objectives whilst continuing to deliver critical frontline services. Local authorities that proactively embrace innovation, invest in workforce development and engage with emerging policy and technological developments will be best placed to meet these challenges and realise the opportunities presented by the transition to a safer and more sustainable transport system.

Members may also wish to continue these conversations through APSE Scotland's Fleet, Transport and Vehicle Maintenance Network, which provides opportunities to share experience, explore shared challenges, discuss practical responses and learn from practice across local authorities. Network meetings are free to attend for APSE members. Previous presentations are available online [here](#) and upcoming meetings are listed [here](#).

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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 our contacts for your service area, please email [enquiries@apse.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@apse.org.uk)

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- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Local Government Reorganisation Network
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance
- Local Authority Social Value, Procurement and Commercialisation
- Parks, Horticulture and Ground Maintenance
- Recovery and Renewal
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Roads, highways and street lighting
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing
- Armed Forces and Veterans Network

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