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ASPHALT
INDUSTRY
ALLIANCE

Reporting on the asphalt industry

Issue 45 | Autumn/Winter 2020

SHARING BEST PRACTICE EVENT 2020

Delegates hail a virtual success

KICKSTART JOB CREATION

The asphalt sector is playing its part

JUBILEE BRIDGE REOPENS

Customised surfacing uses state-of-the-art technology





OPTIMISM: THE FOUNDATION FOR PROGRESS

Despite a challenging year, there are plenty of reasons for the asphalt sector to look ahead positively

As we near the end of a challenging year, I am cautiously optimistic about the future.

It was gratifying that the Government recognised the importance of the work done by those maintaining local roads during the pandemic with Roads Minister, Baroness Vere, speaking at our **virtual Sharing Best Practice** event (see page 10) praising the dedication shown, saying that “those in the highways sector had been the “hidden heroes” of the COVID-19 pandemic”.

The Chancellor also acknowledged the role local roads can play as we build back better in his **Autumn Spending Review** (see page 9). While we know that the funds pledged fall short of the investment that’s needed, it is still a welcome move in these difficult times.

Industry is also looking to recovery, including companies participating in the Government’s Kickstart scheme (see below). Working smartly to keep **projects on schedule and supply chains open** (see page 5), are further examples of how our sector has overcome the challenges 2020 has thrown up.

The shift to a low carbon future will continue to influence highways and we know materials innovation in this area is of key interest. The European Asphalt Pavement Association (EAPA) recently published a **paper on the use of secondary materials** (see page 6) and the on-going, collaboratively funded research project to assess new paving material components, including those derived from waste, was

featured at **Sharing Best Practice** (see page 11).

The MPA-supported Civils and Materials Innovation Hub at Highways UK also highlighted the **range of fresh thinking within the industry** (see page 7), and future mobility and its impact on highway materials are firmly on the agenda at **next year’s E&E Congress** (see page 11).

We are always keen to hear of any case studies or initiatives from local authorities or suppliers that demonstrate new ways of thinking that we can share to promote best practice and help our sector play its part in the drive towards net zero carbon – so please do get in touch.

Rick Green

Chair, Asphalt Industry Alliance

PROUD SUPPORT FOR JOB CREATION INITIATIVE



Over 60 young people have joined FM Conway and Aggregate Industries as part of the Government’s Kickstart programme to provide work experience in the construction industry

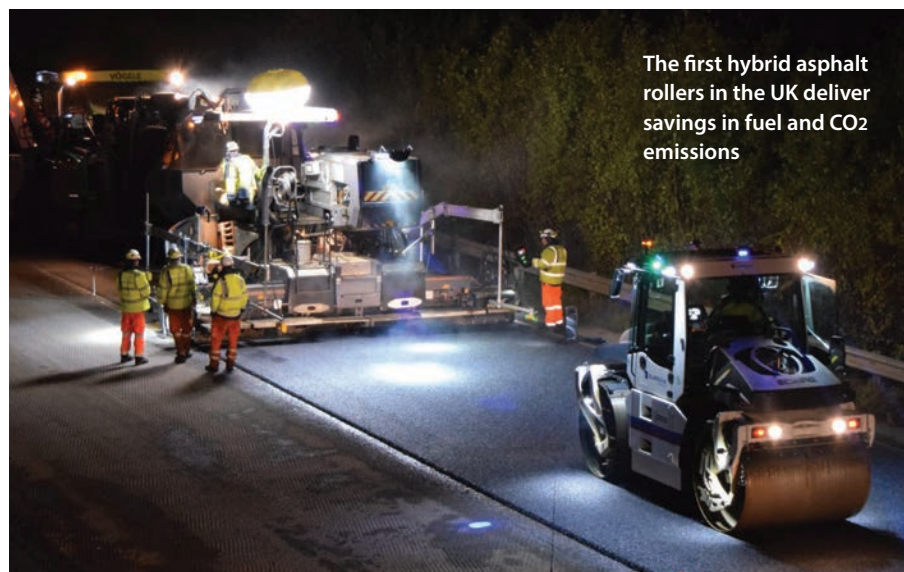
■ **Following the** launch of the Government’s Kickstart £2bn initiative to create thousands of high-quality six-month job placements for unemployed 16–24 year olds, Aggregate Industries (AI) and FM Conway have been approved as official Kickstart employers.

The Kickstart programme aims to provide young people with the skills needed to move into sustainable long-term employment. ‘Kickstarters’ will receive the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week for each placement – paid by the Government.

At AI, the scheme will involve 30 placements, with 37 at FM Conway. The roles have been specifically designed to help young people gain some work experience in the construction industry. The FM Conway scheme includes providing a ‘peer buddy’ to support each placement, as well as providing training and coaching for interview skills, CV writing, job hunting and office skills. AI hopes that some candidates will be able to move into its existing apprenticeship or graduate schemes.

James Roberts, Human Resources Director at AI, comments: “Young people, especially those aged 16-24, have been particularly hard-hit in terms of employment and training opportunities during this difficult time. We’re proud to play our part in supporting the next generation of talent.”

FIRST HYBRID ASPHALT ROLLERS



The first hybrid asphalt rollers in the UK deliver savings in fuel and CO₂ emissions

■ **Eurovia has** invested in the first hybrid asphalt rollers in the UK, which deliver up to 20 per cent savings in fuel and CO₂ emissions.

The new BOMAG 174 rollers also have an intelligent drum control system, Asphalt Manager 2, which allows the operator to set the roller to automatically compact asphalt to a pre-set level. The drum then tests the stiffness of the material as it rolls and automatically adjusts the compaction as and when needed.

Paul Kidd, Technical Director at Eurovia Contracting, said: "We use the BOMAP

system, which is GPS linked, to record the usual passes and temperature and now we have compaction data from Asphalt Manager 2.

"This technology ensures that you do what you need to do to achieve the required compaction and finished surface."

The new equipment is part of Eurovia's Formula Road quality management system, which begins with training all surfacing teams and supply chain partners to develop paving technicians who ensure a right first-time approach.

IN BRIEF

□ **Simon Willis**, Chief Executive Officer at Hanson UK (pictured), has been appointed MPA Chairman for the next two years.

Simon, who succeeds Martin Riley, Senior Vice President, Tarmac, has a mechanical and engineering background and over 20 years' experience of the minerals sector in previous roles at MQP, Eurovia and Tarmac.



Commenting on the appointment, Nigel Jackson, MPA Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted that Simon has agreed to pick up the baton from Martin and become the 8th Chairman of MPA.

"His wide industry knowledge and experience will be invaluable to the Association as we look to play our part in the economic recovery whilst continuing to operate safely and securely."

□ **Victoria Smith** (pictured) has been appointed Managing Director of Spadeoak, Aggregate Industries' (AI) specialist contracting business, and will also join AI's contracting division's senior leadership team.



Previously, she was General Manager of AI's Express Asphalt business and has more than 15 years' experience with the company.

Commenting on her new role Victoria said: "I'm delighted to be taking on this new chapter in my career to navigate the current challenges facing the sector."

Gary Brennand, right, succeeds Victoria, as the new General Manager for Express Asphalt.



PROTECTING WORKERS FROM ABUSE

■ **A Parliamentary** petition to make it a criminal offence to assault highway workers has been initiated by a coalition of professionals from across the sector.

The *Stamp it Out* taskforce aims to eliminate abuse and incursions into closures on both the local and strategic network. It is led by Kari Sprostanova, Health and Safety Director, Balfour Beatty UKCS, with support from the Safer Highways initiative, which is backed by stakeholders from across the supply chain.

Gathering over 100,000 signatures would mean the issue would be considered for a parliamentary debate on a change to the law which could see all highway workers permanently recognised as key workers.



STAMP IT OUT
Putting A Foot Down Against Roadworker Abuse

"There are many thousands at work every day out on our public highways, providing a vital service," said Kari Sprostanova. "Yet we continue to see increasing numbers of threats both verbally and physically against those working to keep us safe. Those working

on our highways deserve our respect and our aim is to have the Government make it a criminal act to abuse road workers in their place of employment."

The petition closes on 24 March 2021. More information can be found at <https://www.stampitout.org/>

M23 UPGRADE COMPLETED EARLY

■ **More than** 52,000 tonnes of asphalt laid in one month helped to facilitate completion of an upgrade to the M23 in Surrey, six months ahead of schedule.

The Highways England project encompassed widening of the carriageway to achieve all-lane running, full depth reconstruction of the hard shoulder, central reserve works, upgrades to junctions 9 and 10 and lane four surfacing to enable the

road to open for traffic.

Aggregate Industries' Contracting Division was the lead surfacing partner, with support from Tarmac as the second surfacing partner helping to ensure the tight timescales were met. In addition to the logistical requirements for the project, the team also had to adapt to new ways of working following the introduction of social distancing guidelines.



Despite social distancing requirements, the M23 in Surrey was able to reopen six months ahead of schedule

STREET AND AUTHORITIES GROUPS PUBLISHES COMMON APPROACH

■ **Street Works UK** and the Joint Authorities Group (JAG UK) have published *A five-year Vision for Street and Road Works in the UK* with the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee (HAUC UK).

The aim is to ensure that the working practices of the street and road works sector will evolve to suit the demands of the digital age. The Vision outlines five main themes that will be at the heart of future work: digitalisation; innovation; skills and

workforce; collaboration; environment and decarbonisation.

Commenting on the report, Clive Bairsto, Chief Executive of Street Works UK and co-chair of HAUC UK, said: "As the country has risen to the challenge of COVID-19, the vital work of the street and road works sector came into the spotlight. I am delighted that, working with sector colleagues, we have developed this blueprint for the nation's infrastructure delivery over the next five years."

David Capon, Chief Executive of JAG UK and co-chair of HAUC UK, added: "As we look ahead to building a better future, local authorities and utilities will have a central role in delivering the vital infrastructure that will underpin prosperity. To turn our Vision into a reality, it's vital that we continue to work together by building on common interests and demonstrating to Government how our work will underpin its infrastructure ambitions."

For the full report go to <https://bit.ly/3fOpJle>



IN BRIEF

□ **The AIA** has joined Local Council Roads Innovation Group (LCRIG) as a Partner Member. Rick Green, AIA Chair said: "The AIA itself is an Alliance of organisations, so we strongly believe in collaboration."



"LCRIG is quickly developing to be an effective platform for further engagement with the highways community, and one where our positions on asset management are already closely aligned. We look forward to working with LCRIG and its Members to encourage innovation."

□ **Major** road works have uncovered new evidence about the roads the Romans built in Britain and how they were maintained – with examples of 2,000-year-old attempts to fix potholes.

The discovery was unearthed on Highways England's upgrade of the A1, near Scotch Corner and includes evidence that the potholes were fixed, not with today's asphalt, but with local limestone.



Courtesy of Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA)

□ **Lafarge Holcim** is working with IBM Services to develop ORIS, the first digital platform for road design optimisation. Utilising smart project design, it is anticipated that ORIS could reduce project costs and carbon emissions by linking efficient road construction and maintenance to local materials and capabilities.



HELP WHEN IT'S NEEDED MOST

During the unprecedented events of this year, the asphalt supply chain has continued to support community initiatives as companies work hard to be good neighbours and fulfil their social responsibility commitments.

A cancelled project has allowed Tarmac to resurface a playground in Kent

AN UNEXPECTED opportunity to help out was seized by **Tarmac** when a last-minute project cancellation allowed it to redirect and donate asphalt to resurface a children's playground near its Snodland offices in Medway, Kent.

Steve Clark, Operations Manager South East, said: "The play area had been closed due to safety issues. Thanks to our surfacing team swinging into action, it was re-opened the next day for the children of Burham to enjoy."

Hanson UK donated 138 tonnes of asphalt to resurface the car park at Wakefield Hospice as part of a programme to mark the hospice's 30th birthday. The donation will improve accessibility and was initiated by CRASH, the construction industry's charity, which helps homelessness and hospice charities improve their buildings.

"Car parks are often overlooked when it comes to deciding how limited funds are spent but accessibility is vital to the users of Wakefield Hospice," said Francesca Roberts, CRASH Chief Executive. "We are extremely grateful to Hanson for this generous donation of materials: without its support – and that of other patron companies – we simply could not continue our work."

The **Steelphalt** team described their involvement in a DIY SOS BBC Children in Need Special as "humbling". The company donated 60 tonnes of its 6mm Steelsurf asphalt to the TV show following the conversion of an out-of-use bus shelter in Caswell Bay into a state-of-the-art eco-friendly surf centre for Surfability – a community interest company that provides surfing

experiences for people with disabilities.

SteelSurf, which is designed for high stress areas and is effective at maintaining surface stability, was used to provide smooth, durable access for all to the new surf centre.



Wakefield Hospice received a donation of asphalt from Hanson UK

FLIGHT SOLUTION



COVID-19 restrictions saw bitumen producer Nynas take an innovative approach to ensure the continued supply of asphalt for use on highways in the Channel Islands.

Following the initial lockdown in March, restrictions were placed on ferry passengers, preventing drivers from travelling with freight. However, as on-site bitumen discharge requires

specially trained and qualified drivers, it was essential to find a safe way of continuing supply to asphalt manufacturer and contractor Ronez on Jersey.

Nynas UK Health and Safety Manager, Paul Lamb, and Sales Manager, Chris Rhodes, quickly developed a rota system enabling the tankers and team of three drivers to travel separately. Once a driver had safely stowed the tanker on the ferry at Portsmouth, it continued the sea voyage unaccompanied. Meanwhile, the driver would fly out to be

ready to receive the tanker on arrival in port before going on to oversee the safe delivery and discharge of bitumen at Ronez's asphalt plant.

"The approach required a great deal of teamwork, plus continual liaison with Customs and Immigration who oversaw these 'Lifeline' routes for essential supplies," said Chris. "Importantly, it enabled our customer to ensure the supply of asphalt to be maintained, allowing roads on the islands to be repaired while traffic was light."



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SHELL BITUMEN

IT IS 100 YEARS since Shell Bitumen set up its first manufacturing facility in the UK in Stanford-le-Hope, Essex.

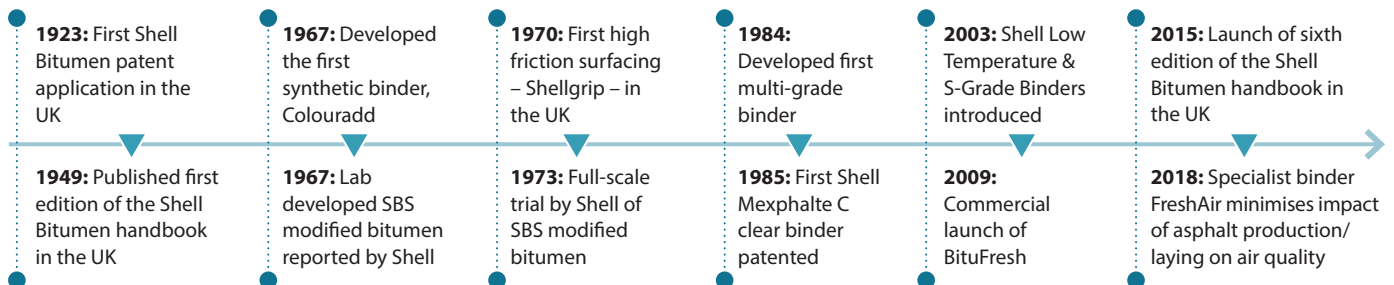
Since then, the company has developed and supplied a wide range of bitumen suitable for roads, runways and racetracks. It now supplies enough bitumen across

the globe to help resurface 500 kilometres of road every day, with customers in 52 markets.

Dave Foster, Shell Bitumen UK & Ireland Manager, said: "Our bitumen solutions touch lives and help people get to where they need to go. Looking ahead we are

developing new technologies that create more durable, sustainable and energy-efficient roads. Our pioneering innovations in coloured binders, low-temperature solutions, low-odour bitumen and underwater adhesives have helped set the industry standards for these applications."

Key milestones in the history of the company:



PRIORITY FOR RECYCLING ASPHALT

THE EUROPEAN Asphalt Pavement Association (EAPA) has published a positioning paper to contribute to the discussion on the possibilities and limitations for the use of waste from other industries in new asphalt mixtures.

Providing context for *The use of secondary materials, by-products and waste in asphalt mixtures*, EAPA sets out that the asphalt industry has already built up an extensive record in re-using or recycling asphalt and in

using several other waste streams as a secondary raw material (recycled aggregates etc.) in new asphalt.

Consequently, the industry understands not only the possibilities, but also the limitations that exist. It now works on the principle that asphalt should never go to landfill nor be seen as a product to solve the 'difficult waste' problems of other industries.

The paper recommends that priority should be given

to the re-use of reclaimed asphalt back into asphalt – as this represents a significant potential to save on the overall consumption of aggregates and bitumen.

In addition, EAPA sets out that waste, or waste derived materials, should only be incorporated into asphalt if it can be shown through risk assessments that the future reuse and recyclability of asphalt is not at risk and that there is no negative impact on the performance of



asphalt, now or in the future.

The full report can be downloaded at <https://bit.ly/2IYwUSe>

● EAPA figures indicate that 75% of available RAP is reused in new asphalt mixes.

2020 INNOVATION HUB PROJECTS FOCUS ON JOURNEY TO NET ZERO

INNOVATIONS in carriageway material design and advances in product delivery were well-represented in this year's Civils and Materials Innovation Hub at Highways UK.

The competition, supported by the Mineral Products Association (MPA) for the third consecutive year, aims to stimulate and showcase innovative civil engineering infrastructure products, systems, materials or processes that will provide a clear benefit to the highways sector.

Twenty concepts across five categories were shortlisted ahead of the online pitching rounds – held as part of this year's virtual Highways UK event.

Judged by an expert group of industry specialists representing Women in Transport, RSTA, MPA, Transport Scotland, AECOM and Transport Focus, the following were awarded category prizes:

- Specialist fencing and civil engineering

...the judges were impressed and reassured by the enthusiasm and fresh thinking shown."

Malcolm Simms,
Director, MPA Asphalt

contractor, Arbus, scooped the prize in the *Product delivery efficiency* category, with its Vehicle Restraint System (VRS), *Smartcraft*.

- The winner of *Materials or Equipment Innovation* was Stabilised Pavements Limited with its *In Situ recycling using the downcut* process.

- Top spot in the *Innovative construction techniques* category – and overall winner – was Morgan Sindall for its *Modular emergency areas – a sustainable solution made*

predominantly from recycled rubber tyres.

- NSG Group (Pilkington Glass), with its *Transport roadside barrier with antipollution self-clean, acoustic control and bird-safe function*, won the *Environment* category.

- *Roadmole – permanent circular repairs for potholes and ironworks*, by CSJ Civil and Mechanical Engineering won the *Safety* award.

Malcolm Simms, Director, MPA Asphalt, who headed up the judges, said: "This year's submissions show the depth of innovation across our sector as well as increasing determination to challenge traditional ways of operating to deliver better networks. The journey to net zero was an underlying theme of many of the shortlisted projects and the judges were impressed and reassured by the enthusiasm and fresh thinking shown."



CYCLE LANE ASPHALT SAVES TIME

A NEW asphalt designed specifically for cycle lanes and footpaths has been developed by building materials supplier, CEMEX.

VIAPATH is a single layer asphalt that can be laid between 25mm and 70mm thick, eliminating the need for multilayer surfacing in most situations, helping to save time, money and materials.

Martin Ashfield, Technical Manager for Asphalt and Paving CEMEX Europe, said: "As VIAPATH can replace surface and binder courses in a single pass it can help meet

Government demands for fast pop-up solutions, while also being cost-effective and minimising disruption to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

"It also addresses one of the common causes of potholes. Typically, a horizontal joint would be required between the binder course and surface course layers which presents an inherent risk to the ingress of water. As VIAPATH is a single layer solution, this joint is eliminated, helping to improve the overall structural durability of the pavement."



CARBON NEUTRAL ASPHALT RANGE



AGGREGATE Industry's (AI) **SuperLow** asphalt range now provides carbon neutral offsetting. The move comes as part of the company's drive to decarbonise the highways sector.

Guy Edwards, Chief Executive Officer at AI, said: "New SuperLow features reduced carbon levels when compared to standard asphalt as it is manufactured at reduced temperatures.

"All remaining emissions are offset through carbon reduction projects on the customer's behalf by our offsetting partner, Circular Ecology."

SINGLE LAYER LOW CARBON DELIVERED IN EALING

CONDUCTING resurfacing works on the busy streets of London is challenging at the best of times. Throw in buses on diversion, bridges, restricted access/short possessions and tar contamination and you have additional obstacles to overcome in the design and execution of a highways project – and all with reduced CO₂ emissions and public health to consider.

This was the position Ealing Highways was in when it undertook the resurfacing of Mandeville Road, the A312, directly outside Northolt Underground station and a busy bus route connecting the A40 to Harrow.

The original design called for 70mm of binder course with a 40mm surface course to be laid on the bridge over the railway line during a four-night period, but a rethink was needed when site investigations showed tar contamination at 90mm depth. The challenge then became to leave the tar contamination undisturbed and avoid the significant cost of disposal of a hazardous waste. The brief also called for a dense and durable design suitable for the rigours of London life.

Ealing Highways contacted Tarmac who proposed planing to 80mm and laying UltiLayer SMA 14 from the company's range of polymer modified bitumen asphalts in a single layer.



Support for health objectives

Tarmac's technical team supported accredited contractor Toppesfield to ensure the works were successfully completed and the necessary compaction was achieved. To ensure the thick inlay had cooled sufficiently to be white lined and open to traffic in time, the UltiLayer was specified as a Warm Mix Asphalt. This method of production also provided the additional benefit of reducing the project's CO₂ footprint by around 10% and reducing on-site emissions by around 80%, supporting London Borough of Ealing's Public Health objectives.

The planing and laying operation was carried out over two nights with material supplied from Tarmac's nearby plant at Hayes. In total 580 tonnes of UltiLayer was laid, saving 220 tonnes on the original 110mm deep design. The UltiLayer also used 14mm steel slag aggregate, transferred from Tarmac's works at Port Talbot by rail. This aggregate carries a zero CO₂ rating as it is a by-product of the steel making process.

Roger Eke, Technical Product Manager at

Tarmac, said: "This is the third significant scheme on which Ealing Highways has specified UltiLayer. The dense, low texture mixture and high-grade polymer modified bitumen makes it a sensible choice for highways engineers looking to overcome the many issues associated with an ageing road network that carries high volumes of heavy traffic."

Richard Stiles, of Ealing Highways' Infrastructure Renewal Team, added: "We are expecting the new surface to cope with the demands of relentless traffic and, although we will monitor the site in future, we are confident the right choice was made as we avoided the extra cost of tar disposal and reduced the duration of works by two nights, saving money and minimising disruption. Tarmac has delivered a durable material designed for the long term which offers reduced carbon emissions."

"Overall, the project was delivered at no additional cost to the original budget and resulted in improved ride quality, appearance and reduced noise pollution."

GROUND-BREAKING LOW-CARBON ROADWORKS

WESTMINSTER City Council has completed a six-week project in King Street, which has used a series of low-carbon measures to cut project carbon emissions by almost 75%.

The project, to repair public highways and upgrade the footway, used electric vehicles, tools, welfare, and recycled equipment, to remove the traditional need for diesel and petrol engines. The charging points for electric vehicles and tools installed will remain in situ as a legacy of this project.

Among the low-carbon measures was the use of GreenPatch, a high recycled content permanent pothole and patch repair asphalt, supplied and laid by contractor FM Conway.

Cllr Andrew Smith, Westminster's Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment, said: "If we are to truly tackle the effects of climate change and meet our ambitious target of

Westminster being carbon neutral by 2030, then we must revolutionise the way we do things as a local authority, which includes the way we carry out our essential daily works and operations.

"This scheme is not only ground-breaking but also a catalyst for change in the way we do things. We hope that the success of this trial will see public realm works across the city transform for the better and help us towards maintaining a greener and cleaner Westminster."

Data collected throughout the trial will be used to calculate the total carbon savings, with the aim of reducing emissions, cutting noise pollution and ultimately providing a blueprint for all future works to be low-carbon, low-emission, and sustainable.

LOCAL ROADS FUNDING A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

THE GOVERNMENT'S Spending Review for 2021-22 includes the allocation of £1.7 billion for local roads, covering capital expenditure



Chris McAndrew

for the alleviation of traffic pinch points, the DfT's previously announced pothole fund and funding for road maintenance.

The aims, as set out in HM Treasury's *National Infrastructure Strategy* are based on the approach that 'High quality local roads are also central to the future of transport, playing an important role in the take-up of autonomous vehicles and greener forms of transport such as cycling and buses.' The pledges include £1.125 billion for local authority local roads maintenance including the £500 pothole fund,

“...the sums outlined will not be enough to plug the existing multi-billion pound backlog in road maintenance funding.”

Rick Green, AIA Chair

supported by £260 million for 'shovel-ready' local transport schemes through the Integrated Transport Block. Plus, the Government is also investing £310 million in upgrading public transport and active travel upgrades with the aim of reducing congestion and increasing capacity. It is anticipated that some of the funding will be allocated on a bid-for basis.

Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan

Further pots have been committed to support the decarbonisation of the transport system set out in the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan and include nearly £1.9bn to be spent on electric vehicle infrastructure, with dedicated grants for zero and ultra-low emissions vehicles. In addition, the new £4 billion cross-departmental Levelling Up Fund and the £1.2 billion Transforming Cities Fund, could also lead to enhancements in local transport infrastructure, such as footways and cycleways.

The Government has previously announced

£27.4 billion over the next five years for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). Commenting on the Spending Review AIA Chair, Rick Green, said: "Our local roads played a vital role in keeping the country functioning this year, supporting the emergency services and facilitating the distribution of food and goods, and these spending announcements reflect that the Government recognises the need to invest in the network as we build back better."

"While the funding commitments are welcome in these challenging times, we are aware that the sums outlined will not be enough to plug the existing multi-billion pound backlog in road maintenance funding and so our ageing and congested network will continue to decline. We believe that what's needed going forward, is an additional investment of £1.5 billion a year for 10 years, to improve the experience of all road users, support recovery and deliver a much-needed boost to the economy."



AS PART of the Government's focus on 'building back better', Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, recently visited FM Conway's Heathrow Asphalt plant.

FM Conway's Head of Operations, Mark Whelehan (pictured left), Chairman, Michael Conway MBE (second left), and CEO, Adam Green (right), met with Boris Johnson for a discussion regarding the campaign and what this means for infrastructure, before giving the PM a tour of the site.

GROUP UPDATE



PLANS ARE progressing to launch the new *All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Better Roads* before the end of the year.

Given the difficulties of Parliamentary access during 2020, the inaugural meeting will look to confirm the Group's name change from the APPG on Highways, appoint officers and consider the Group's priorities for the near future, including enhancing membership numbers and engagement.

Proposals include consideration of a planned AIA briefing on "the role of local roads in supporting the country's future economic, sustainability and social cohesion goals, and the potential cost to productivity and connectivity of not investing sufficiently in the network" – intended to stimulate an APPG inquiry.

SHARING BEST PRACTICE LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Over 120 UK highway engineers from 70 local authorities, plus industry professionals, joined the Asphalt Industry Alliance's (AIA) annual *Sharing Best Practice* event following its move online this year.



Speakers covered a wide range of pressing issues facing local road networks to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience. Topics included: a shift to active-mobility in a post-COVID-19 world; the expectations of motorists and cyclists and local authority approaches to achieve more sustainable highways. The findings from 25 years of ALARM (Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance) surveys, plus information on an industry-led research project on protocols to use when assessing innovative paving materials, were also covered.



AIA Chair (left), **Rick Green**, welcomed delegates to the half day event commenting: "It's a real testament to our sector that so many have

opted to participate. We may be working remotely, but it highlights the value we place on being able to learn from industry colleagues facing similar challenges and demonstrates our appetite to hear more about the issues that are shaping the future of local roads."

Baroness Vere, UK Roads Minister, opened the first session, which focused on policy evolution. She acknowledged those in the roads sector as the 'hidden heroes' of the COVID-19 pandemic due to their dedicated work in keeping highway networks functioning safely before going on to outline the Department for Transport's (DfT) on-going commitment to local roads funding (see panel below).

"It was more interesting than ever this year – very direct and relevant."

Julian Richardson,
Oxfordshire County Council

David Giles, UK General Manager of Eurobitume and Director of the AIA, gave a review of 25 years of the ALARM survey. This suggested that a fundamental shift in the levels of local authority highway maintenance funding is needed to prevent

the continued decline of the network and ensure it can support the economic recovery and successfully underpin future mobility aspirations.

The next two speakers provided network users' perspectives on future priorities.

Nicholas Lyes, Head of Roads Policy and Public Affairs at RAC, reported that a significant majority of the organisation's members considered local road condition and maintenance to be the most critical of their top four concerns – with the recent *RAC Report on Motoring* highlighting that drivers are two and a half times more likely to suffer a breakdown as a result of hitting a pothole than in 2006.



Duncan Dollimore (right), Head of Campaigns and Advocacy at Cycling UK, outlined the differing needs of cyclists and the knock on implications for local authority approaches to road maintenance programmes. With 82% of cycling journeys taking place on minor roads, he challenged those with responsibility for maintaining networks to bear this in mind when determining priorities.

CALL TO BUILD BACK BETTER, FASTER AND GREENER

As well as praising those in the roads sector for their dedication and commitment during lockdown, Baroness Vere's address at *Sharing Best Practice* outlined the DfT's future mobility goals for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030. She urged local authorities to prioritise

active mobility – backed by the Government's £2 billion investment pledge over five years, which was brought forward to take advantage of reduced traffic during COVID-19. Recognising that a strong business case had been developed for local highways ahead of the Chancellor's Spending Review,

Baroness Vere also called for local authorities and industry partners to "build back better, build back faster and build back greener," with greater emphasis on sustainability, technology and materials longevity to ensure the most efficient use of tax payer funding.



“It’s a real testament to our sector that so many have opted to participate.”

Rick Green, AIA Chair

Rounding up the first session, **Mark Stevens**, Chair of ADEPT Engineering Board, also considered the change in approach that will be required to support the continued shift to active travel and how this could be developed to enhance a sense of place and community cohesion.

“Content was interesting and relevant. Virtual events can often be hard to engage with, but this was not.”

Mathew Burling,
Sandwell Council

Asphalt management

The second session examined approaches towards more sustainable highways.

Dave Blackburn, Waste and Recycling Manager at Dorset Council, set out how the Council’s Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration has led to increased specification of both Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA) and Recycled Asphalt Planings (RAP). WMA is now specified in 45% of the council’s capital maintenance schemes and, combined with up to 30% RAP on some projects, a reduction in associated CO₂ emissions of

15% has been delivered. **Malcolm Simms**, Director of MPA Asphalt and AIA, and **Helena Lacelle**, Principal Engineer, Pavement Design and Asset Management, Transportation, AECOM, discussed the aims behind the on-going MPA, Eurobitume and Highways England supported research project: *Filtering protocol for innovative paving materials including waste derived materials*.

“We recognised there was a sector-wide need to develop a process to assess new paving material components, including those which have been derived from waste or as by-products of other industries,” said Helena. “We understand the need for good product stewardship for both our own and, potentially others’ wastes,” added Malcolm.

“But we also need to ensure we don’t compromise our sector’s ability to reuse and recycle what we have already supplied as we continue to optimise our own circle of recycling.”

The final presentation was delivered by **Tom Henry**, Highways Manager, London Borough of Lewisham, and **Herbert Micallef**, Director, Highways and Infrastructure, Metis Consultants. Their focus was a 10-year review of asset management in Lewisham, informed by membership of the South London Asset



Realigned priorities: Tom Henry explained how a risk-based approach in Lewisham has led to a more appropriate balance of funding for carriageway and footway maintenance

Management Consortium. Tom explained how, following the introduction of *Well Managed Highways*, priorities on the network had been realigned, with the introduction of a risk-based approach enabling a more appropriate balance of funding to both carriageway and footway maintenance.

Feedback from delegates on the first virtual *Sharing Best Practice* was very positive with 80% of those responding ranking it ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ and 100% of respondents saying that they would recommend future events to colleagues.

FLAGSHIP CONFERENCE TO MOVE ONLINE IN 2021



E&E CONGRESS, the flagship industry conference for the asphalt and bitumen sectors, will move online in 2021, following

its postponement this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The programme, originally scheduled to take place in Madrid, will now take place virtually from 16-18 June 2021 and will include a combination of presentations and workshops as well as opportunities for delegates to engage with sponsor organisations and exhibitors.

Organised by the European Asphalt Pavement Association (EAPA) and Eurobitume, the conference’s overall theme remains: *Asphalt 4.0 for future mobility*.

Siobhan McKelvey, Director General of Eurobitume and a member of the E&E organising committee, explained why involvement from across the sector is key: “Next year’s event will be an important opportunity to share experiences and come together as an industry to discuss the potential challenges that lie



Siobhan
McKelvey

ahead. Undoubtedly, this is a transformative time for future mobility, with stakeholders more open to new scenarios than perhaps they were before the world was impacted by COVID-19.

“Road, cycle and pedestrian networks are being adapted right now. And, combined with expected shifts in the types and volume of traffic, the increased uptake of asset management approaches – the implications

for our sector are fundamental.

“The coming years will see changing demands placed on our roads as we transition to new modes of mobility, and respond to the effects of climate change while seeking to achieve carbon net zero. Industry-wide involvement at the E&E Congress next year is vital to broaden the debate so we can move forward together. No individual or organisation has all the answers and voices from across the sector need to be heard.”

More information on E&E Congress 2021 can be found at: www.eecongress2021.org

SMART SURFACING USED IN LISTED BRIDGE REFURB

An iconic Grade II listed bridge will soon reopen following a comprehensive three-year refurbishment programme, including the use of a specialist asphalt.

The Silver Jubilee Bridge, which spans the River Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes, was closed for repairs following the opening of the Mersey Gateway, the first time it had undergone major refurbishment since it opened in 1961.

The revamp, led by Halton Borough Council, came with a challenging brief – requiring an asphalt solution that could help reduce water ingress, improve durability and be laid at a minimum depth of 70mm over a waterproofing membrane. In addition, as vibration on the bridge deck is not permitted, it was essential that the asphalt did not require a high degree of compaction.

Minimum inlay thickness

Cllr Stan Hill, the Council's Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, says: "The design of any bridge deck surfacing can be challenging, but even more so when you only have 70mm of coverage on a Grade II listed bridge. We wanted a solution that was flexible enough to withstand movement,



could help reduce water ingress through the asphalt onto the bridge deck, improve durability and still give good deformation resistance – all at this minimum inlay thickness."

Following early involvement in the project, Aggregate Industries' Contracting Division constructed a 40mm lower layer of very dense and highly rut resistant Hot Rolled Asphalt, which was then overlaid with 30mm of ProLay Ultra cl.942 asphalt.

The material was laid using state-of-the-art smart surfacing technology to capture the

data required to support asset management, giving Halton Borough Council as-built digital data records straight from the paver.

Paddy Murphy, Managing Director of Contracting at Aggregate Industries, added: "Given the complexity of this bridge renovation, we created a bespoke ProLay Ultra asphalt mix manufactured, supplied and laid by our expert team. It's a great example of how this customised approach was able to meet the difficult brief of creating an asphalt solution that didn't require a high degree of compaction yet still had low voids."

DIARY DATES 2020/21

Some planned dates for your diary (subject to change):

15-16 Dec: European Asphalt Pavements Association (EAPA) webinar on **Sustainability Assessment of Asphalt Pavements** <https://bit.ly/3feT7Hj>

10 Feb: 2nd South West Highways Alliance Conference – **Highway to Zero Carbon**, STEAM Museum, Swindon <https://bit.ly/3nGUKAL>

23-24 March: IAT 2021 Annual Conference: **Asphalt Vision**, Titanic Quarter, Belfast www.iatconference.co.uk

16-18 June: 7th Eurasphalt & Eurobitume Congress: **Asphalt 4.0 For Future Mobility** <https://www.eecongress2021.org>

5-10 Sept: MPA/Newcastle University **Asphalt and Pavements course**, Newcastle <https://bit.ly/3fcdDbu>

6-7 Oct: LCRIG's **Strictly Highways**, Winter Gardens, Blackpool <https://lcrig.org.uk/events/strictly-highways-2020>

 We wanted a solution that was flexible..."

Cllr Stan Hill, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, Halton Borough Council



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