



LGTAG Newsletter – February 2025

INTRODUCTION



Our incoming President for 2025-26, Emily See, has just released the first details of her President's conference. This will be held at Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes. Yes, for those historians amongst you it is the very place that the code breakers used to unravel enemy messages during World War Two. The conference is a one-day face to face event on Wednesday 4 June.

Emily's theme is "Rebuilding the Foundation – Asset Management the key to infrastructure investment." The conference will cover all elements of asset management, and we have speakers from Treasury, Department for Transport, ADEPT, CIHT and many more. LGTAG members can benefit from free or reduced rate attendance and / or sponsorship opportunities. You can read more details including speakers, and register, via our conference page (hosted by our partners at LCRIG) using [this registration link](#).

HIGHWAYS & INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

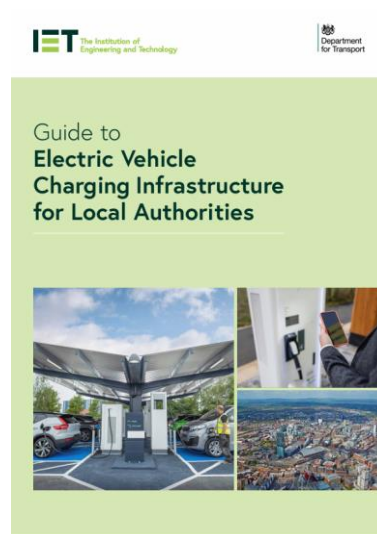
Our **Highways & Infrastructure Management Board (HIMB)** will be holding an online session on 26 February. The agenda is being finalised, but topics suggested for the agenda include the ORR investigation into National Highways engagement, No Mow May 2025 and the LGTAG Research Grant submission process. You can read more details as they are released on our dedicated meeting page on the website [here](#).

NB The December releases of highway maintenance funding allocations and road condition statistics for England are covered in our “Government” section below.

Our HIMB’s joint session (**The Big EV Debate**) with our Strategic Transport Board last November raises many issues and examples of advice / best practice regarding **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure**. We tried to summarise the points and references in our short output document, a headline summary, that is [downloadable here](#). Soon afterwards three more pieces of key advice were published. These being a substantial document from the Institute of Engineering & Technology (IET) on EV charging infrastructure and two shorter Government publications on grid connections policy and cross pavement solutions for charging. Links and a brief summary of content are set out below.

The DfT / OZEV published **Guidance, Cross-pavement solutions for charging electric vehicles**. It is intended to help local authorities to develop policies on the safe use of cross-pavement electric vehicle charging solutions. Topics covered include policy design; permissions and permits; minimum standards for installation and apparatus; responsibilities and liability; benefits of cross-pavement charging solutions and case studies. The guidance, including some brief case studies can be found [here](#).

At a more detailed technical level is the 96 pages of guidance, entitled Guide to Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure for Local Authorities, issued by the Institute of Engineering & Technology (IET). This also has the support of the DfT and also gives case studies along with many more practical illustrations and pieces of advice. The full material can be [found from the IET here](#).



The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (**OZEV**) published the policy paper on **Improving the grid connection process for electric vehicle charging infrastructure**. This sets out 7 'action areas' that have been identified from engagement with the industry that are seen to need attention. They cover.

- Energisation of chargepoint assets; Increased accessibility and streamlining of the connection offer process; Standing charges] Providing a forward look of investment to DNOs; Land access / wayleaves; Consenting and Continued monitoring and evaluation.

A series of proposed actions are listed which are to be taken forward on a voluntary basis by charge point operators (CPOs), distribution network operators (DNOs) and government. The full paper is [available from OZEV here](#).

All of the recent pieces of data, guidance and advice have their merits but one is left with a sense that this rapidly developing area of work may still need a bit more drawing together of material (updated as technology advances) to help local authorities efficiently tap into the best latest material?

The **Office of Rail and Road (ORR)** has a monitoring role over National Highways (NH) that was established under legislation in 2015. ORR are required to scrutinise the company and hold it to account for its management of the strategic road network – including delivery of performance and efficiency.

ORR also advise the government on the appropriate level of funding and performance requirements for future road periods to help frame challenging and deliverable performance and efficiency requirements. These requirements are set out by the government in road investment strategies (RIS). As part of this responsibility ORR are **currently examining how NH engage with stakeholders** of which local authorities are a major component. Members may be contacted by ORR's consultants to respond to a survey on NH's engagement performance. We are also planning to have an ORR speaker at the forthcoming H&IM Board.

It may still be a bit frosty outside, but thoughts turn towards Spring. Our friends at Plantlife have opened up registration for this years **No Mow May campaign**. We will have a speaker at the forthcoming Highways and Infrastructure Management Board to brief us all further. You can get more advance briefing and access to registration through the links below.

- No Mow May 2025 Registration Link:
[Local Authority No Mow May Registration \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- No Mow May 2025 Webpage link including guidance and case studies:
[Managing Road Verges and Green Spaces - Plantlife](#)

FLOODING & RESILIENCE – NORTHERN IRELAND

In another of this winter's storms (**Storm Eowyn**) our friends in **Northern Ireland**, Scotland and the north of England experienced the worst conditions placing a severe strain upon the resilience and emergency planning resources of colleagues across the local authorities impacted. Amongst the issues raised have been ongoing dislocation to electricity supplies, disrupted water supply, blocked roads and schools closed by structural damage. The article about the situation in Northern Ireland [from the BBC](#)

[here](#), reported around 35,000 homes still without power five days after the worst of the storm had passed. It is of note that electrical engineers from other regions (some hailing from as far away as the Channel Islands) have been assisting the local teams to deal with the widespread dislocation of power supplies.



Battered coastlines, fallen trees, blocked roads, damaged schools, and felled power lines. (A selection of images from Press Eye, Aaron Doherty, Pacemaker Press and PA News depicts Eowyn's rampage across Northern Ireland)

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT

Our **Strategic Transport Board** met online on 22 January. The meeting heard three interesting and relevant presentations, The first was from Marisa Hayes who gave an update on the National Underground Assets Register (**NUAR**) project. The main development was the agreement that the Ordnance Survey were to become the long-term hosts for the database. Legislation relevant to NUAR, in the form of the Data Use and Access Bill, was also currently before Parliament. You can find a fuller account and the presentation slides to be shared on the LGTAG site [here](#).)

The Board then heard from Rachel Lee of Living Streets who presented on the third edition of the **“Pedestrian Pound” report**. The report ,as publicised in our previous newsletter, can be downloaded [via this link](#).

Key points from the research were that Pedestrians = Pounds (in terms of local economic activity); in person connections matter and walkable environments save money e.g. in reducing health service demand. The research includes several case studies including Shrewsbury, Alloa and London's Baker Street. Again a fuller feedback and a copy of the presentation slides can be found on our LGTAG site [here](#).)

Our third and final presentation was an update on the **Pathways wayfinding project** from Tim Fendley from AIG and Mark Hardie from MHA. We had received an initial briefing in September 2023. Work had since progressed with up to fifteen pilot projects being prepared to test out the consistent signing system developed by the team. A more detailed account backed by the slide deck can also be found on the LGTAG meeting webpage [here.](#))

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The increasing reliance upon battery power across many aspects of everyday life risks exacerbating a serious **safety issue for waste collection and storage from battery fires**. An example being the increased use of smoking materials such as vapes that incorporate batteries. There have been many fires caused either in RCV's or at recycling centres by batteries crushed in waste collection. It is an ongoing task to educate users of the service so that incidents do not occur such as the one at Bridport in Dorset [reported here by the BBC](#). Thankfully in that case the fire was promptly dealt with, no one was hurt and the RCV remained usable. That has not always been the case.



An example of education about the battery dangers – Greater Cambridge Shared Waste

LONDON

Our London Strategic Transport Forum (historically termed LoTAG 1) has acted as client for a piece of work assessing the **current status of funding for borough transport strategies and projects in London in 2024**. By compiling a detailed analysis of existing funding options and the processes involved, the study aimed to support boroughs in navigating the increasingly diversified financial landscape at a time when councils are facing increasingly stretched central funding are limited. The work was carried out by Citisense using data supplied by the majority of London's boroughs. and you can read it using the link to their site [here](#). In addition to cost pressures

experienced across the UK London's transport funding has been greatly influenced by changes in the volume of resource available to be distributed by the regional authority (TfL) in recent settlements.

The presentation materials from the LoTAG 2 Conference are now available to members. They are available on the members' area of the LoTAG website: <https://www.lotag.co.uk/lotagconference>. If you are not a member of the LoTAG website, you just need to register with your borough email address and create a password. If you have any problems, please let the regional coordinator, Angela Ramsier, know. The conference was a huge success, and our London colleagues are already planning the 2025 event.

PARKS & GREEN SPACE

Our LGTAG representatives were pleased to attend, and in the case of several members such as former President Jon Munslow, to present at the **GreenSpace 2025 conference**. This was held at the National memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on 22 January and was organised by Kaarbontech. Many of the climate change and biodiversity issues challenging local authorities were addressed. An example being the management of the large tree "stock" for which councils are responsible.



Mr Munslow in action at GreenSpace 2025

GOVERNMENT / PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT, DATA, AND UPDATE

The Department for Transport has issued its latest **senior staff organogram**. In addition to the change at the political "top of the tree" changes include gearing up for rail reforms. You can download the chart [from the DfT here](#).

Government Consultations

Several new consultations were released just before Christmas. A theme amongst many is the aim to relax / speed up processes that might inhibit change. This would appear to tie in with the Treasury's efforts to boost growth by reducing constraints.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) opened a **consultation on Local authority funding reform: objectives and principles** which is

about proposed updating of how local authorities are funded through the local government finance settlement. This consultation applies to changes from 2026-27 onwards and is distinct to that of the local government finance settlement for 2025-26. It closes at 11:59pm on 12 February 2025. The full material including the 19 consultation question scan be accessed [here](#).

The MCHLG also have a consultation live on **Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation Reforms**. It seeks views on a range of proposals aimed at implementing technical reforms to make the compulsory purchase process in England and Wales quicker, lower costs of the process, and ensure the compensation rules are fairer. It closes at 11:59pm on 13 February 2025. The full consultation (22 questions on this one) can be downloaded [from their website here](#).

The DfT also have some consultations running, First up we have one on **Phasing out sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 and supporting the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) transition** - It seeks views on delivering the commitment to end the sale of new cars powered solely by internal combustion engines by 2030 and supporting the UK's transition to zero emissions vehicles. The consultation is split into 2 parts. Part 1 is about phasing out sales of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 and supporting zero emission transition. The second part of this consultation is about the ZEV Mandate, delivered through the vehicle emissions trading schemes (VETs). This consultation is relevant to all four home nations and also has the Business and Energy Secretaries as co-sponsors. It closes at 11:59pm on 18 February 2025. The full details (49 pages, 17 questions this time) can be found [here](#).

On a similar topic DfT opened a consultation on **Zero emission vans: regulatory flexibility**, this seeks views on proposals to reduce regulatory burdens for businesses operating zero emission vans. The proposals focus on roadworthiness testing and drivers' hours rules. It closes by the end of 3 March 2025. The details can be [read here](#).

Publications / announcements

The period around Christmas saw a great number of relevant publications from Government. Ranging from the strategic re-organisation of local authorities / devolution through to detailed statistical data. We have covered a few already in specific sections above (e.g. on EV charging) but many more are important for LGTAG members' sectors.

Top of the tree (not quite a Christmas fairy though!) was the release of proposed council reorganisation and future funding proposal material in play. This is captured in the **English Devolution White paper**. Plenty of debate to be had on the relative merits of larger units versus more localised ones. You can peruse the full 118 pages from the Deputy Prime Minister with the [Document available here](#).

On December 20, the DfT published the **latest Highways maintenance funding allocations** - Allocations of the local highways maintenance funding by authority for the financial years from 2020 to 2026. The key new element being the 2025-26 apportionment. It is to be noted that London boroughs are to receive some direct funding again. It is only recently that a portion of the dedicated DfT money has been diverted from its usual routing through TfL.

Our politically representative friends over at the [LGA have commented](#) on the highways funding, They released [this statement of qualified support](#), with the increase welcomed but the retention "incentive" criticised. The allocations can be viewed in more detail [here](#).

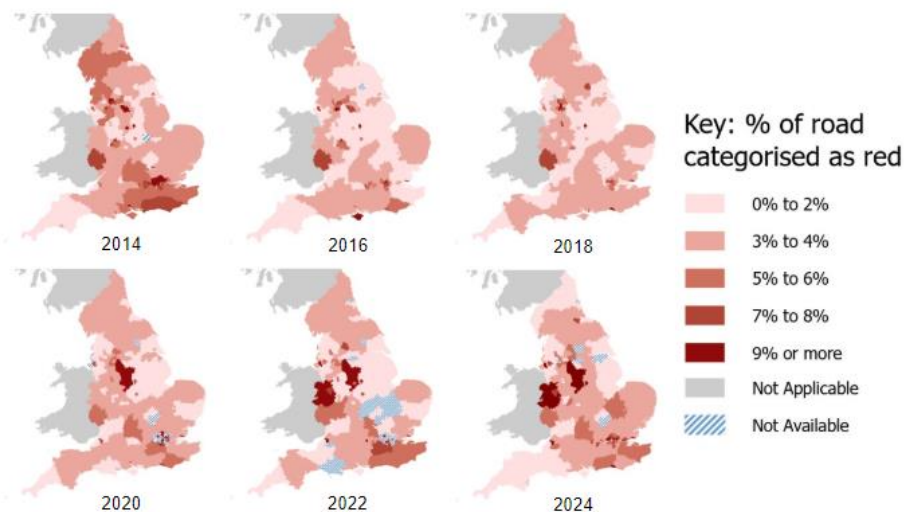
The DfT have also published **Road conditions in England to March 2024**. This is timely given the funding announcement above. It covers road condition statistics on local authority roads and National Highways managed roads in England. In the period ending March 2024, local authorities in England reported that:

- 4% of their 'A' road network
- 7% of their 'B' and 'C' road network
- 17% of their unclassified road network

were categorised as red (i.e. should have been considered for maintenance).

This compares to the roads managed by National Highways where 4% of motorways and 7% of 'A' roads should have been considered for maintenance in period ending March 2024. The full data release which includes several graphs as well as much more detail is [available here](#). There are inevitably variations from authority to authority as the maps extracted from the DfT report below shows using the red condition category data.

Chart 4: A map showing the difference in the percentage of red local 'A' road across local authorities in England, for the years 2013 to 2024 ([RDC0120](#), [RDC0121](#), [Interactive Map](#))



Extract from the Road conditions statistics report

Bus fares were recently revised to take account of the Government's extension of revenue support (all be it at a higher cap of £3). The latest fares statistical release predates that change. **Quarterly bus fares statistics: July to September 2024 shows that the** local bus fares index increased by 5.6% in England outside London between September 2023 and September 2024. The £2 fare cap for single tickets was still in place, so this increase reflected changes to other fare products (such as season tickets). For other areas, the local bus fares index change between September 2023 and September 2024 was:

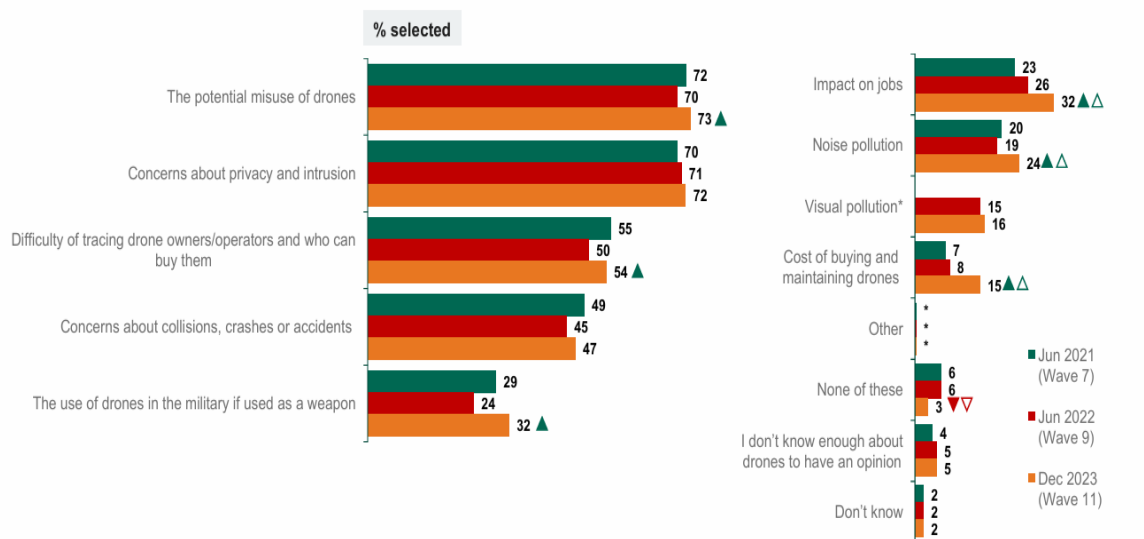
- 1.2% increase in London
- 7.5% increase in metropolitan areas
- 5.5% increase in non-metropolitan areas
- 5.1% increase in Scotland

- 8.7% increase in Wales

As a comparator the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 1.7% over the same 12-month period. Full details are [here](#).

DfT published wave 11 of the Transport and transport technology: public attitudes tracker – Its fieldwork is a little dated in a field where things might be expected to move on quite smartly as that was from December 2023. Sections cover such emerging transport as e-scooters and drones. Our extract below features public concerns over the latter with privacy and misuse categories remaining prominent. The announcement on 28 January of Darlington as the location (subject to regulatory approvals) for the Amazon trial of a drone based delivery network indicates a significant step up in the application of the technology to everyday commercial usage, The full 78 page report can be [accessed here](#).

Figure 7.4 – Concerns about drone use



*New code for W9 Jun 2022
 Q135. Which of the following concerns, if any, do you have about the use of drones?
 Base: All 16+ in England (Jun 2021: 3392; Jun 2022: 3162; Dec 2023: 3622)

▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase compared to Wave 7
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease compared to Wave 7
 ▲ Indicates a statistically significant increase compared to Wave 9
 ▼ Indicates a statistically significant decrease compared to Wave 9

Extract from the Wave 11 public attitudes report

The other EV charging related publications that appeared around the same time are reported in our HIMB section above.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The **Rees Jeffreys Road Fund** have announced **two further opportunities for financial backing** in professional development. These are.

- **Ready for the Future professional development grants** - which are for transport professionals to support them to gain the emerging skills needed for the future in the transport sector. Aimed at filling the future skills gap, applicants can apply for funding to learn about things such as AI and data through to behavioural science, accessibility, and inclusion. The grants are targeted at people who would not otherwise be able to afford to study and who can use their newly acquired skills in

an impactful way in the transport sector. The deadline for applications is the 11th April 2025. More information about the scheme is at [Ready For The Future Grants - Rees Jeffreys Road Fund](#)

- **Grant funding for innovative projects** which backs innovative research and educational projects that promote and advance how roads are experienced by everyone in the UK. Grants of up to £30,000 are available for projects that develop and test new ideas or create new learning that make roads safer, more efficient, and effective in terms of maintenance, environmental impact, and user experience. The next deadline for applications is 11th April 2025. The Fund encourage potential applicants to get in touch now and discuss their proposed project application with them. [Grants - Rees Jeffreys Road Fund](#)

LGTAG GOVERNANCE

Our **LGTAG Council** are pleased to have been invited once again to visit Northern Ireland. The final details of a site visit, joint NITAG meeting and Council session on 4 March are being agreed ahead of what promises to be another valuable event.

Thank you once again to everyone who has paid their **2024-25 membership fees**. Our records suggest that some remain outstanding, and we have just contacted these members to resolve the remaining arrears.

MISCELLANY

We are accustomed to seeing various pictures of potholes accompanying news articles, not least when the 2025-26 maintenance funding was reported. However, the highways are not the only transport infrastructure which can be in poor shape. The snap below was taken by your correspondent at a South London commuter station. Have a look at those vertical and horizontal profiles. That mind the gap warning is certainly relevant!



In poor shape at a South London station

CALENDAR DATES

2025

Wednesday 26 February (1200-1400) – Highways & Infrastructure Management Board (online)

Tuesday 4 March – LGTAG Council (Northern Ireland visit and meeting / hybrid format)

Wednesday 23 April (1200-1400) – Joint STB and HIMB session on AI (online)

Monday 2 June – Provisional AGM date (online)

Wednesday 4 June – LGTAG Presidents Conference (Bletchley Park)

*LGTAG on **social media**
Connect through our **Linkedin site here.***

Please note, our thanks to those who previously followed us on X/Twitter. In the wake of a review by LGTAG Council we have now deactivated that account.

The **presentations from the 2024 LGTAG President's Conference** can be accessed from our website [using this link.](#)

My thanks go to everyone who provided input for the newsletter. Bob Donaldson and Emily See, amongst others, helped in producing this edition.

GDPR

We have sent you this communication because you are on our LGTAG mailing list. If other colleagues want to be added or you wish to have your details removed, please notify me. LGTAG's full GDPR statement can be found on our website at [this page](#)

Colin Mann - National Secretary – LGTAG - 37 Northampton Road, Croydon, CR0 7HD – Email - Secretary@lgtag.com Mobile: 07484191623 - www.lgtag.com
