



Briefing 22-14

April 2022

APSE Street Cleansing Seminar 2022: A Report Back

To: All Chief Executives, Senior Policy Officers, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Brief Overview

On 5 March 2022, APSE held its first in-person Street Cleansing Seminar for over two years at the National Conference Centre in Birmingham. This briefing provides a short summary of the day's speakers and the topics of discussion.

[Each presentation from the event can be downloaded for free from the APSE website here.](#)

1. Creating cleaner, greener and safer local environments

A staple of the sector, APSE's annual Street Cleansing Seminar provides an excellent opportunity for local government streetscene teams to share best practice and brush-up on the latest technological and policy developments.

Delegates, ranging from officers to directors to elected members, joined us from across the UK to share best practice and emerging policy challenges across the local government landscape.

2. The state of the street cleansing sector

Wayne Priestley, APSE Principal Advisor, opened the session with an analysis of APSE's new State of the Market on Street Cleansing; the emerging trends and what they mean on the ground for streetscene staff. A wide variety of local authorities from across the UK responded to the survey thus providing a meaningful cross-section of views.

APSE's latest survey work honed in on the state of budgets, service efficiencies, income generation, as well as other areas of interest such as litter bin strategies and the use of community volunteers.

The survey found that despite a level of ongoing service budget pressures and the impact of the pandemic, managers and frontline staff are continuing to provide efficient street cleansing services. However, there is a real risk that service quality could diminish as a result of those ongoing pressures, which may include changes to cleansing frequencies, the need for investment and the impact of the pandemic

The APSE State of the Market findings stressed that it is critical that service resources are targeted more effectively in those areas where cleansing demands are highest. From the results received there does appear to be a greater level of optimism that closer monitoring of cleanliness levels with more targeted resource input will help stave off some of the worst excesses of funding cuts. You can view the full briefing here. [ADD LINK]

3. Towards a litter free Scotland

Dr. Sarah Letsinger, Zero Waste Policy Officer, Scottish Government, was up next to outline progress on the 2014 National Litter Strategy, as well as the recommended priority areas for future strategy identified by the Strategy Review in 2019. Three priority areas identified include:

- A focus on flytipping
- Ownership of actions
- Monitoring and evaluation

Dr. Letsinger was keen to emphasise the need to ensure a strong, consistent enforcement model that is fit for purpose. Proposals include raising fixed penalties to the maximum and taking powers to enable the seizure of vehicles used in flytipping. Ultimately, for Zero Waste Scotland, three strategic themes – behaviour change, services and infrastructure, Enforcement – are key to realising the ambitions of the Litter Strategy .



70%
of Scots are concerned about litter and flytipping in their area.

Enforcement -Flytipping
Ensure there is a strong, consistent enforcement model that is fit for purpose

Proposed actions include:

- Conduct an evidence review of enforcement practices
- Raise fixed penalties to max
- Explore civil penalties
- Take powers to enable seizure of vehicles used in flytipping
- Review and develop further guidance on enforcement best practices

4. Local streets paved with gold

Our final speaker for Session One was Craig Fuller, Director of Sales at Roadvert who was on hand to highlight how his organisation has helped councils unlock fresh revenue streams from advertising; delivering highly targeted on-vehicle advertising campaigns for a fraction of the cost of mailshots.

A unique advertising medium that has a massive audience reach both locally and nationally, discover how APSE Approved Partner Roadvert's cutting-edge technology can create much-needed extra revenue for your local council by [clicking here](#).

5. Industry Supplier Developments

During the coffee and lunch breaks, delegates had an opportunity to view the latest cutting-edge street cleansing products. From electric compact sweepers with zero emissions to solar-powered, sensor-equipped bins, delegates were able view and explore all the market-leading products on display and discuss the latest technological developments with our excellent exhibitors.



6. Developing and Growing Volunteers throughout a pandemic

Eddie Curry, Head of Public Realm at Nottingham City Council, opened Session Two talking about the importance of 'Clean Champions' to maintaining the cleanliness of the local area. Nottingham Clean Champions was set up in 2017 to encourage residents to take an active role in their community and take control of litter in their neighbourhood.

Mr Curry went on to explain the measures his team had put in place to develop and grow these vital volunteers throughout the pandemic. The approach to maintaining a sustainable volunteering force involved employing a volunteer coordinator and two interns dedicated to managing the volunteers permanently. With regards to keeping the volunteers abreast of the latest developments, Nottingham used fortnightly zoom meetings, quarterly meetings, newsletters and Facebook groups. As a way to further boost moral and maintain high levels of engagement, the council held a celebration event for the volunteers at Council House.

The results speak for themselves: the current number of Clean Champions is 5736 (3715 adults & 2021 juniors), and the current number of bags collected per month is approximately $1200 \times 12 = 144000$ annually.

7. Greening street cleansing

Next up to the podium, Stuart Russo, Senior Technical Officer at City of Bradford Council, looked in depth at how his streetscene service has played a vital part in helping to realise the local council's climate emergency plans.

For Bradford, the key to advancing the green agenda lies in long-term planning and building in efficiency. Effective measures adapted by the Council and cited by Stuart in his presentation include:

- Integrated service teams minimising travel to some locations e.g. parks and cleansing.
- Cross-border agreements for difficult locations.
- Formalising local community agreements to reduce travelling e.g. Friends Of groups.
- Sensor-tech at key locations e.g. remote or ones prone to heavy use during good weather.
- Maximising proactive cleansing rather than reactive complaints driven process.
- Efficient route planning, not the quickest but the greenest route.
- Revaluating staff start and finish locations, managing by output & low-code tech solutions.

8. 'The Rochdale Approach'

Having scooped most improved performer in the Street Cleansing category at the APSE Performance Networks Awards 2021, delegates were treated to the secrets to the Council's success. The Borough had previously struggled with its street cleansing service with some issues compounded by an ageing workforce, ageing sweeper fleet, abuse of litter bins and poor feedback.

Remedying these issues, and propelling the team to success at the APSE Performance Networks Awards, involved implementing a suite of changes. Amongst these improvements included a new fleet of sweepers, encouraging staff feedback, closer monitoring of external contractors, a targeting of repeat complaints, the trials of solar powered litter bins and closer working with enforcement.

Successes & Benefits

- Most Improved LA
- Pride
- Happier workforce
- Less complaints
- More compliments
- Proactive
- Improved culture
- Cleaner streets



9. The Coastal Plan: A flexible and multi-area approach to street cleansing

Our penultimate speaker for the day, Mike Cockburn, Assistant Director of Parks and Environment at Wirral Council, was on hand to discuss the unforeseen benefits and opportunities arising from the pandemic, and how the experience of COVID has produced a fundamental change in how the Council's Street cleansing service functions and operates.

The easing of restrictions in May 2020 generated major challenges to Wirral's services and high footfall and service demand continued, particularly at coastal locations, throughout 2020 and 2021. These pressures led to the development of 'The Coastal Plan'.

The multi service Plan was prepared to cover a full range of demand issues - vehicle and pedestrian movement, community patrol, public messaging, toilet provision, parking enforcement, young people engagement , environmental health and licensing. The street cleansing provision included increased litter patrols, additional bulk bins, BBQ disposal, supervisory support, extra litter bin servicing and collection.

The Plan played a key role in allowing the service to navigate the choppy waters of the pandemic. The Plan has also delivered several co-benefits including political recognition of the importance of street cleansing services, the embedding of a multi-service management approach and regeneration plans for Wirral's key coastal locations.

10. What does the data tell us?

The final speaker of the day, Debbie Johns, Head of APSE Performance Networks, examined what APSE's streetscene benchmarking data could tell us about the sector; namely issues surrounding structure, costs and staffing.

Debbie acknowledged that, as per APSE's data, more councils are moving towards fully integrated or jointly-managed streetscene arrangements, and demographics generally show certain types of authority favouring this approach. However, larger councils are moving towards integrated solutions in order to meet austerity targets.

Debbie also touched on the latest developments surrounding APSE's Land Audit Management System; a simple and effective performance measuring system for street cleansing teams. You can learn more about this system, and the benefits it can bring to your street cleansing service, [here](#).

11. No room for complacency

If one had to identify just one main takeaway from the event, it would be that street cleansing service managers need to continually monitor and review their services if they are to deliver green, clean and safe streets. Certainly, from a public policy perspective, services which improve the quality of local neighbourhoods are extremely important to the general public. This was once again made abundantly clear within the findings of APSE's 2021 Public Perceptions Survey carried out by Survation, showing that street

cleansing was one of the most highly regarded services by UK residents. [You can view the survey here.](#)

As the foremost specialist in local authority frontline services, APSE continues to support local authority street cleansing teams via our extensive network of over 250 local authorities. 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.

Not a member? [Sign up today!](#)

Matthew Ellis

Communications Officer

How APSE's rich suite of services can help your street cleansing service...



Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing Advisory Group

– Free for APSE members

Free to join for APSE members, this Group looks at strategic, operational and technical issues which impact on local council waste collection and streetscene teams. Topics featured include: service delivery arrangements; latest legislative and policy issues; campaigns, education and enforcement; environmental issues such as flytipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling; quality standards; partnership working with police and fire services; recycling; and waste treatment such as anaerobic digestion. The Group also covers operational issues such as domestic and trade collections, use of vehicles/equipment, working patterns, apprenticeships and staff development. [You can sign up for the Group here.](#)



Step in as an ASPE Interim Manager and join our network of excellence

APSE Solutions are currently assisting a number of councils with a high demand in interim requirements. We are therefore looking to expand on available associates who can confidently step into a team, and hit the ground running. We are currently seeing a growing demand in streetscene management. We understand that as people leave their roles, we lose so much valuable experience and local government knowledge, APSE Solutions strive to share that knowledge and expertise amongst those authorities that need the support the most. If you have a background in operational and/or senior

management within streetscene services, you may have the skills required to step in as an ASPE Interim Manager and deliver the Solutions to excellent public service.

If you would be interested with working with APSE as an associate for interim assignments, get in touch for an informal chat. Email Nathan at nhorrocks@apse.org.uk or call 0161 772 1810.



Data is power: Measure the performance of your street cleansing teams

APSE Performance Networks is the largest voluntary public sector benchmarking service in the UK. With more than 200 UK local authorities in membership, Performance Networks benchmarks across 17 frontline services, including street cleansing.

As a membership of APSE Performance Networks, local authority street cleansing teams are provided with the following data: Cost of service; Productivity Staff absence; Customer satisfaction; Human resources and people management; Quality assurance and community consultation; Cleanliness standards achieved; Cost: service/transport/staff; Enforcement Education/publicity; Fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles.

The Land Audit Management System (LAMS) is also included, which is a quality inspection system to monitor grounds maintenance and/or street cleansing quality.

Not a member? [Sign up today!](#)



Health & Safety in Waste and Environmental Services – A Training

Masterclass

Delivered over two half-day sessions, this masterclass is led in conjunction with our legal partners, Pinsent Masons. You will develop an understanding of the “big picture” on health and safety, asking questions such as: how serious is it? Why should we be concerned in waste and environmental services? What are the issues for us? What are the hazards and risks for my specific service? What role does the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) play and what are their powers? The course explores case law and best practice case studies.

This course has been reintroduced in response to the ongoing prosecutions of local authorities for breaches of health and safety regulations. Never has it been more important to have an understanding of this vital area. Discounted for APSE members, [book your place here](#).



Helping your council municipalise local energy generation

APSE Energy is designed to bring councils together to share information, ideas, resources, best practice, and to support local energy projects. Our dedicated team of specialists assist APSE Energy members through:

- Regular briefings about the most up-to-date issues related to the energy agenda and their impact on local government;
- Detailed publications on relevant topics such as energy efficiency and renewables technologies, legislation and the climate emergency;
- Events, workshops and webinars to bring people, experience and ideas together to enable sharing of knowledge;
- Circulating specific operational queries to find answers from our membership;

- Providing consultancy support for individual projects where internal capacity means help and expertise is required.

Not a member? [Sign up today!](#)