

State of the Market Survey 2022

Local Authority Street Lighting Services



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About APSE

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) is a not-for-profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority frontline services and operates one of the UK's largest research programmes in local government policy and frontline service delivery matters.

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Results at a glance

Service

% of street lighting services currently delivered in house	75.01%
% of respondents who sell their services to organisations external to the council	50.00%
% who have a CMS System	34.48%
% of responding councils who scout for failures	37.93%
% of respondents whose approach to lamp replacement is burn to extinction	68.97%
% of respondents whose approach to lamp replacement is planned replacement	13.79%

Budgets

% whose budget has decreased from the last financial year	19.35%
% whose training budget has stayed the same over the past 12 months	83.87%

Staff

Average age of street lighting operational staff among respondents	48.6 years
% who feel staff absence levels are at an acceptable level	79.31%
% who run an apprenticeship scheme	36.67%
% with difficulty recruiting operatives	35.48%
% with difficulty retaining operatives	16.13%
% with difficulty recruiting technical staff	41.94%
% with difficulty retaining technical staff	19.35%
% with difficulty recruiting managerial staff	16.13%

% with difficulty retaining managerial staff	6.45%
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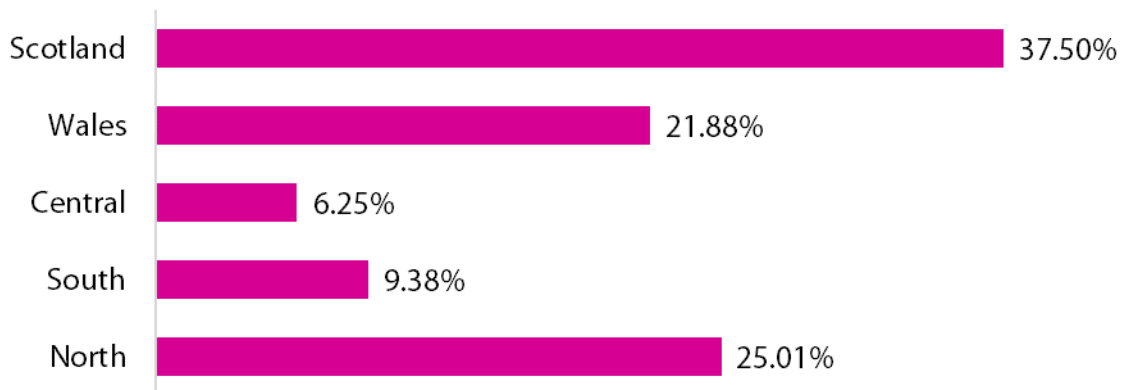
Introduction

APSE conducted an online survey during Summer 2022. A series of questions were asked covering a range of issues of interest to those officers, managers and councillors responsible for Street Lighting services.

State of the Market surveys are an attempt to understand perceptions of the market amongst people directly involved in delivering services.

Responses were received from local authorities across the UK. None of the questions were mandatory, so the total amount of responses differs from question to question. Individual details of respondents have been kept confidential. Results of the survey should be treated as a snapshot of current opinions of those working in street lighting services rather than a thorough analysis of change over time. The results are however triangulated against other APSE datasets and APSE network information and provide a good test of how street lighting services are performing and the

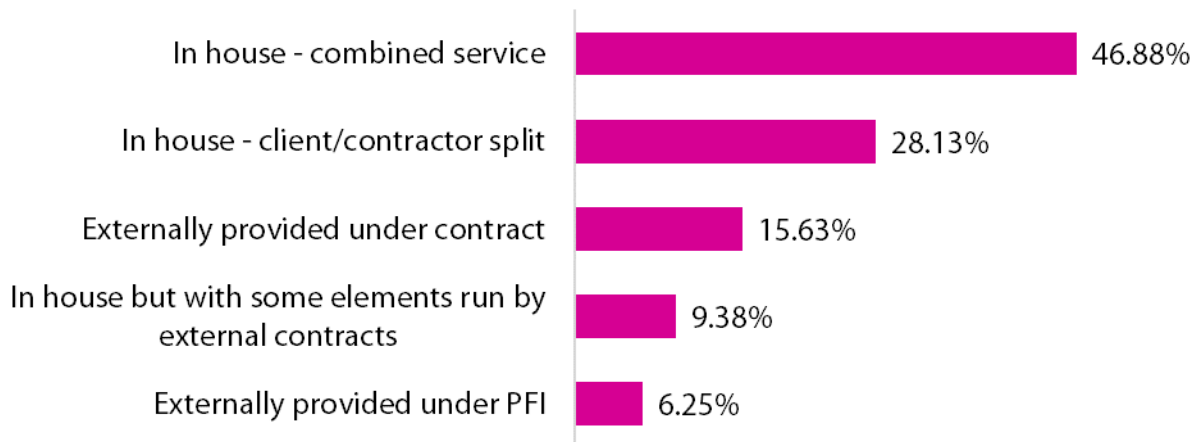
Where in the UK do you work?



The table above shows the breakdown of where the respondents to the survey are located in the UK.

Section 1 – The Service

How are your street lighting services currently delivered?



Most respondents' street lighting services are currently delivered via an in-house combined service (46.88%), 28.13% are delivered in-house with a client/contractor split and 9.38% are provided in-house with some elements run by external contracts. 15.63% are provided externally under contract and 6.25% are externally provided under PFI.

If the service is currently provided in-house, do you expect the service to remain in-house over the next 12 months?



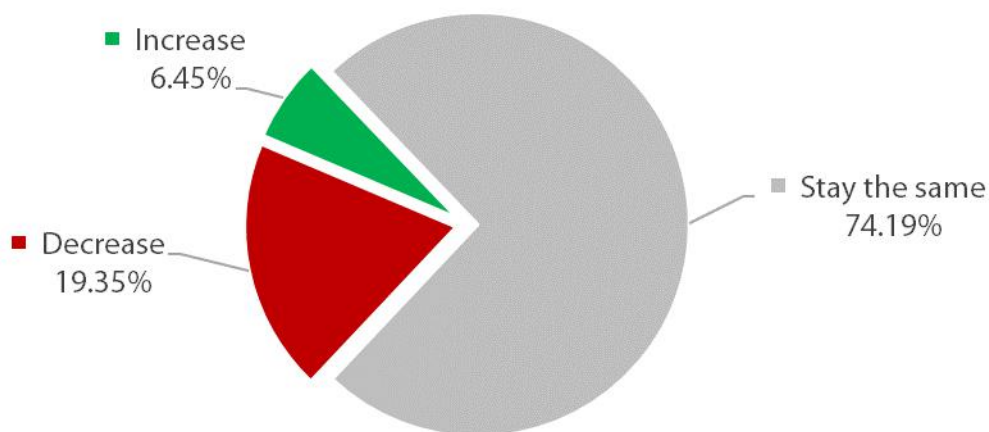
88.89% of respondents with a service currently provided in house expect the service to remain this way over the next 12 months.

Approximately how many street lights does the authority maintain?

Authorities reported maintaining between 1,200 and 123,000 street lights with an average of 32,963.

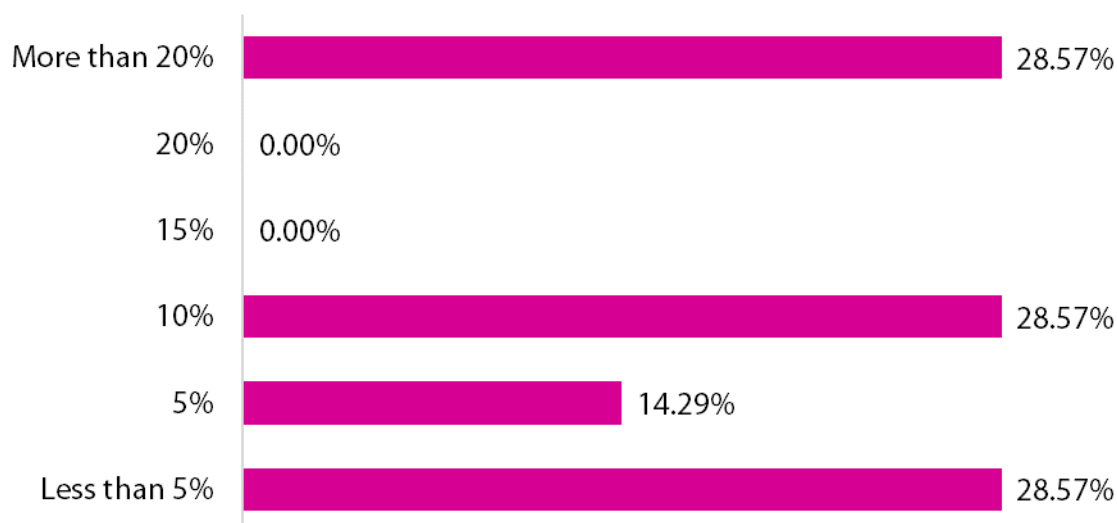
Section 2 – Budget

How has the budget for the street lighting service changed from the last financial year?



While most respondents' street lighting budgets have remained the same as the last financial year (74.19%), 19.35% experienced a decrease and 6.45% experienced an increase.

If your budget has decreased from last year, by how much has it decreased?



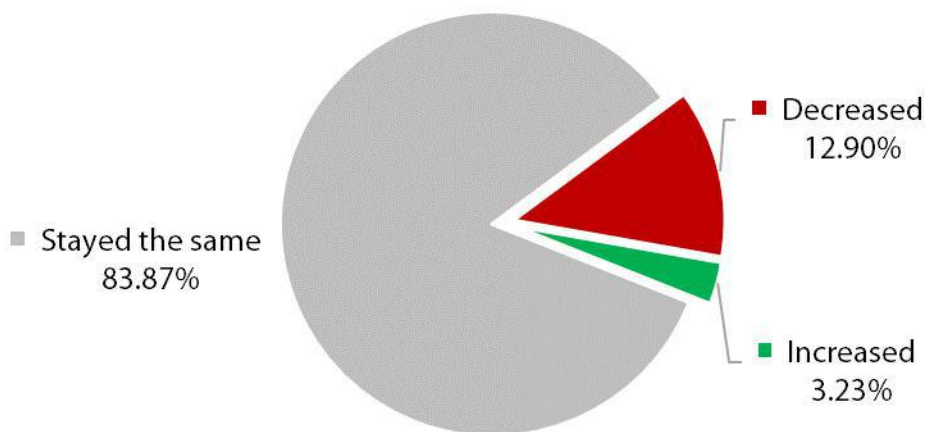
Responding councils have experienced a variety of different decreases in budgets from less than 5% (28.57%) with the same amount experiencing decreases of more than 20% (28.57%). As with other services the impact of budget pressures in terms of labour cost increases, fuel price inflation and supply side costs may translate to real term budget decreases

To what extent will this year’s budget for street lighting meet the need for maintenance / investment?

0 – 25%	16.13%
25 – 50%	16.13%
50 – 75%	9.68%
75 – 100%	38.71%
100%	19.35%

58.06% of respondents believe that their budget for street lighting will meet between 75% and 100% of their need for maintenance / investment. On the other end of the scale, 16.13% of respondents felt that the budget would meet between 0% and 25% of their needs.

What has happened to your training budget over the past 12 months?

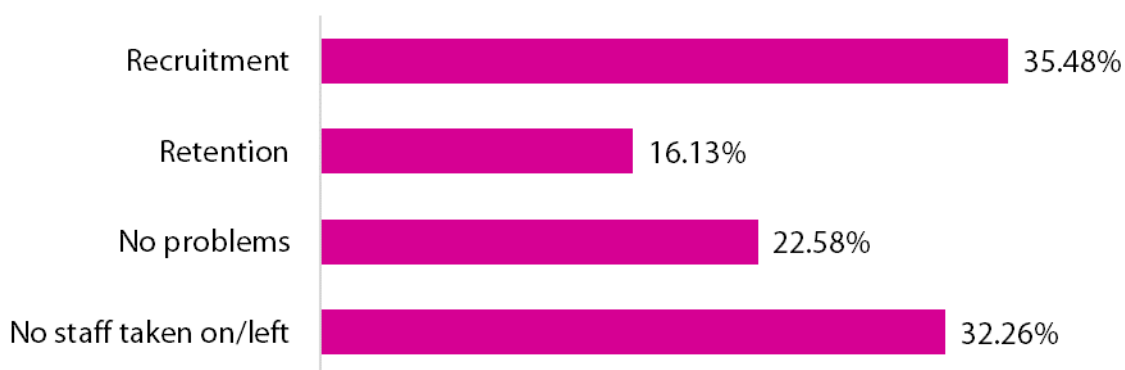


The majority of respondents’ (83.87%) training budgets have stayed the same over the past 12 months. 12.90% of them decreased, and 3.23% of them increased.

Section 3 – Staffing

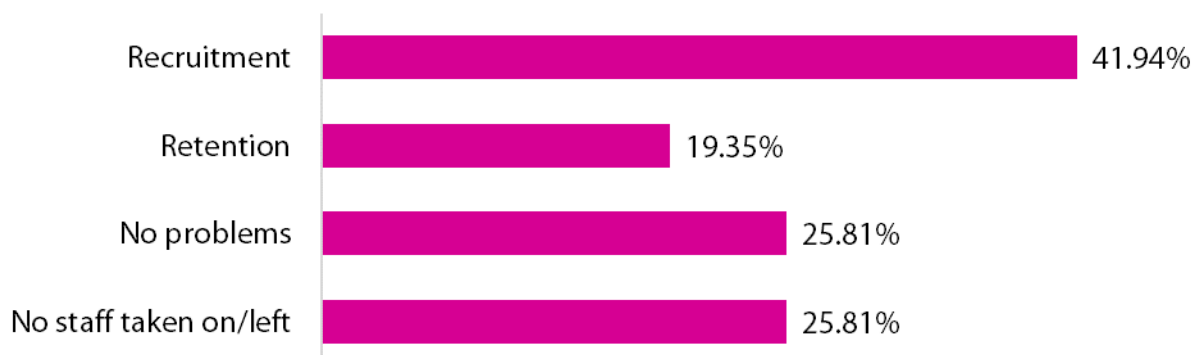
Where have you had difficulty recruiting or retaining staff (over the past 12 months)?

Operatives



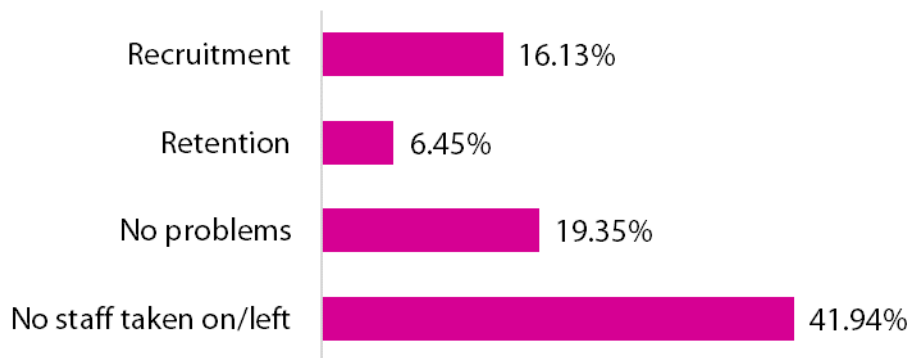
35.48% of respondents had difficulty recruiting operatives, and 16.13% experienced issues retaining them. 22.58% reported as having no problems, and 32.26% said that no staff had been taken on or left.

Technical staff



41.94% had issues recruiting technical staff, and 19.35% experienced issues retaining them. 25.81% said they had no problems, and 25.81% said that no staff had been taken on or left.

Managerial staff



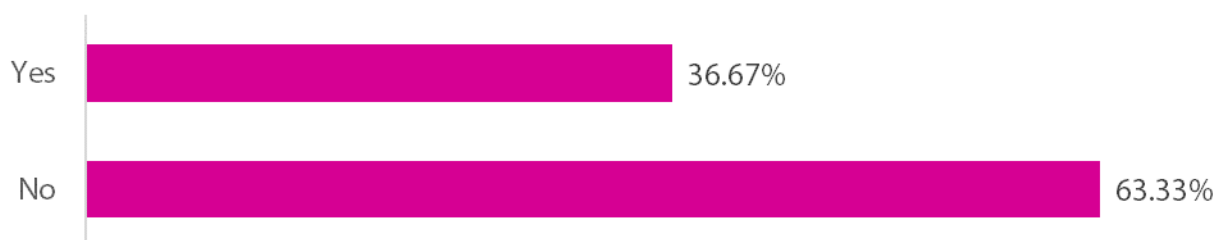
16.13% had issues recruiting managerial staff, and 6.45% experienced issues retaining the, 19.35% said they had no problems, and 41.94% said that no staff had been take on or left.

Do you personally feel staff absence levels are at an acceptable level?



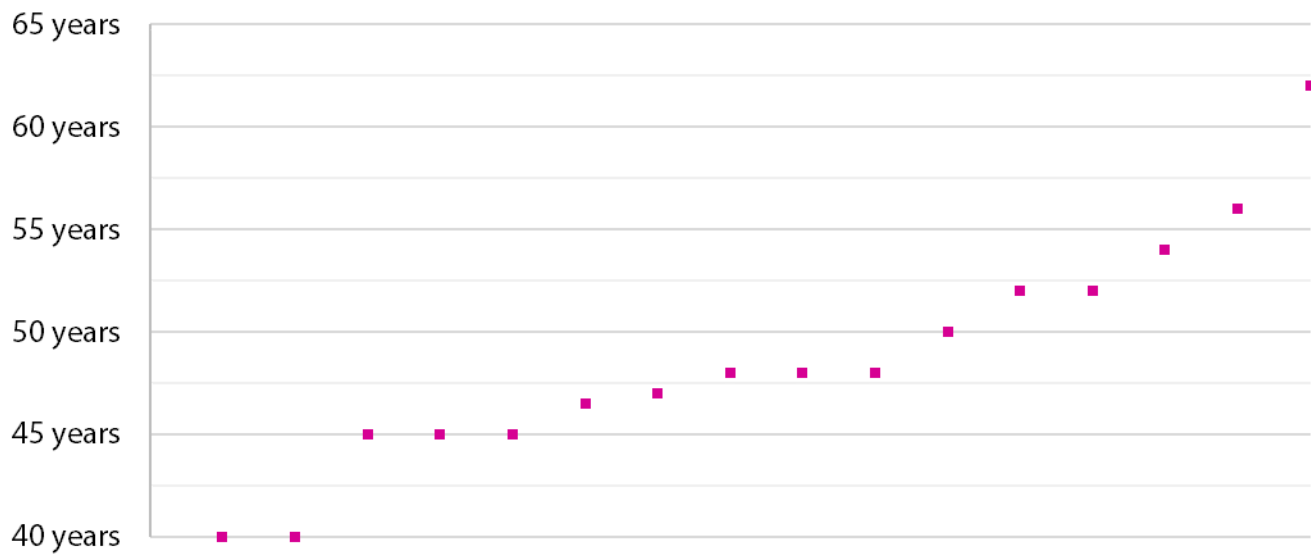
79.31% said that they did personally feel staff absence levels are at an acceptable level.

Do you run an apprenticeship scheme?



36.67% of respondents run an apprenticeship scheme. This is a disappointingly low figure, particularly with the opportunities for greener apprenticeships in new technologies and lighting design.

What is the average age of your street lighting operational staff?



The average age of street lighting operational staff was 48.6 years, with the lowest average age reported as 40 years and the oldest average age among respondents was 62 years.

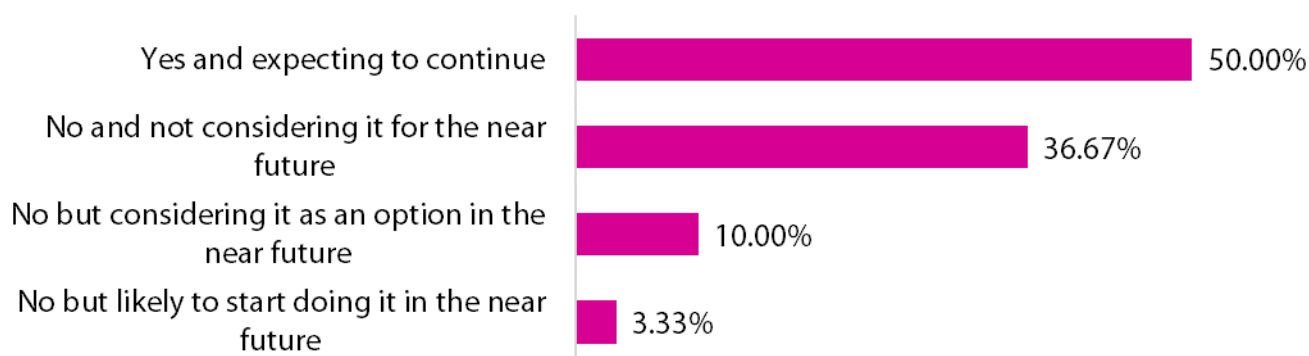
Section 4 – Service Delivery

What energy saving initiatives have you undertaken? What proportion of the lighting stock do you estimate is affected?

	Zero	0-10%	10-20%	20-30%	30-40%	>40%
Lamp switch off (eg. 2am-5am)	60.00%	24.00%	0.00%	4.00%	0.00%	12.00%
LED Lighting	0.00%	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	0.00%	85.71%
Lamp dimming	25.00%	7.14%	10.71%	3.57%	3.57%	50.00%
Reduced lighting hours	72.00%	8.00%	0.00%	4.00%	0.00%	16.00%

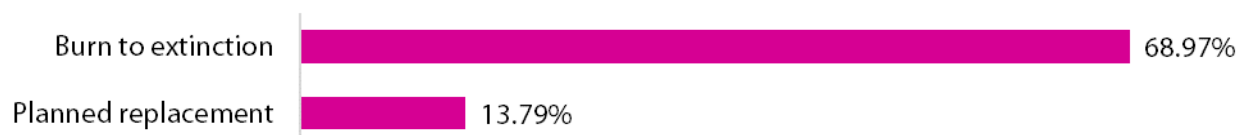
The table above shows the different approaches taken by local authorities with regards to different energy saving methods.

Do you currently sell your services to organisations external to the council?



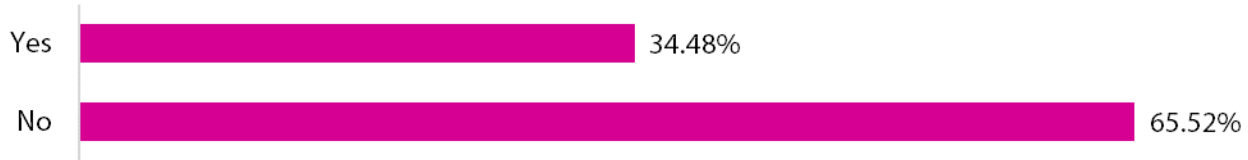
Most respondents are selling their services to organisations external to the council and expecting to continue this (50.00%). 10.00% are considering this as an option in the near future, 3.33% are likely to start doing it in the future and 36.67% are not considering this in the near future.

What is your council's approach to lamp replacement within your street lights?



The majority of responding councils' approach to lamp replacement is burn to extinction (68.97%) rather than planned replacement (13.79%).

Do you have a CMS System?



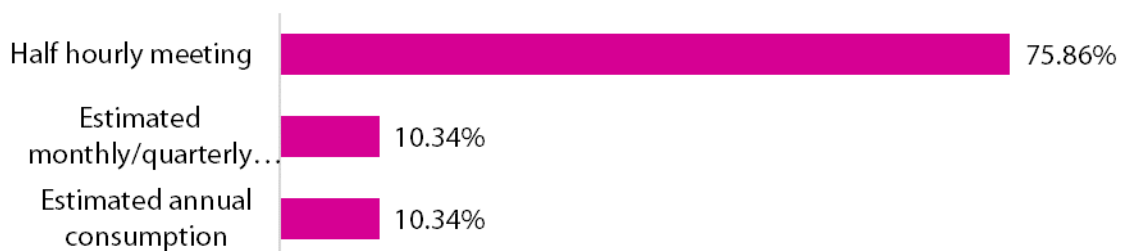
34.48% of respondents have a CMS System, 65.52% do not.

Does your council scout for failures?



37.93% of responding councils scout for failures. The decrease in the use of scouting is directly attributable to newer technologies alongside a decrease in defects due to widespread street lighting replacement schemes and conversion to LEDs.

How does your council track energy usage (by half hourly metering, estimated annual consumption or other)?



Among respondents, half hourly metering was the most common method of tracking energy usage.

What is your council's target time for restoring street lights to working order (in days)?

4 days or less	2
5 days	9
7 days	11
10 days	2
14 days	2
21 or more days	2

The most common council target time among respondents for restoring street lights to working order was 7 days. The restoration of street lights is a consistently improving area in APSE performance networks data reporting.

Which energy supplier do you use?

EDF	17
NPower	4
Scottish Power	3
Total Gas and Power	1
West Merica	1

Responding councils use a range of different energy suppliers, with the most common being EDF.

What is the length of your current energy contract?

1 year	3
2 years	3
3 years	2
4 years	4
5 years	2
Unknown	4

The lengths of current energy contracts are shown in the table above.

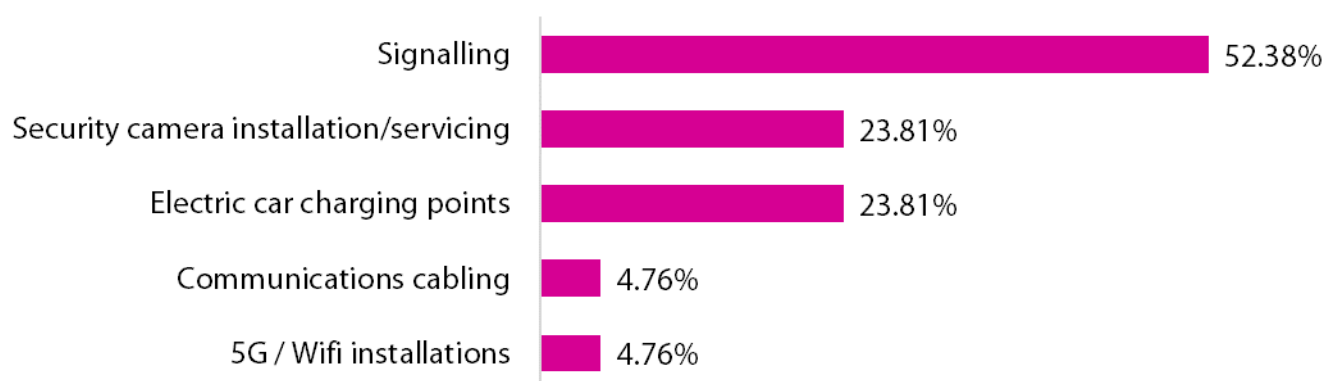
When does your current energy contract end?

2022	1
2023	8
2024	6
2025	1

Unknown	4
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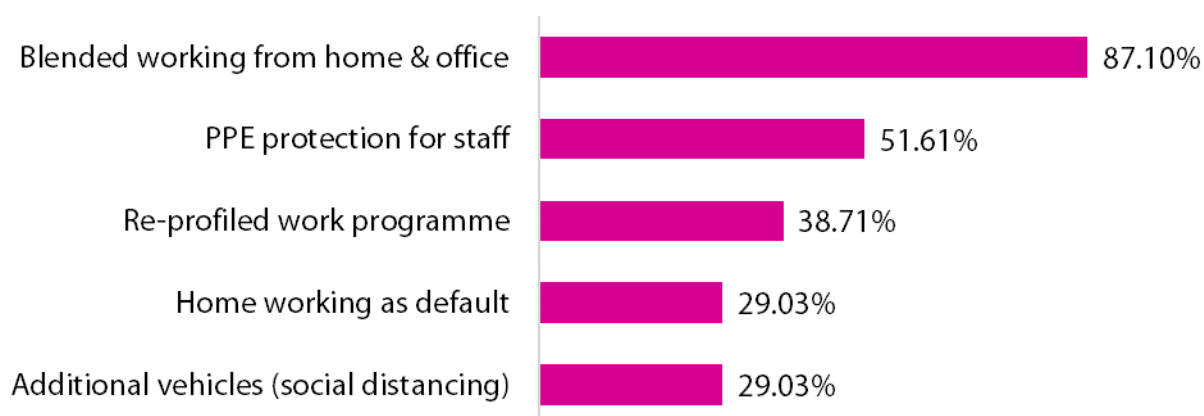
The table above shows the years when respondents current energy contracts end, with the most common response being 2023.

What non-street-lighting tasks do you undertake?



The most common non-street-lighting tasks undertaken by respondents are signalling (52.38%), security camera installation/servicing (23.81%) and electric car charging points (23.81%).

What have been the lasting effects of COVID-19?



The most common lasting effects of COVID-19 are blended working from home & office (87.10%) and PPE protection for staff (51.61%).

Have you been impacted by recent sanctions against Gazprom or others?



Only 11.54% of respondents had been impacted by recent sanctions against Gazprom or others.

Section 5 – Opinions

Where do you see growth areas for the street lighting service over the next 12 months?

While several respondents noted that they did not see any growth areas for the service over the next 12 months, responses from those who did include:

- Use of street lighting for 5G
- Use of street lighting for electric vehicle charging
- Underground cable replacements
- LED renewals
- Taking design work in-house
- Column replacements
- Hiring charges for third party fixture to columns
- Adoption of new developments
- Public realm lighting
- Renewing structurally failed columns

Where do you see areas where work may decrease over the next 12 months?

Respondents noted that they didn't anticipate many areas where work would decrease other than lamp replacement and routine fault maintenance because of the switch to LEDs.

- Variable lighting levels
- Service in general due to energy and material cost increases
- Fault repairs
- Bulk changes

Local Authority Street Lighting Services

State of the Market 2022

APSE Comment

The Survey was undertaken in Summer 2022 before the true cost of the war in Ukraine affected energy prices although a small number of lighting services had contracts related to Gazprom. The impact of geo-political events on energy pricing may be felt in the longer term costs of the service as well as the impact of inflation on overall service and supply costs in the next 12 months.

The advent of LED lighting has had profound changes on the industry with staff numbers reduced substantially, with the workforce approaching an average age of 50 and apparently less stress on recruitment than found within other areas of highways' work.

Most authorities are close to completion of their LED rollout and column renewal is catching up too. Many are eyeing lighting columns as the repository for a raft of future technology, including 5G and vehicle charging so the role of the traditional street lighting service is likely set to expand and change significantly over the next few years.

The service will also be viewed as a success in rapid decarbonization with the transition to LED and lower energy usage however this is not currently translating to service costs as the utility element of energy costs has in many cases offset the decreases in usage.

The Association for Public Service Excellence

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular advisory groups, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The advisory groups are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Advisory groups are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE advisory group meetings, and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area, please email: enquiries@apse.org.uk.

Our national advisory groups include:-

- FM & Building Cleaning
- Catering (school meals)

- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Cost of Providing/Cost of Living Network
- Environmental Health
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing Construction and Building Maintenance
- Local Authorities Commercialisation, Income and Trading Network
- Parks, Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance
- Recovery and Renewal
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing