

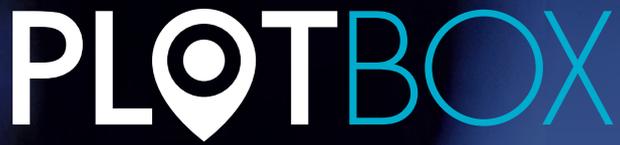
Data rocks!

Reporting back from the APSE Performance Networks Seminar 2021

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A New Year Message from APSE's National Chair



What's another year...

Cllr. Arwyn Woolcock

This time last year we were in the midst of what many described as the third wave of COVID-19. We were all desperately hopeful that it would be the last, and that 2021 would bring us back to some level of normality.

Sadly, that was not entirely the case, and we face many upcoming challenges with the onset of the Omicron variant, and the uncertainties that this brings to local government, and the communities we serve.

However, I want to reflect on the positives from 2021. When safely allowed I am pleased that APSE did manage to host some in-person events with our networks across the UK. As much as Teams and Zoom calls have been lifesavers for many interactions, I am sure that we all agree being in a room is the lifeblood of networking organisations. Being able to share a coffee and a chat with acquaintances old and new, leads to not just the laughs and anecdotes, but the opportunity to share ideas, innovations and explore resolutions to the many issues we face in our services.

I was delighted to take up the office of National Chair, in person, at the APSE Annual Seminar held in Birmingham. Home to the birthplace of municipalism, with its rich history of Joseph Chamberlain's interventions to improve the lives of Birmingham's citizens. It was a fitting place for me as a committed

municipalist myself, to take up my term of office. I firmly believe that local councils have the power to change peoples' lives for the better.

The past year has confirmed my beliefs. Councils have been at the forefront of supporting communities and we should never forget that. As Olympian Kriss Akabusi reminded us at the Annual Seminar 'we see you'. Too often the local government heroes are hidden in plain sight, but this should not be the case.

So, as we move into 2022, I want to say to you a huge thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you have achieved, and continue to achieve, in these difficult times. You really are the glue that holds our local communities together; whether as a councillor listening to and supporting your residents, whether a chief officer balancing finite resources, or as a frontline worker out in our communities, supported by the myriad of colleagues planning and delivering services, you are all at the coal-face of our local public services.

I wish you and your loved ones all the best for the festive season, and my thanks and good wishes for your ongoing commitment and resilience as we move into 2022 which I hope will be a much better and healthier year for us all.

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Report Back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events



Plugged into the MJ

"Progress is being made but we know it hasn't gone far or fast enough to resolve the systemic problems of finance and it remains unclear as to whether fair funding will ever be reviewed." On 18 November, APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien wrote for the MJ on recent announcements in the Government's Spending Review, and whether they signify the beginning of significant attempts at levelling up.

COP a load of that: APSE in Glasgow for COP26

On 11 November, APSE made the trip to COP26 in Glasgow to support #LocalGovDay. Whilst there, APSE attended a number of lively discussions.

One such event involved APSE joining our colleagues NILGA for the 'All Together Now: Collaboration for Local Climate Action in Northern Ireland' discussion. The session explored how adaptation and resilience can be used as a catalyst for wider climate change and featured speakers: Stephen Jones of Climate Northern Ireland,

Karen Smyth of NILGA, Richard McLernon of Belfast City Council, and Cathy Burns of Derry City and Strabane District Council.

APSE was also in attendance for the Soil Association Scotland event 'Connecting Climate Change & School Meals', as well as the session 'Financing the Sustainable Cities of the Future: What will it take to get there?'

Meals on Wheels Week

To focus attention on the positive impact Meals on Wheels has on those receiving the service, the NACC invited local MPs, dignitaries and industry leaders to join a delivery round in their locality and experience first-hand and share with their networks the lifeline it affords older and vulnerable people. One of the campaign's designated VIP's was APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien. Other VIPs keen to help spread the word included Andy Jones, the Chair of PSC100, Robert Richardson, the Chief Executive of the Institute of Hospitality, Caroline Bovey, the Chair of the British Dietetic Association (BDA), and Baroness Barker, who joined a Meals on Wheels delivery with Hertfordshire Independent Living Services (HILS) in St Albans.



Options for Social Care

On Tuesday 23 November, APSE's Mo Baines addressed the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Liverpool City Region. At this virtual event, Mo discussed options for social care; how to address reform, staffing shortages, options to rebuild capacity within the sector, and how to best support people in need of social care support. The event was chaired by Kim Johnson, MP, Chair of the APPG. Other speakers included: Cllr Val Armstrong, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Gillian Keegan MP, Minister for Social Care and Dan Smith of North West UNISON



APSE's Mo Baines with Belfast City Council Climate Commissioner, Debbie Caldwell, and Roisin Willmott, Director for Wales and Northern Ireland of RTP/I Cymru at the 'All Together Now' event in Glasgow on 11 November.



Scotland

Scottish National Party Conference

On 26 November, APSE Scotland hosted a fringe event at the SNP online Annual National Conference. The fringe focused on APSE's recent Local Government 2030 Commission report "Local By Default" calling for a system reset in local government, from sustainable finance for local councils to a reinvigoration of local democracy. The panel event included speakers Elena Whitham MSP, Deputy Convener of Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and elected member for East Ayrshire Council; Cllr Lynne Short, Dundee City Council as well as APSE Chief Executive and Chair of the Local Government Commission 2030, Paul O'Brien. The fringe was chaired by APSE Scotland's Vice Chair, Cllr Les Sharp of Clackmannanshire Council.

Northern Ireland

Back with a Bangor

Councils made it happen at the 2021 Local Government Conference in Northern Ireland. Over one hundred physical delegates along with virtual attendees attended the Policy and Investment event on Wednesday 24 November at the Clondeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor.

Jointly delivered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE NI), the 2021 "Councils Make It Happen" event tackled dealing with the economic, environmental, investment, social and health issues facing councils in Northern Ireland.

Hosted by broadcaster and political journalist Jayne McCormack, APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien delivered the key note presentation setting out the findings of the APSE Local Government Commission 2030. Paul also took the opportunity to deliver a fitting tribute to outgoing NILGA Chief Executive Derek McCallan who has been an excellent advocate for local government in Northern Ireland and across the UK. APSE wishes him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

APSE's National Council meeting in Belfast

Alderman Tommy Nicholl of Mid and East Antrim Council welcomed APSE's National Council to Belfast for its December meeting. Alderman Nicholl is the APSE National Chair elect for 2022-2023 having been nominated at the extraordinary Annual General Meeting of APSE Northern Ireland in November of this year. Alderman Nicholl will be supported in his role by Ellen Cavanagh, APSE Northern Ireland Secretary who has been nominated as the National Secretary Elect for 2022-2023.



[L-R] APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien and outgoing NILGA Chief Executive Derek McCallan.

Social Value Focus

A social value forum looking at the role of councils in Northern Ireland, took place on 30 November 2021 at Belfast Castle. The event included a series of modules looking at procurement policies, social value outcomes, inclusive economic outcomes and sustainable service delivery. A further three forums are planned in 2022. The forum content was delivered by Mo Baines, APSE Head of Communication and Coordination and leading Social Value expert Matthew Baqueriza Jackson. For details about the next forum email mbaines@apse.org.uk

Wales

Climate Considerations

Cllr Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Service Transformation and Deputy Leader of Swansea Council lead a discussion amongst APSE members at the APSE National Council meeting in December. Cllr Lewis highlighted the importance of designing in Climate Change outcomes in new forms of social housing. Swansea is an award-winning council on decarbonising housing and you can read more about this on page 22 and Swansea's work with Cardiff university.



Alderman Tommy Nicholl, APSE National Chair elect, Ellen Cavanagh, APSE National Secretary Elect and Cllr Terry Andrews, APSE Northern Ireland Vice Chair.

Using performance data to learn from one another



Elma Murray OBE
APSE Local Government
Commissioner and Interim Chair
of the Accounts Commission
Scotland

In July 2021 APSE published its seminal report looking at the future of local government to 2030 – Local by Default. I was privileged to be one of six Commissioners who worked on this – mainly during the pandemic and a sustained period of lockdown. There is no doubt the global pandemic featured in our thinking and was a constant reminder of the urgency of our work and why it mattered.

Local by Default is a strategic blueprint for the future of local government services in the UK. It makes 28 recommendations covering our constitution, financial sustainability, local determination and leadership, our workforce and how we work with our communities.

Underpinning all of that though is how we make it happen and what it means for the day-to-day services that local government delivers on its own, and with its local partners.

The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and the fundamental inequity that exists in so many of our communities. Since March 2020 local government has stepped up and doubled its efforts to put those who are vulnerable and most in need right at the centre (and the heart) of how services were adapted and delivered.

Looking to the future we can build on that and be more overt and deliberate about how we align people, partnership working, prevention, place and, of course, performance.

All of the 5 'P's above need to be working together for us to make continual improvement.

For us to measure that improvement we need to be measuring performance. It's important for staff to see what difference they're making and to get that pride in what they do. Local communities want to understand what their local Council does and how it's getting better.

For us to measure that improvement we need to be measuring performance. It's important for staff to see what difference they're making and to get that pride in what they do. Local communities want to understand what their local Council does and how it's getting better.

The local government community needs to evidence why 'local matters' and that means providing the evidence of our performance and using it to learn from each other. The APSE Performance Network does just that. It supports councils to demonstrate depth, pace and continuity of improvement. If we also use this to learn, it can support improvement happening at scale and to demonstrate that we build and improve from the bottom up ie. Local by Default. •

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Councils the most trusted to provide and deliver services in people's local area

Survation.



The latest Survation poll for APSE finds three times as many people trust their local council over the Government to make decisions about how services are delivered in the local area.

Survation were asked by APSE to provide a public opinion survey of attitudes to local neighbourhood services in 2021, covering the range of council services that would appear in their local area. Most questions mirrored questions asked in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 with additional questions relating to efforts to tackle climate change.

Polling was conducted by Survation with field work taking place between the 20-23 October 2021. The polling sample consisted of 1651 UK residents Aged 18+, including booster samples in Northern Ireland & Wales to ensure sub-samples of at least 100 persons in those regions. Data were weighted by age, sex, region, household income, education, 2019 GE vote and 2016 EU Referendum to be representative of all UK adults aged 18+.

Key Findings

The survey found trust in councils and councillors is still high overall compared to trust in Government and ministers. In other findings, the data suggests that climate change remains a priority for the public and they expect councils to take a leading role in responding to it.

It is bad news for Government and ministers with three times more trusting councils than Government, and over seven times more trusting councillors over Government ministers. Just 12% of the public trust ministers to make decisions about their local areas:

- Three times as many trust the local council (51%) over the Government (15%) to make decisions about how services are delivered in your local area. [Figure 1]
- Seven times as many trust local councillors (51%) over Government ministers (7%) to make decisions about their local area. [Figure 2]
- Nearly four times more people trusted councils (49%) to deliver local services over a private company (13%) or the Government (12%). [Figure 3]

Not enough taxes spent in the local area

When asked whether enough tax is spent on services in the local area, a comprehensive 65% responded with 'not enough', an increase of 6% on the previous year. Even more comprehensive was the response to the follow-up question, in which 77% of people preferred the Government to set aside more money for local councils than for national spending. [Figure 4]

Figure 1

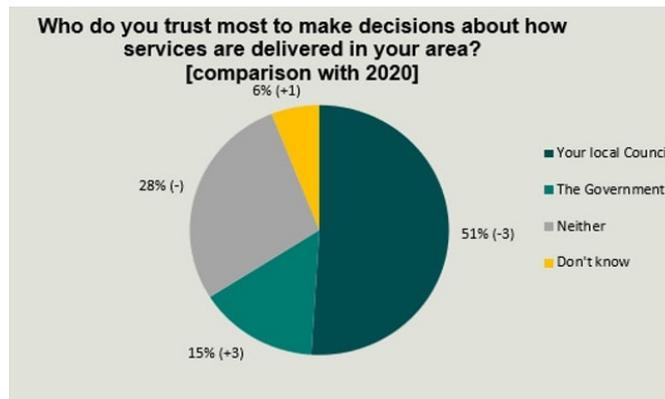
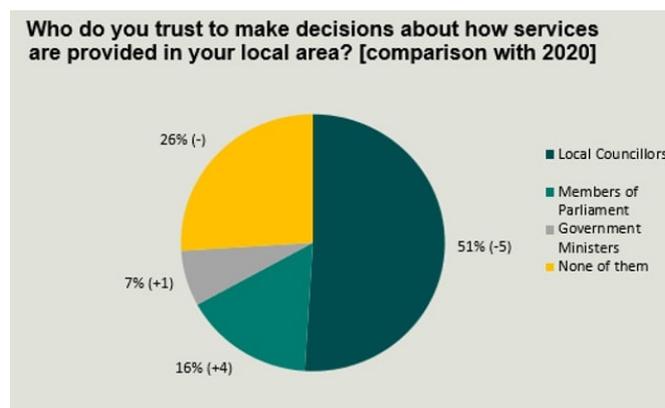


Figure 2



Councils most trusted to make decisions on local planning

On the hot topic of local planning, the public are nearly three times as likely to trust councils over the Government and over four times as likely to trust them over developers. A point the Government would do well to consider ahead of it setting out its response to feedback on the planning white paper, scheduled to take place in early 2022.

Funding social care

The Health Foundation has estimated that the funding gap for social care services in England will increase to £6.1 billion by 2030/31. When asked which tax they would prefer to increase in order to meet this shortfall, Income Tax came out top (32%), after the "Don't know" (32%) option and National Insurance (22%), Council Tax came last at (14%).

School meals move up the menu in service satisfaction

Satisfaction levels with services are broadly the same as 2020 with a range of positive results for local council frontline services amongst the public. However, satisfaction with School Meals, has had a significant increase. The top scores, with a mean score out of ten, for public satisfaction go:

- Parks (7.4)
- School meals (7.0)
- Waste and recycling (6.7)
- Sports and Leisure (6.6)

Some of these satisfaction ratings are also reflected in where the public would like to see more money spent. We asked "If you had a choice, what percentage of the extra money would be spent on the following 11 services?"

- Waste and recycling and sports and leisure services both increased as public priorities in 2021 up on 2020, perhaps reflecting public experience or consciousness of these vital

Figure 3

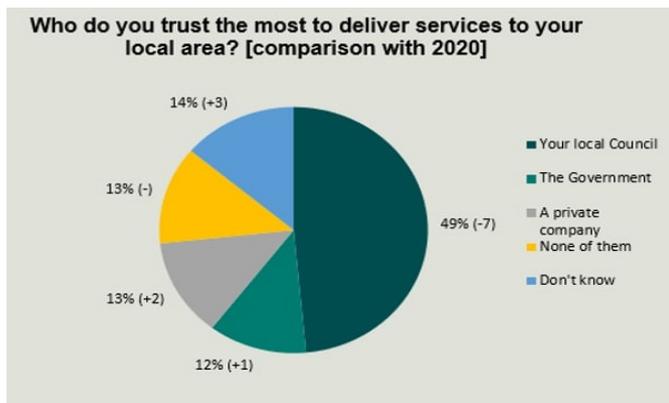


Figure 4

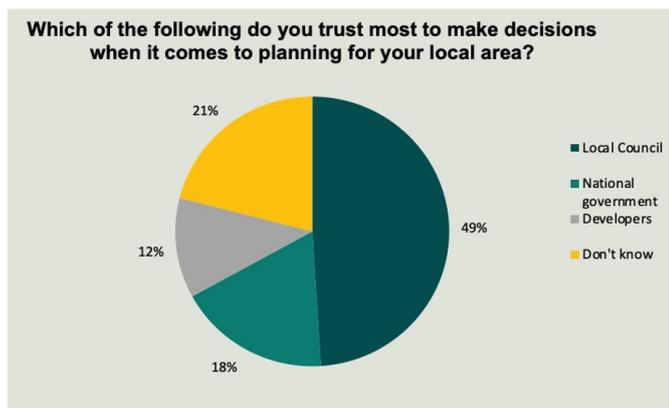


Figure 5

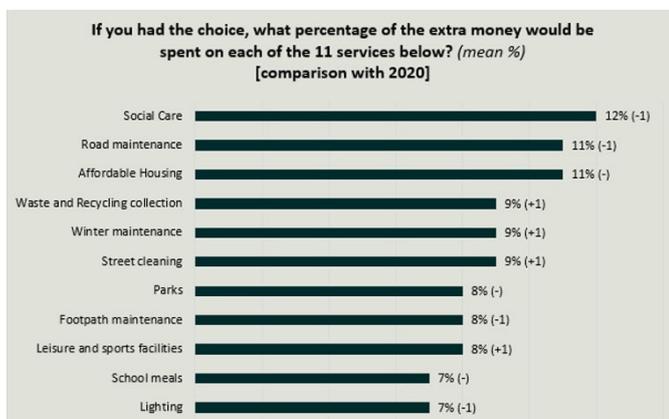


Figure 6



services during the pandemic. Social care topped the list of priorities (12%), followed by affordable housing and road maintenance both on 11%. [Figure 5]

That said, when local climate action was added to the list of 11 services, it emerged as the equal second highest new spending priority after Social Care and Housing, on par with Road Maintenance – leisure and sports decreasing as a priority. This demonstrates the tricky balancing act councils are confronted with now that climate change has reached a point of critical concern which is gaining parity with social care as a core issue for the public.

A sense of a decline in services follows the disruption caused by COVID and the lingering effect of austerity

A plurality of respondents believe that services have declined in their local area in recent years (45%), with 38% saying it has stayed the same. This sense of decline is likely a result of two things: disruption throughout the pandemic when areas like household waste recycling centres were forced to close alongside leisure centres and swimming pools, and also overall budget cuts that have impacted the sector for over a decade. It should be noted that overall satisfaction remains high for local councils but we should treat this result as a sign that the impact of cuts to the sector is filtering through into frontline services, further exacerbated by the disruption of COVID.

Councils best-placed to combat the effects of climate change

When it comes to the climate emergency, an overwhelming majority of the public expect that local communities will need to respond to the effects of climate change on the local environment in the next 10 years. The public think councils are best placed to combat the effects of climate change in their local community with big support for making homes more efficient:

- 59% say the specific local climate action they most support is making homes more energy efficient. This is slightly down on last year. The next priority is improved recycling and waste reduction (53%). [Figure 6]
- 54% would like to see more of their taxes given to their local council to address climate change.
- 37% see councils as best placed to implement local steps to combat the effects of climate change compared to 30% for the Government.

Underlining the case for an empowered and well-resourced local government

Speaking of the poll, APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, "These findings are really encouraging for anyone who works in local government. When it comes to delivering the neighbourhood level public services communities want and need, public trust remains strong; testament to the phenomenal work undertaken by local authorities over the past year in the face of extraordinary pressures."

However, recognising some of the challenges presented by the results, Paul went on to say:

"Though the survey should bring some reassurance to the sector, it should also serve as a spur to action in convincing Government of the need to grant councils parity of esteem when delivering improvements at a community level. As laid out in the APSE Local Government Commission 2030 report – Local by Default – the roles and responsibilities of local authorities must be broadened and deepened, especially in areas like climate change, if we are to meet the big public policy challenges of the future effectively and with popular support. A sustainable financial settlement is also imperative, one that ensures every council has sufficient resources to exercise its roles and responsibilities and meet the ever-growing needs of its communities."

- Visit the APSE website to download a PDF of a presentation on the survey findings - delivered by Damian Lyons-Lowe, Chief Executive, Survation - at the Performance Networks Seminar 2021. The presentation contains the full list of questions asked by Survation and accompanying graphs. This article was also based on the APSE briefing 21-61, which you can read online at www.apse.org.uk



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Debbie Johns
Arwyn Woolcock

**Performance
Networks Seminar**

2021

Report back

A quick look at this year's innovative speakers and thematic forums

Best and Most Improved Performer Awards

Check out the winners and finalists of this year's prestigious APSE Performance Networks Awards

Data Rocks!

Performance Networks Seminar Report Back

Following the cancellation of last year's in-person event, delegates from across the UK were raring to return to Blackpool for two-days of top quality networking, as well as expert insight into the big issues affecting the sector. We provide a summary of the event, speakers, workshops and forums.



Data intelligence has become an integral part of service delivery. The need for local government frontline services to demonstrate their competitiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness has never been greater. Benchmarking is essential to achieving this; informing budgets, target setting and highlighting areas of improvement over time.

With this in mind, the APSE Performance Networks Seminar remains a unique date in the local government calendar as it provides an unrivalled opportunity for service managers and directors to network and exchange ideas on data intelligence.

On the first day of the seminar, delegates heard from various high-profile keynote speakers discussing the ways council services can leverage their data to demonstrate competitiveness and improve performance. In the afternoon, delegates could attend one of five informative and engaging forums and then one of ten service-specific workshops. The forums and workshops allowed delegates to discuss issues of local concern and develop solutions with colleagues through problem solving surgeries.

The future direction for frontline services

"We didn't just put out a report with recommendations, we designed a route map for change, a route map for a revitalised local government fully engaged with communities" Elma Murray OBE, APSE Local Government Commissioner and interim Chair of the Accounts Commission Scotland, opened the Seminar with a look at the report 'Local by default'. Elma considered the 5 P's - People, Partnerships, Prevention, Place and Performance - and went on to explain how the APSE Local Government Commission Report's 28 recommendations embodies each of these P's.

A snapshot of APSE's benchmarking service

APSE's Debbie Johns was up next to provide a picture of the impact of the pandemic on performance within the UK from the data sets in Performance Networks. First, Debbie set some context; the data was drawn from 2020-21 financial year which was greatly affected by Covid-19 and by comparing the averages to previous years data, the analysis demonstrated the impact that the pandemic had on frontline services

Overall, council services have had different experiences in terms of whether they faced an increase or decrease in spend during the year. Building cleaning and parks, both frontline services dealing with the pandemic, experienced very small increases which really reflect inflationary increases and additional PPE expenditure. Catering (60% increase in trading deficit) and leisure spend (39% reduction in expenditure) was driven by school/leisure centre closures. The data also showed the impact on income from closing and suspending services. The reduction in income for Building maintenance (13%) was probably as a result of the inability to access houses and building closures. For refuse, trade waste income will have been restricted from business closures. Income figures for leisure reflect reduced usage of the centres which on average decreased by 87%. This has had a real impact on the headline cost data. Whereas in 2019-20, 93% of expenditure was recovered through income, only 31% was recovered during 2020-21 on average.

Debbie then analysed the impact on staff. On average building cleaning lost 11 FTE posts per council as a result of Covid absence and 9 FTE posts per council as a result of shielding. However, 8% more staff were used to cover the increased demand from the pandemic and the loss of staff due to absence. There was a very small loss of staff on cemeteries and crematoria as a result of Covid absence and shielding and a need to increase staff to deal with demand. In leisure, half of the councils retained staff and 70% paid retainers to casual staff.

There was a very different picture emerging between housing and non-housing building maintenance work. Due to the closure of buildings such as schools and leisure centres, non-housing services faced a larger reduction in employee costs (4% reduction) and vehicle costs (10% reduction). However, housing services saw an increase in employee costs despite the reduction in the number of jobs done. The increase in employee costs ratios was probably due to social distancing and necessary control measures in place due to the pandemic. The housing sector experienced an increase in emergency jobs. This will be due to the public being at home more during the lockdowns as well as the reduction in routine jobs will have had a consequential impact on emergency jobs. 2020-21 also saw less voids as there was less movement of tenants during this period. However, where there were void properties, there was an opportunity for a lot more work to be done, which reflected in an increase in re-let times and costs.



Debbie displayed charts showing the increase in demand for cemeteries and crematoria; this was higher for cremations (13%) than burials (7%). Numbers were affected by spikes in the pandemic. This included spikes in April and May 2020 and in February and March 2021 which follows the same pattern as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) analysis on deaths during the last couple of years.

Next, Debbie discussed the impact on service provision. Overall, two-thirds of councils suspended some types of refuse collection services. However, these were pre-dominantly very short suspensions. Any suspensions in collections in green waste, food waste or dry recyclables were due to planned suspensions or temporary suspensions due to outbreaks, rather than any resource issue or weather-related reasons. There were no suspensions of residual household collections due to Covid-19. The only suspensions of residual household collection, which were very limited, were those for weather-related reasons such as flooding. The data showed a large increase in service request changes for street cleansing, with additional demands being faced by the service in dealing with flytipping (45% increase) and emptying litter bins (32% increase) and dog bins (31% increase).

Despite school closures, Debbie explained that the education catering service was still providing an average of 49 meals per pupil (compared to 105 meals in a completely normal year on average), which shows how well the service coped in meeting new demands such as delivering meals to vulnerable or key worker pupils, home deliveries and holiday provision as well. Only 4 councils closed any playgrounds for the whole year. There were examples of innovation during this period such as on-line leisure classes being provided by over half of the councils. There was also an improvement in servicing vehicles on the scheduled day to meet the demand for vehicles.

The LAMS (Land Audit Management System) is a quality inspection system to monitor grounds maintenance and/or street cleansing. The results had been extracted from LAMS for street cleansing and grounds maintenance for inspections undertaken during the 2020-21 financial year. There were improvements in all of the averages for litter, dog fouling, bin structure, graffiti, fly posting, fly tipping, overflowing bins, bin cleanliness and staining/gum but a deterioration in weeds and detritus compared to the previous year. This was despite the demands of the pandemic. The deterioration for weeds and detritus was more likely to have been affected by weed control measures and weather-related issues than the pandemic itself. This improvement across environmental issues will have been aided by monitoring tools such as LAMS helping to identify and rectify environmental issues. A similar picture emerges for ground maintenance although dog fouling also deteriorated from analysis of these inspections, which is likely to be a result of increased dog ownership and dog walking.

Debbie then drew on some of the climate change measures reported by APSE Performance Networks. This included that 49% of parks services have a biodiversity/parks habitat action plan and 78% street lights are LED. The data is showing that progress has been made, although in some of the areas there is still a lot of scope for improvement such as the use of alternative fuels and electric vehicles and renewable energy sources. Debbie asked the workshops to identify additional measure which should be incorporated into the benchmarking in future on climate change.

Following on from this, Debbie updated delegates as to the progress being made by the Performance Networks service in launching new projects, expanding its influence and improving user experience. This included the LAMS app which now has 41 councils using this,

measuring the quality of service delivery for grounds, streets and cemetery land. This year has seen the introduction of a randomiser so the app randomly selects sites to be inspected and also has a mapping and route planning facility for the inspections. APSE have also developed an API so that inspection scores from LAMS can feed into back office scheduling systems. In addition, an app for building cleaning inspections was launched March 2021 and 15 councils have already signed up to this.

Debbie closed her address by noting that Covid-19 has had a large impact on council services throughout the UK and performance networks is a vital tool for councils to be able to compare their inputs, productivity, outputs and outcomes with similar councils who are facing the same challenges. APSE performance networks is the best source of information for local government, which is needed now more than ever to battle for budgets and to provide evidence to internal and external stakeholders

International perspectives

Our next speakers joined us all the way from across the Atlantic via video link. Rivka Liss-Levinson and Gerald Young of MissionSquare Research Institute, an organisation in USA that supports local government in a similar way to APSE in the UK, discussed the challenges of performance benchmarking in the USA, namely the major demographic, technological, and pandemic-related disruptions alter the public workforce environment, and how employers can manage those impacts over the longer term.

You can learn more about these disruptions by reading Gerald and Rivka's article on page 21.

Public trust in councils on the rise

Our next speaker of the session, Damian Lyons-Lowe, Chief Executive at Survation, shared the latest results of the APSE/Survation 2021 public opinion survey. The survey found three times as many people trust their local council over the Government to make decisions about how services are delivered in the local area. The survey also found trust in councils and councillors is still high overall compared to trust in Government and ministers. In other findings, the data suggests that climate change remains a priority for the public and they expect councils to take a leading role in responding to it. You can learn more about these findings on page 7.

Forums and workshops

In the afternoon, delegates attended thematic forums then workshops that honed in on particularly pressing issues and a range of local government frontline services. The forums explored a range of hot topics. In the forum "Workforce planning", Mo Baines, APSE Head of Communication and Co-ordination, discussed the latest APSE workforce survey: the skills and workforce profile, the impact of Covid-19, and future capacity including green skills. The subsequent report is available to download using this link.



In the forum "Lessons from COVID for business planning" Mark Davies, Director for Communities and Environment, Lancaster City Council, joined Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions, to highlight the various ways Lancaster Council has responded to the pandemic, and the service improvements that will be carried forward.

Fliss Mercer, Director: Communities, Customer & Commercial Services, Telford and Wrekin and Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive, revealed the secrets to the Council's success in their forum. Having been crowned APSE Overall Council of the Year 2021 in September, Fliss spoke at length about the various community initiatives and projects that have helped set the Council apart.

Other forums looked in detail at the new LAMS inspection apps as well as sustainability and climate change.

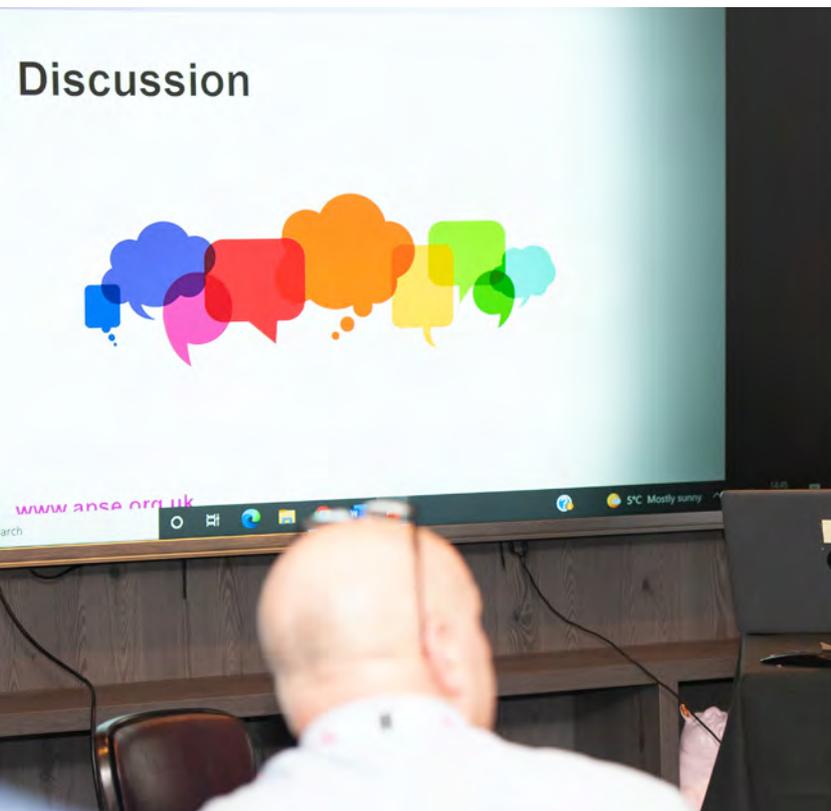
After lunch, day one of the seminar ended with ten highly informative workshops. With various frontline service experts facilitating the discussions, each workshop looked in depth at ways frontline staff can identify and overcome challenges, and thereby improve their effectiveness.

Climate change

The second day of the seminar opened with Gary Blenkinsop, Service Director for Environment and Climate, Wakefield Council. Gary spoke about the various initiatives his Council had pushed ahead with: low carbon estate and fleet, renewable energy, carbon offsetting, and behaviour change and influencing.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion, made up of a number of senior frontline service managers from across the UK, discussing how frontline services can respond effectively to the climate crisis. The panel included: Mary Lester, interim Director of Neighbourhood Services, Nottingham City Council, Debbie Sutton, Amenities Manager, Highland Council, David Clegg, Service Manager for Network Operations, Dorset Council, and Linda Mickleburgh-Benn, Service Manager, Property Maintenance, Wigan Council. •

If you would like to view any of the speakers' presentations, please visit the APSE website.



Best and most improved performer 2021

Sponsored by **Camms.**

APSE Performance Networks is pleased to announce the winners in the Most Improved and Best Performer categories for the Performance Networks Awards for 2021.

The awards ceremony took place at the Performance Networks Seminar at the Village Hotel, Blackpool on the evening of Thursday 2 December 2021. The charity awards dinner is a special event in the local government calendar and in recent years has raised over £60,000 for Parkinsons UK.

The Awards were hosted by BBC weather presenter Emmanuelle Lhoni.

APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien, said, "Performance information and benchmarking data is needed now more than ever. In the face of extraordinary external pressures, each finalist has demonstrated an astounding level of resilience and ingenuity. Right across local government, our member councils are successfully utilising APSE's Performance Networks data to drive improvements in service delivery and deliver considerable benefits to the communities they serve. A massive congratulations and thank you to all those shortlisted."

Congratulations to all finalists and winners!

Building Cleaning *kindly sponsored by Numatic*

Best Performer



Finalists

- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- Shropshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council

WINNER: DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- East Ayrshire Council
- Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
- Scottish Borders Council
- Shropshire Council
- Swansea City and County
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Building Maintenance *kindly sponsored by Camms*

Best Performer



Finalists

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Durham County Council
Fife Council
South Ayrshire Council
West Lothian Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Catering services *kindly sponsored by De Montfort University*

Best Performer



Finalists

Bradford Metropolitan District Council
East Ayrshire Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Scottish Borders Council
Shropshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
Tayside Contracts

WINNER: GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



Cemetery and Crematorium Services *kindly sponsored by The Columbaria Company*

Best Performer



Finalists

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
City of York Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Manchester City Council
Middlesbrough Council
North East Derbyshire District Council
Warrington Borough Council
Wyre Borough Council

WINNER: MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
City of Lincoln Council
Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council
North Lincolnshire Council

WINNER: NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

Parks, Open Spaces and Horticultural Services *kindly sponsored by Multevo*

Best Performer



Finalists

Conwy County Borough Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Hull City Council
North Northamptonshire Council (CK shared service)
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Telford and Wrekin Council

WINNER: EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Aberdeen City Council
Conwy County Borough Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Royal Borough of Greenwich
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

WINNER: ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Refuse Collection *kindly sponsored by Webaspx*

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
North Northamptonshire Council (CK shared service)
North Warwickshire Borough Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
South Lanarkshire Council
Telford and Wrekin Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
West Lindsey District Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

Huntingdonshire District Council
Kirklees Council
North Warwickshire Borough Council
Preston City Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Telford and Wrekin Council
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
West Lindsey District Council

WINNER: HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Roads, Highways and Winter Maintenance *kindly sponsored by Multevo*

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Aberdeen City Council
Angus Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Clackmannanshire Council
East Ayrshire Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Falkirk Council
Scottish Borders Council
South Ayrshire Council
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: WIGAN METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

Carmarthenshire County Council
Northumberland County Council
Renfrewshire Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough Council

WINNER: WIGAN METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Sports and Leisure Facility Management *kindly sponsored by Alliance Leisure*

Best Performer



Finalists

Ashfield District Council
Hucknall Leisure Centre
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council
East Riding Leisure Beverley
 Ipswich Borough Council
Fore Street Swimming Pool
 North Lincolnshire Council
Epworth Leisure Centre

Wokingham Borough Council
Loddon Valley Leisure Centre
 Wyre Borough Council
Garstang YMCA Leisure Centre

WINNER: NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Street Cleansing *kindly sponsored by Bucher Municipal*

Best Performer



Finalists

Bolsover District Council
 Chesterfield Borough Council
 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Eastleigh Borough Council
 Gedling Borough Council
 Huntingdonshire District Council
 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 North East Derbyshire District Council
 South Lanarkshire Council
 West Lindsey District Council

WINNER: EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Cambridge City Council
 East Renfrewshire Council
 Hull City Council
 Huntingdonshire District Council
 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council
 Reading Borough Council
 Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
 Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



Street Lighting *kindly sponsored by bbits*

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- Angus Council
- Fife Council
- Inverclyde Council
- Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Kent County Council
- Moray Council
- North Lincolnshire Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: WIGAN METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

- East Ayrshire Council
- Falkirk Council
- Highland Council
- North Lincolnshire Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
- West Lothian Council

WINNER: FALKIRK COUNCIL

Transport Operations and Vehicle Maintenance *kindly sponsored by System Edstrom*

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- Dorset Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Shetland Islands Council
- Tayside Contracts

WINNER: EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Finalists

- East Ayrshire Council
- Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Moray Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Sunderland City Council

WINNER: NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

APSE would like to thank all sponsors of the Performance Networks Seminar and Awards 2021 for their support

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MONMOUTH

"The Streetboss allows us to recycle at source which saves the council money as all waste would previously have gone to landfill. It is also a great educational tool for the public who can clearly see we are leading by example and recycling as much Litter as possible"



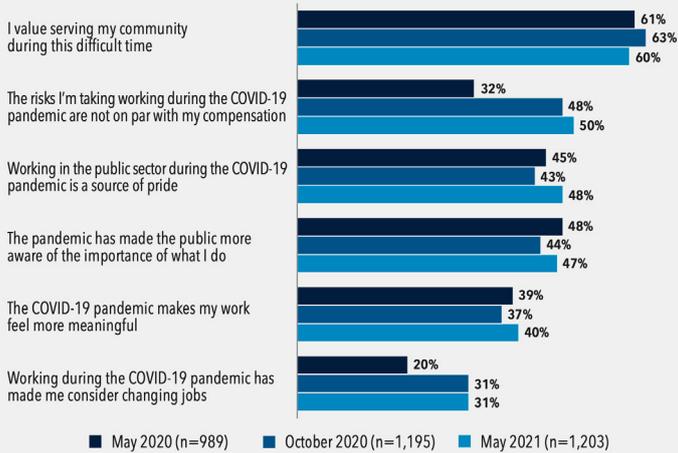
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Environmental

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Figure 10 **Feelings about working in the public sector during COVID**

(% somewhat or strongly agree)



employees).

This increase in the offering of flexible schedules is particularly critical as state and local government workers continue to struggle with the financial and employment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with lingering health and safety concerns. Since May 2020, the Institute has surveyed public sector workers every six months about these impacts, with the most recent results from 1,203 state and local employees surveyed in May 2021.

Among the key findings, 41% of respondents said they and their family have been negatively impacted financially by the pandemic, and 38% of those surveyed have had to spend down money from their emergency fund to make ends meet. Employees are taking on more debt (31%) and are worried about being able to save enough to be financially secure throughout retirement (43%).

COVID-19 is affecting employees' mental health as well. State and local workers were most likely to report feeling stressed (42%), burnt-out/fatigued (42%), or anxious (31%) about COVID while at work. Nearly three in four (74%) considered their job as at least somewhat risky in terms of potential exposure to people who may have COVID-19. Further, 56% have found it difficult to balance both work and home-life demands during the prior six months. With these concerns, it is perhaps not surprising – though certainly alarming – that 31% of respondents said that working during the pandemic had made them consider changing jobs. Of those, 25% want to leave the government sector entirely. [See Figure 10].

Despite these struggles, employees do have recommendations on how to improve the workplace. When asked to describe in their own words one or two realistic actions their employer could take to make the workplace better, the most frequently reported responses were issuing raises/bonuses (21%), allowing work from home/remote work and flexible hours (20%), and promoting safety by

COVID-19 is affecting employees' mental health as well. State and local workers were most likely to report feeling stressed (42%), burnt-out/fatigued (42%), or anxious (31%) about COVID while at work.

following CDC guidelines and providing/enforcing PPE (17%).

As much as the pandemic is continuing to impact employee recruitment and retention, employers are also facing a 'silver

tsunami" of retirements, as a large segment of older workers prepares to retire. Unlike during the 2009 recession, those who are eligible to retire are deciding to accelerate those plans, which means that employers need to have effective plans in place for filling key leadership positions that may be left vacant, preserving institutional knowledge, and developing skills and expertise among younger staff so that they see a clear path to professional growth in a public service career.

Automation is also driving expectations that some positions, particularly in areas like customer service, transportation, or supervision, may require fewer staff over the next 10 years (see A Cross-Sector Review of Public Service Employment).

Regardless of how these multiple workforce challenges interact, one factor weighing in favor of government employers is employee satisfaction with serving the public. For example, 60% of employees in the May 2021 COVID-19 survey say they value serving their community during this difficult time. Recognizing that employee motivation lies not just in the salaries that governments can offer, 19% of HR managers are building recruiting campaigns around finding satisfaction in public service.

For more on how the cities of Denver, Minneapolis, and San Francisco have emphasized the value of public service, read about government's brand advantage in Workforce of the Future: Strategies to Manage Change.

- *Rivka and Gerald's presentation for the Performance Networks Seminar is available to download from the APSE website. Please visit www.apse.org.uk*

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Formerly known as Cemetery Development Services, The CDS Group has been on an incredible journey.

We have undertaken over 400 feasibility studies and completed over 40 new cemeteries in the UK and overseas. As a result of the success and reputation in the cemetery market, CDS expanded into designing and developing new crematoria sites for both private companies and local authorities using our inhouse team of engineers and architects.

Our dedication to your vision has enabled us to gain recognition in both the cemeteries and crematorium market, **but now we are expanding.**

Our business now focuses on three distinct areas, namely Cemeteries and Crematoria, Parks and Leisure, and Environmental Solutions.

Our Parks and Leisure team can help design sports facilities, landscaping of parks and public spaces as well as designing drainage solutions.

The Environmental team can assist with investigating contaminated land sites under Part IIA and brownfield land, bringing to life forgotten parcels of land, helping to contribute to the local community and provide potential income generation for the local authority.

We currently have new sites under construction with many more in different stages of project feasibility, design and planning. The quality of our work has not changed; maintaining the high level of service you expect.



CDS are with you every step of the way, from Feasibility Studies, Landscape and Concept Design through to Planning, Construction and Delivery, ensuring a seamless experience from inception to completion.

Our team of highly qualified specialists - field surveyors, engineers and designers - are committed to creating beautifully landscaped and thoughtfully constructed developments.

Ones that have distinctive spatial qualities but also offer excellent commercial value, and that are low-maintenance environments with minimal operational costs.

Our Green Agenda also ensures that our developments are environmentally friendly, offer reductions in emissions and pollution whilst helping improve biodiversity.

For more information on how The CDS Group can help, please phone us on +44 (0)1525 864387 or visit our website.



Discover what's beneath.

Sowing the Seeds for Success: The case for investing in our local parks

A new report, 'The State of the UK Public Parks', published by APSE using data from CFP, finds that from 2010 onwards parks budgets have reduced by £690 million, leading to industry calls to stem this decline and leverage new investment in these valuable local community assets.

A new report, 'The State of the UK Public Parks', published by APSE using data from CFP, finds that from 2010 onwards parks budgets have reduced by £690 million, leading to industry calls to stem this decline and leverage new investment in these valuable local community assets. With local councils responsible for managing 85% of the UK's urban parks, the past decade of austerity has delivered sharp cuts to parks repairs and maintenance budgets.

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive said, "Whilst our report reflects on initiatives to stimulate parks, we find that continued austerity measures have not been ameliorated by central government support, which has amounted to sporadic and small-scale grants to support initiatives such as 'pocket parks' and small renovation projects.

O'Brien continued, "In many cases, funding can only be accessed by costly and inefficient bidding systems, which take little account of local need. As a consequence, the financing of urban parks has continued to be woefully inadequate for local authorities"

The report authors found that the impact of the COVID-19 health pandemic has created further challenges for UK parks. At the very point that parks became the lifeline for local communities during

"It is sad to read, as predicted in the 2016 State of UK Public Parks study, that the state of the UK's public parks has improved little and for many has actually got worse over the last few years. Glimmers of hope exist, whether that be the huge rise in people now concerned about the environment, the increase in Local Authorities drafting urban green space strategies or the exciting work emerging from the Heritage Fund and National Trust's Future Parks Accelerator. What is clear however is that greater support and resource is needed to help the amazing army of people who care for our parks on a daily basis. Parks don't look after themselves!"

Drew Bennelick
Head of Land and Nature UK Policy, National Lottery Heritage Fund

lockdown and travel restrictions, the ability to raise income from activities such as cafes, sports pitch hire and events was effectively stopped by public health restrictions. This income had become a lifeline to parks during the age of austerity, to meet the gaps in local budgets. Parks have therefore faced a double whammy; the loss of income but at the very point when footfall in parks has massively increased, placing additional budgetary pressures to clean, and maintain, our parks for the benefit of local communities

The report finds that once again the level of funding for parks will not meet the needs of local communities, and yet parks could be regarded as a 'spend to save' investment initiative, meeting the outcomes of many public policy objectives. Parks can offer: -

A means to support the levelling up agenda, through the development of new parks to address the often-unequal outcomes in some of the poorest communities, when it comes to accessing green space.

A means to support climate change action in both mitigation, in capturing carbon and enhancing biodiversity, and in amelioration, as part of action plans on flood defences, heat protection and air quality.

A means to secure the future green skills within the UK. Our research found that parks are at risk of becoming de-professionalised because of a failure to recognise the key skills needed for parks and the need for career pathways to ensure the future of the parks workforce.

A means to engage communities in volunteering; the pandemic decreased volunteer capacity due to self-isolation and public health regulations but parks offer a golden opportunity to engage young and old alike, and all within our communities to take pride and care in their local environment and enhance inclusion.

The report does show some glimmers of hope with some local authorities expecting the quality of their parks and associated budgets likely to increase. However the majority of councils are still facing the threat of static or declining standards and further budget reductions, coupled with increasing demands for space for new developments. Moreover, the issues of inequality, which government states it wishes to address, poses a further conundrum. Not only does the report find problems in maintaining existing parks, but there is a clear need to create more parks in areas of need in order to level up the distribution of parks across the UK.

In conclusion Paul O'Brien said, "Whilst the Government has stated, as a key element of its 25-year Environment Plan, that it wishes to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited, I would suggest that one way we can help to achieve this is through the proper funding of one of the most treasured community facilities, our local parks". •



The report is available to download from the APSE website.

New Soft Plastics Recycling Bin Range

Leaffield Environmental, a leading UK manufacturer and designer of recycling and litter bins have launched a new soft plastics recycling bin range to collect soft plastics packaging in high footfall areas such as supermarkets, shopping centres, service stations and office food areas.

Leaffield's new soft plastics recycling bin range includes some of their best-selling bins including the Envirobank 240-litre, Maxi 140-litre and Meridian 110-litre bins. The bins feature a black base unit made from 100% recycled plastic*, red lid aperture, soft plastics poster, and labels**. Bespoke colours and personalisation of labels are available upon request.

WRAP confirmed this year that while plastic bags and wrapping makes up around a fifth of consumer plastic packaging, only 6% of it is recycled. In response to this, The UK Plastics Pact members, representing the vast majority of plastic packaging sold by supermarkets, have committed for all of it to be recyclable by 2025***.

Philip Maddox, Managing Director at Leaffield Environmental said: "This year, we have had the opportunity to work in partnership with a leading supermarket chain, that have used our Envirobank recycling bin to trial their new in-store soft plastics recycling scheme. Following the successful trial and increased demand from consumers to recycle more soft plastics, more schemes are being rolled out throughout the UK."

Philip Maddox continues: "These new recycling schemes are a critical step forward to increasing the recycling rate of plastic bags and wrapping, as only 20% of local authorities are collecting plastic bags and wrapping as part of their kerbside recycling service***. Due to the increased demand in soft plastics recycling, we are pleased to launch a new range of bins in different sizes for retail and commercial office environments."

* Subject to availability ** Labels and posters for illustrative purposes only ***Source: WRAP

For more information on the new Leaffield's new soft plastics recycling bin range call Leaffield Environmental on 01225 816541, email recycle@leaffieldenv.com or visit www.leaffieldrecycle.com



NEW Heritage XL Litter Bin

NEW



Leaffield's Heritage XL at East Devon beach

Capacity 240 litres



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- Features a 240 litre wheelie bin
- Reduces manual handling
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* Subject to availability

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COP26: Industry Experts Call for Climate Action to be at the Heart of Recovery for the UK Local Authority Sports and Leisure Sector

A group of industry experts in the local authority public sports and leisure sector called on the COP26 UK delegation to recognise the importance of the sector in helping the UK reach its ambitious climate change targets; especially as the sector seeks to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 health pandemic. In a statement agreed across leading partners in local government involved in the promotion of physical activity, which brings together APSE, CLOA, Community Leisure UK, District Councils Network, and Active Partnerships representing local councils and Trusts operating public leisure facilities, the unified voice of the sector has called for widespread investment in decarbonising the vital community level leisure facilities.

The group called for a starting point of a £1 Billion capital funding pot to support the replacement or refurbishment of antiquated leisure assets, which carry a heavy carbon footprint, to allow for the development of low energy, low carbon and fit-for-purpose assets, which will help communities as the sector focuses on physical activity, as an ill-health prevention measure, in post-covid recovery. By ensuring these newer or refurbished assets are greener the sector can achieve more by way of climate change endeavours to decarbonise the UK and meet the aims of COP26.



Climate Change and Physical Activity - Position Statement

Key Summary Points

- Increasing financial support to the public leisure sector is one of the best long-term invest to save initiatives that the government can make in terms of physical health, mental health and social cohesion.
- This is a chance to redesign and reshape our current leisure and cultural facility stock with climate in mind, in order to future proof local authority leisure provision, for which investment is required.
- If £1 Billion of additional funding were to be made available to local authorities, distributed over the next 3 years, through a decarbonisation capital replacement programme, based on a strategic needs assessment; this could see enough money allocated to each UK local authority to build/refurbish facilities to Passivhaus or similar standards over that time, supporting decarbonisation of the leisure estate.
- This is an opportunity to accelerate the ongoing reshaping and redesign of current leisure sites to also act as community hubs. These hubs can be thought about in relation to other key agendas such as the 20-minute neighbourhood idea and wider spatial planning.
- Public leisure plays a key role in town and city development, and with this contributes to active lifestyles.
- Providing more opportunities for people to engage in sport and physical activity in a carbon friendly way will support the Government's health agenda to reduce sedentary lifestyles and behaviours and prevent long-term health conditions. Specifically, the Government's prevention agenda, obesity strategy, the school sport and activity action plan, and the staying mentally well: winter plan 2020 to 2021.
- All of the above needs public funding to support its core activities but generates multiple benefits for society and is one of the best long term investments government(s) can make, it promotes public health and cuts huge cost through ill health prevention.



• You can read the full Position Statement at www.apse.org.uk



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Investing in Decarbonisation Schemes

-  **Reduce leisure portfolio carbon emissions**
-  **Introduce energy efficient technologies**
-  **Achieve local and national net zero targets**

Alliance Leisure are leisure development specialists and have delivered over 170 projects with a value of more than £160m. Our focus on the environment has led us to securing an initial £12m from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to assist 5 local authorities drive decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures in the public sector.

Case Example: Hyndburn Borough Council

Aim:
To cut Hyndburn Leisure Centre's carbon output by 70 per cent

Solution:
Installation of air source heat pumps, solar panels and LED lighting

“ The UK's stock of ageing and inefficient leisure facilities make a significant contribution to carbon emissions so it's encouraging to be collaborating with ambitious local authorities to decarbonise these important assets. These projects will create clean and energy efficient leisure centres to help meet the nation's net zero targets, and in the long term will also result in considerable operational savings. ”

Tom Gardner
Business Development Manager at Alliance Leisure

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How do we know that we make good buildings? The benefits of Building Performance Monitoring

Emmanouil Perisoglou MSc, CEng, MIET, Research Associate at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University, highlights how monitoring energy consumption, generation, and storage is key to delivering affordable and sustainable homes in a changing world.

Building a house involves the process of separating the external from internal to ensure independency and security and create comfortable controlled indoor conditions. In recent years, this definition is accompanied by low carbon criteria, and a series of government schemes are pushing for green new build homes and retrofits. Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities are keen to make the change, creating quality places to live to achieve climate change ambitions whilst reducing or eliminating fuel poverty. All these aims and objectives create a variety of challenges as making a good home is now a multivariable exercise that demands quantifiable priorities and outcomes.

How do we make sure that we deliver high quality low carbon housing in a changing world? Monitoring is a powerful tool to evaluate the performance of a building and reveal its identity and characteristics. To monitor is to measure the progress or quality over a period of time; this process gives confidence that what is designed/promised matches the reality. In addition, monitoring is a building diagnostics instrument that supports proactive and responsive maintenance. Choosing the right monitoring tools allow the in-depth study of building performance and to identify and rectify potential failures. Whole house monitoring enables a holistic approach that quantifies changes in the environment, building fabric, building systems and occupant behaviour. If, for example, an energy bill is high, appropriate monitoring will assist to identify the reason/s and solution/s to try to solve the problem.

Monitoring can also be part of a control system, such as a smart thermostat that would learn from the occupants' patterns, or part of the commissioning process to make sure that a system works. It could also be a prerequisite to participate in an energy scheme (FIT) or part of public/occupants' awareness, for example by visualising renewables generation in a school. Monitoring is the medium that helps us to enumerate performance indicators; but which are the indicators? Different building stakeholders have different ideas on what a good building or an effective system is. The architect/designer would primarily want to make sure that the building complies with the Building Regulations and would use modelling processes to ensure compliance and good performance. The priority for a registered social landlord could be to know if the installation of a solar panel is affordable and replicable. Governments have targets on carbon emission reductions and economy stimulation that they need to achieve. The market cares about selling their product and a business that works whereas the tenants' focus would be to reduce cost to live and have a comfortable home. A different monitoring approach applies to each performance target-indicator.



Deep retrofitting of 6 bungalows in Swansea. LCBE team from Cardiff University and Swansea Council won a 2021 Welsh Housing Award in the Excellence in Housing Innovation category. 3D drawing created for LCBE project, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University.

At the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University, we are developing and trialling a whole systems-based approach combining renewable energy supply, storage and demand reduction solutions in different types of buildings. Our approach combines modelling and monitoring the energy and environmental performance to propose affordable and replicable suite of solutions to provide evidence of carbon savings, cost of technologies and associated cost savings together with more broader challenges faced. Modelling and monitoring outcomes are used to inform the decision-making process on a set of solutions that have been demonstrated in a range of buildings including groups of social and owner-occupied housing. Once the technologies are implemented in practice, monitoring continues to provide evidence of energy and environmental performance.

The Welsh School of Architecture have an established research track-record and state-of-art equipment to evaluate building performance. We engage the public, drive policies and enhance the market through the evidence that we have generated. Researchers in the school are collecting data from thousands of sensors by using high-end tools and combining in-situ testing with remote monitoring and wireless sensor systems that allow real time data gathering, analysis and visualisation.

The Low Carbon Built Environment (LCBE) team at the Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University, led by Dr. Joanne Patterson have recently worked together with Swansea County Council to significantly reduce energy bills and carbon emissions, whilst improving the condition of some of their homes. The project won a 2021 Welsh Housing Award in the Excellence in Housing Innovation category. Six off mains gas bungalows in Swansea have been transformed into highly energy efficient 'Homes as Power Stations' generating and storing their own energy and providing substantial energy savings for the residents. The homes are now more comfortable and attractive, and the lessons learned are informing a wider debate around stock retrofitting challenges, vital to meet net zero carbon targets. We have gathered information on the built environment, energy use and the technologies before and after the work has been carried out. This information is essential to quantify how low carbon the buildings really are and helps to give confidence to other organisations who are looking to invest in low carbon solutions. •

Emmanouil gave a presentation on this topic at the APSE Housing and Building Maintenance Seminar 2021. You can download the presentation from the APSE website.

Supporting you to improve your private sector housing stock

Lendology CIC are a social enterprise lender regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. We lend council capital to a range of homeowners. We work with our council partners to understand their strategic housing objectives, and provide guidance on loan policy to drive activity.

As a not-for-profit lender, we are able to support homeowners with a particular focus on those who may be financially excluded.

We currently deliver the following schemes in partnership with our existing councils, although our flexibility means we can support you to create your own scheme, based on the unique housing issues you would like to address.

Empty Property Loans to bring empty properties back into use

Landlord Loans to support Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

Renewable Energy Loans for climate retrofit measures

Home Improvement Loans for general repairs

Disabled Facilities Loans to top-up DFGs and support independent living at home



"Lendology provide a vital option to homeowners who are struggling to finance house repairs and improvements. The direct and flexible support that is provided offers a huge benefit to our residents."

Torrige District Council



"It's a really beneficial partnership and solution to the provision of funding for the renewal and improvement of local housing stock."

North Somerset Council

"It was very helpful to us and our current circumstances. They provided a solution that was easy to understand and flexible."

Lendology Borrower



For more information and to discuss your housing objectives, contact Emma Lower, CEO at Lendology CIC on emma.lower@lendology.org.uk 01823 461099 or visit www.lendology.org.uk

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