



association for public service excellence

Trend Analysis 2022/23

Street Cleansing



Briefing 24/15

March 2024

Table of Contents

1	Overview	3
2	Trend analysis	3
3	Cost	3
4	Quality	5
5	Customer satisfaction	7
6	Education, enforcement and environmental	7
7	APSE Comment	10

Trend Analysis 2022/23

Local authority street cleansing

This analysis was conducted by Abi Ademiluyi, APSE Principal Advisor for Street Cleansing

For any enquires in relation to the survey, Abi may be contacted on:

Tel: 01865 749365

Email: aademiluyi@apse.org.uk

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.

1 Overview

Street Cleansing data has been collected separately for comparison purposes for APSE's Performance Networks benchmarking service since 2000/01. It is used to populate a set of robust indicators and was created to show performance over a broad range of the service provision, including cost, quality, and customer satisfaction. These indicators have been continuously streamlined over the years to ensure the most relevant data comparisons for street cleansing. Every year, APSE has reported on the ongoing trends of these key indicators.

Against the backdrop of austerity measures and diminishing budgets, councils had initially managed to continue to maintain standards of cleanliness and customer satisfaction, but in recent years some reversals have been seen. The Coronavirus pandemic which has necessitated councils to change service delivery and increase or decrease services according to priorities. It may therefore be difficult to compare the past four years trends until normality again returns.

2 Trend analysis

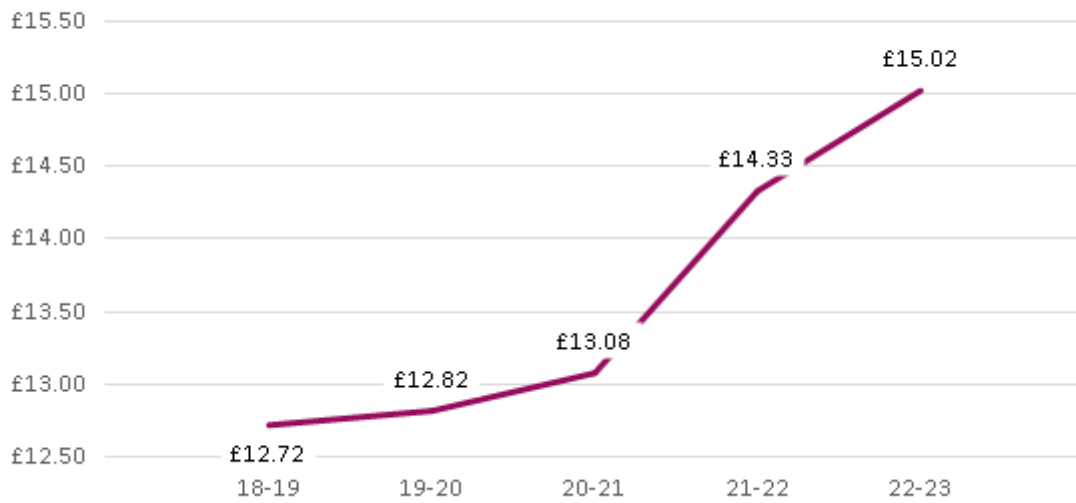
Trend analysis carried out annually has shown average performance fluctuate over the years, reflecting internal changes made by local authorities to negate budget reductions through service reviews in an attempt to maintain standards and provide more innovative ways of managing and operating the street cleansing service.

3 Cost

There has been a continuing increase in the costs for street cleansing, but this is perhaps not surprising as 2022/23 saw the continuing impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic, albeit to a lesser extent than 2021/2022, but nevertheless, many of the protective and additional service requirements were still in place in many councils throughout the UK. In addition, as higher levels of normality returned, more people ventured back into public places and as such litter levels will undoubtedly have increased, requiring normal or in some cases even higher levels of cleansing services.

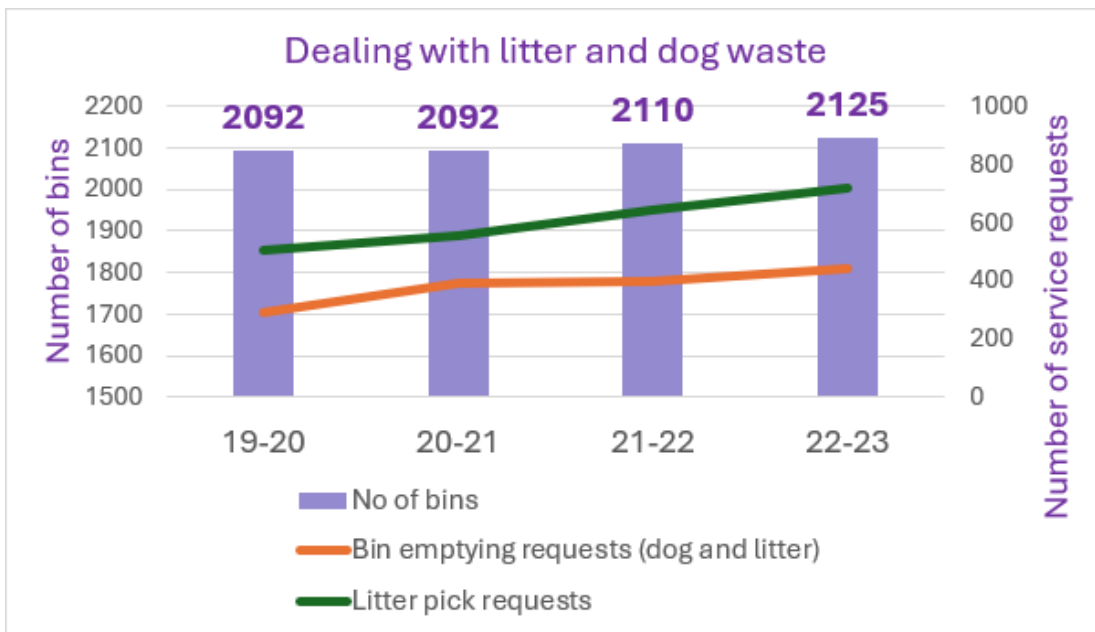
The increase in costs despite the pandemic are a continuing aspect of the service over the past five years, it is just that they certainly accelerated because of the extra costs placed on street cleaning services during the pandemic. It is envisaged that returns for 2023/24 will perhaps be a better indicator of the levels of future costs.

PI 05 Cost of street cleansing service per head of population (excluding CEC)



In addition to above, there has also been a higher demand on street cleaning services which when you also factor in inflation, will also impact the cost of providing services. The chart below shows an increase in demands on the service in relation to bin emptying and litter pick requests. The provision of bins has increased, as have the number of requests from members of the public.

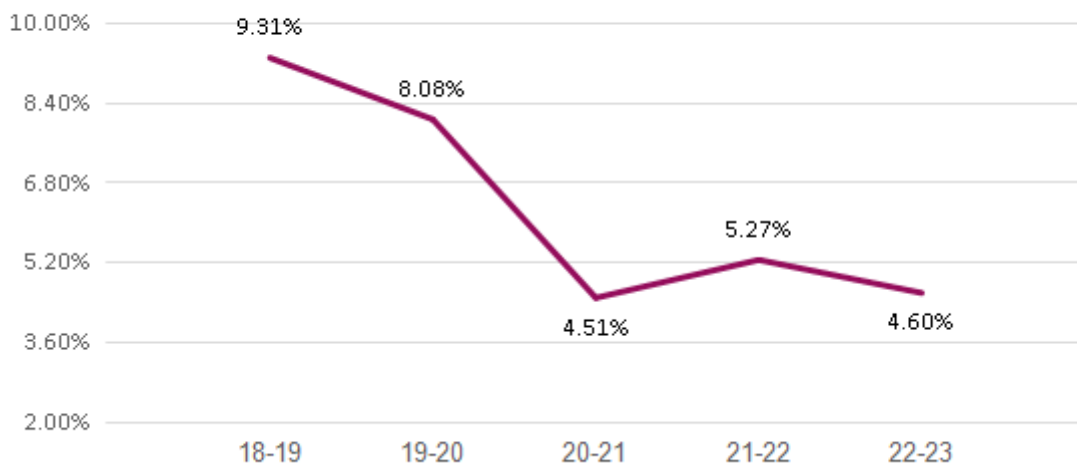
Street cleansing continuing demands on service



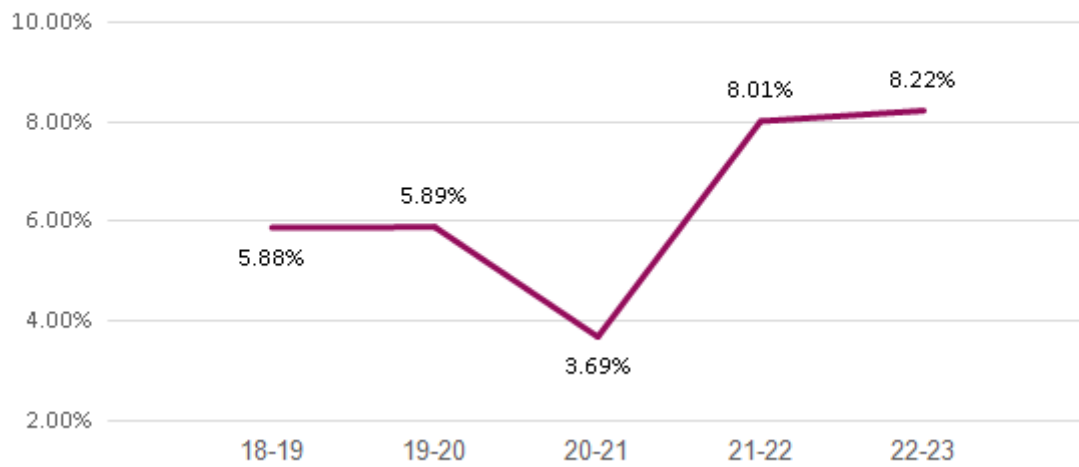
4 Quality

As previously mentioned, the pandemic reduced the ability to socialize in public spaces, and as a consequence street litter levels are likely to have reduced, even though people were given limited access to exercise in public streets as part of their recommended daily exercise. Also, many non-essential shops were closed during the pandemic reducing the amount of takeaway litter being generated. These two factors together may have been a major reason why the number of unacceptable levels of cleanliness scores reduced. Another reason the cleanliness could have improved would be because of closer monitoring and management of litter, detritus etc. from inspection tools like [APSE's Land Audit Management System \(LAMS\)](#) which are helping to identify issues and rectify these. There has been a decline in the percentage of sites falling below grade B in 2022/23 showing more positive outcomes.

**PI 37a Percentage of sites surveyed falling below grade b for cleanliness (England only)
(LAMS / LeqsPro survey carried out with requisite numbers)**



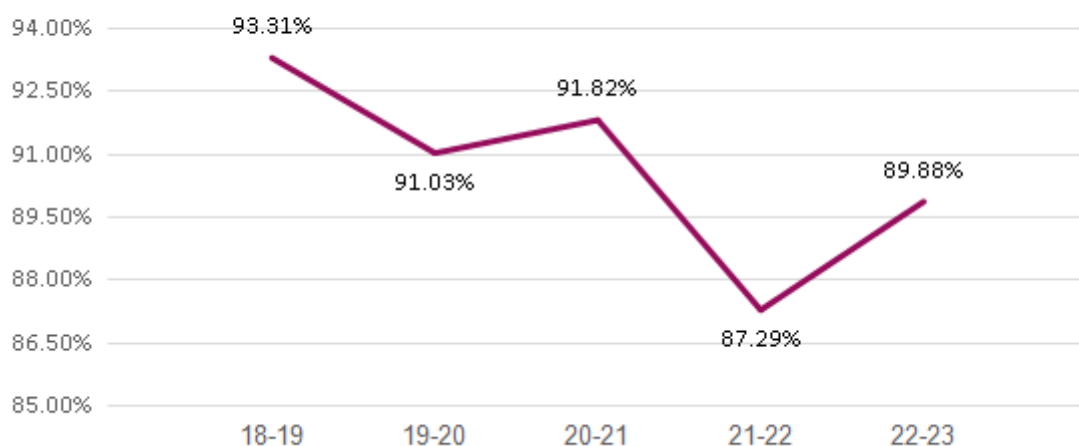
**PI 37b Percentage of sites surveyed falling below grade b for cleanliness (England only)
(LAMS / LeqsPro survey with reduced survey numbers or other survey type)**



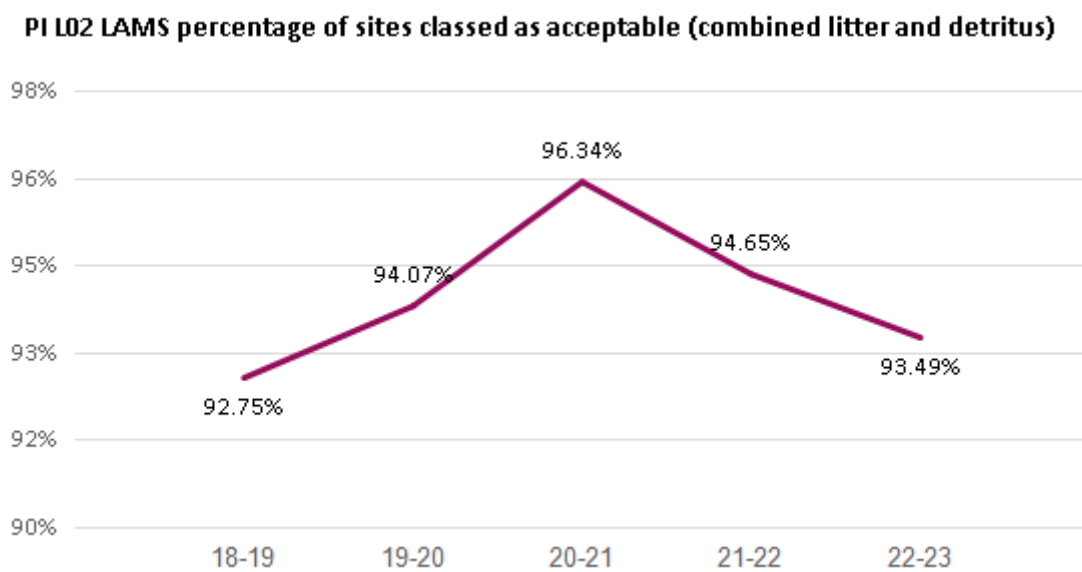
The increase in sites being assessed as below grade B (PI 37b) is probably due to the same reasons highlighted in PI 37a; that of more people now back on the nation's streets.

The graph below (PI 37m) is a continuing reflection of the impact of the pandemic, in that as fewer people were on the streets during 2019 - late 2020, the number of acceptably clean streets rose in 2020/21. However, with the lifting of restrictions, more people were back on the streets and as such cleanliness levels fell as did the number of sites inspected which were classed as acceptably clean during 2021/22. There has however been an increase in acceptable areas for 2022/2023.

PI 37m Percentage of sites surveyed which were assessed as acceptably clean by Keep Scotland Beautiful (Scotland only)



The graph below relates to the percentage as measured by APSE Land Audit Management System (LAMS). As previously mentioned, many street cleansing services continued to operate during the COVID 'lockdown' periods and were therefore able to clean streets unhindered by pedestrian and traffic. Coupled with the closure of many non-essential shops and the inability for people to gather, then the reduced incidents of litter and the ability to more easily clear detritus meant scores for this indicator rose. However, 2022/23 has seen a reduction in the number of sites inspected being classed as acceptable, again due to more people now being able to move around freely and therefore increased footfall across the sites inspected.



5 Customer satisfaction

The pandemic meant that many service elements were either suspended or cancelled for a period. Many staff were either advised or instructed to work from home, as such some areas of work particularly street cleansing, may well have suffered therefore or been re-prioritised.

It is likely that fewer public opinion surveys were carried out during the pandemic period but where they were, they showed a decrease in the levels of public satisfaction, largely a reflection of street cleaning staff often being redeployed elsewhere to support services such as refuse collection and bereavement.

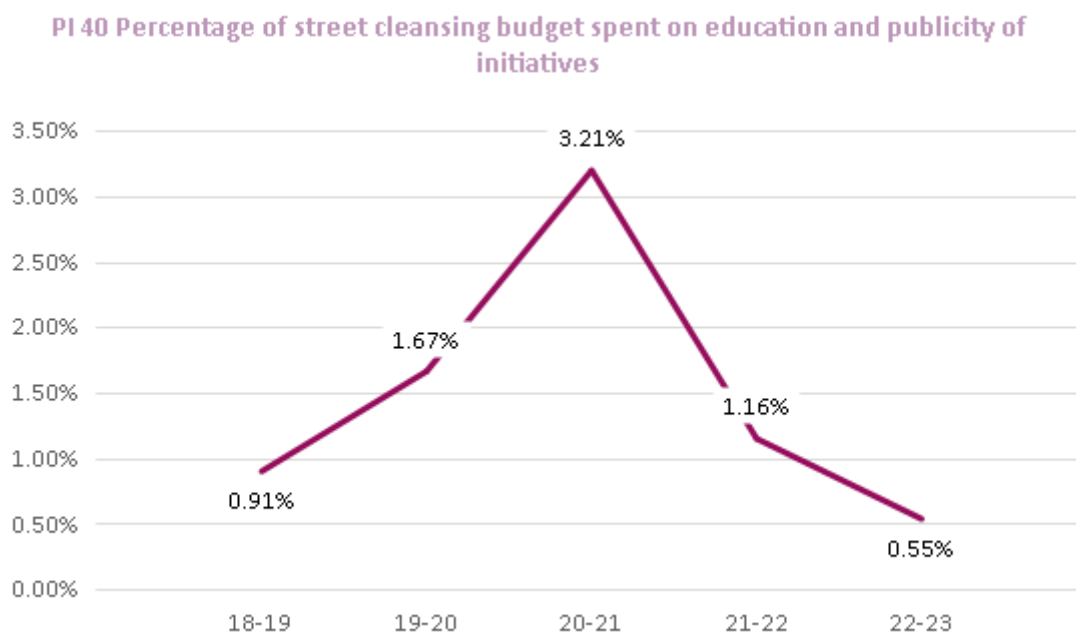
2022/23 has seen a continued decline in levels of public satisfaction. This is perhaps

not just due to reduced service provision, as some street cleansing staff may well have been continued to be redeployed late into 2022, but also from comments received for Service Managers at Advisory Groups seminars and one to one conversations. Levels of littering nationally seemed to be increasing. Another explanation for this could be the increasing expectations of the public. This is an area APSE will continue to monitor to see how results are affected in 2023/24.

6 Education, enforcement and environmental

Clearly during the pandemic, there was a significant increase in the proportion of budgets being spent on education, enforcement, and other environmental initiatives. It is likely that the bulk of this was being used to keep the public informed of service changes and promoting positive environmental behaviors through social media, as face to face contact would have been seriously curtailed during the time of the pandemic.

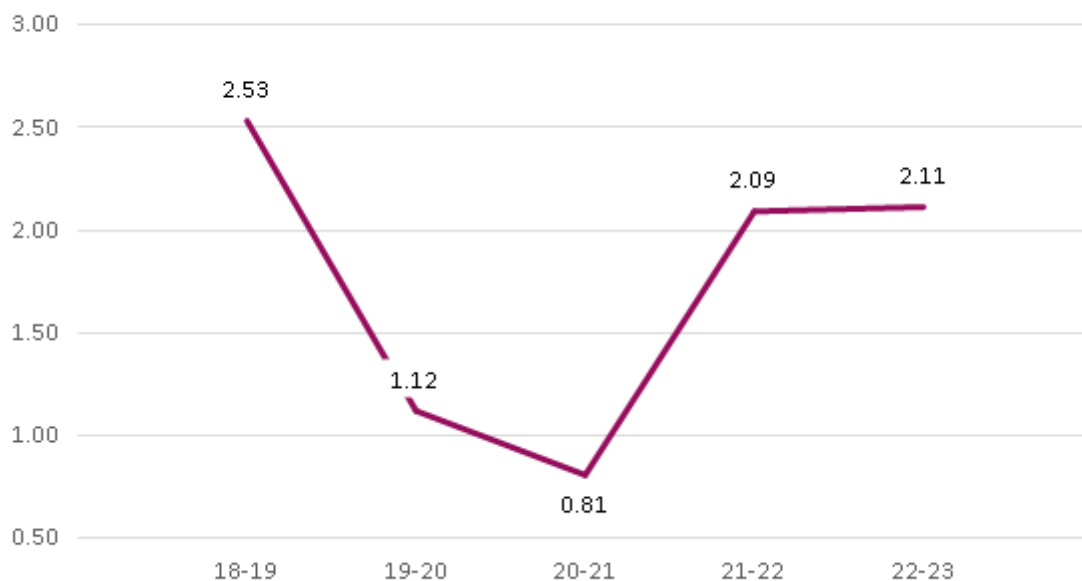
However, the graph below shows that in 2022/23, there has been a further decline in this area of funding, despite reports of increased littering and fly-tipping levels remaining high in many areas of the UK.



Clearly now that all of the restrictions of the pandemic have been removed and everyday life back to a high level of normality, the task of preventing street littering has been re-established, which is clearly shown in the slight increase in FPN's being

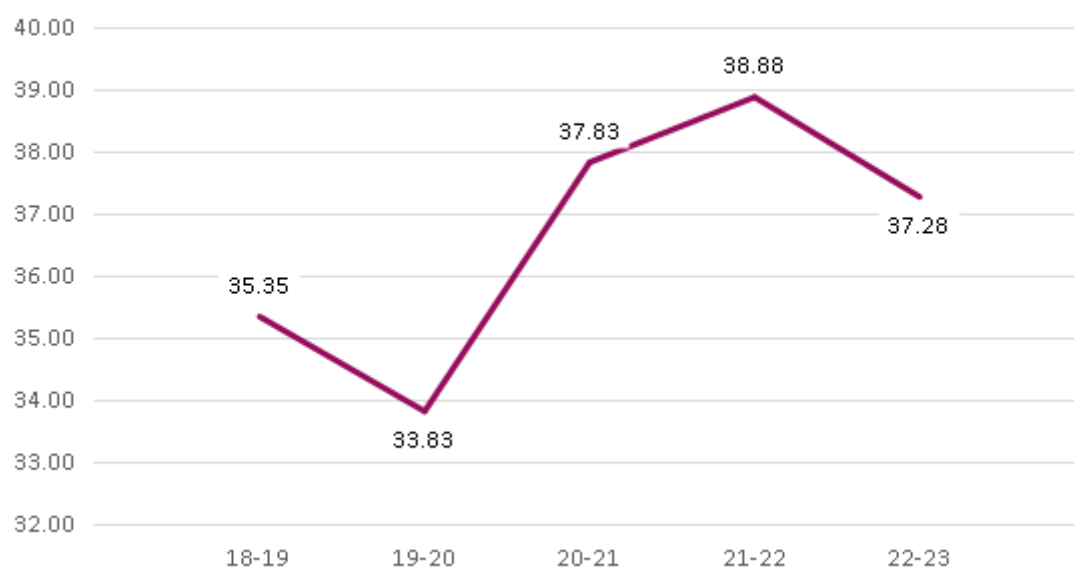
issued during 2023/23.

PI 25a Number of litter offence notices issued per 1,000 head of population



In line with a reduction in the ability to enforce Fixed Penalty Notices due to social distancing and staff availability due to redeployment of many, the ability to monitor and investigate incidents of fly-tipping during the main pandemic period would have been difficult. Also, as many councils suspended bulky waste collections and closed their HWRC's, this may have led to an increase in fly-tipping. The 2022/23 results however show a slight decrease in the number of incidents which will be an area of further discussion by the APSE network.

PI 25d Number of incidents of fly-tipping/dumps per 1,000 households (England Only)



Levels in the percentage of street cleansing waste being recycled initially fell during

and post pandemic. This was probably a result of disposal routes still being affected by markets being slow to re-establish post pandemic. There has however been an increase of the percentage of street cleaning waste being recycled in 2022/2023 as most markets had now stabilized.



7 APSE Comment

The findings of the trend analysis over the last few years have been reflective of the impacts of the pandemic and as such some of the figures and performance levels have been affected either negatively or positively and care needs to be taken when reading this briefing note.

It is likely that it will take another twelve months before a more stable picture can be ascertained.

Abi Ademiluyi
APSE Principal Advisor
aademiluyi@apse.org.uk

Sign up for APSE membership to enjoy a whole range of benefits.

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 and Building cleaning
- Catering (School Meals)
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Cost of Providing/Cost of Living Network
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance
- Local Authority Commercialisation, Income and Trading Network
- Parks, Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance
- Recovery and Renewal
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Roads, highways and street lighting
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing

Visit www.apse.org.uk for more detail



Association for Public Service Excellence
3rd floor,
Trafford House,
Chester Road, Manchester M32 0RS.
telephone: 0161 772 1810
fax: 0161 772 1811
web: www.apse.org.uk

