

Take your partners

Graham Burgess
PAGE 4-5

Southern Cross

Andrew Johnson
PAGE 6-7

Annual seminar report

PAGE 9-11

Awards special feature

PAGE 11-19

Local government goes ship shape and Bristol fashion



Service awards 2011 special edition

Performance networks seminar 2011

Armchair audit

Is this the future of performance management in local government?



A major two-day seminar incorporating the performance networks awards evening at the Hilton Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool

Thursday 1 and Friday 2 December 2011

Contents

APSE Direct News

Service awards edition 2011

APSE Performance networks information	2
Contents and editorial	3
Take your partners	
Graham Burgess, Blackburn with Darwen Council	4
A Southern cross to bear for local councils	
Andrew Johnson, Walker Morris	6
Ministry of Excellence in Rotherham	
Martin Kimber, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	8
APSE Annual seminar conference report	9
Service Awards 2011	
Award winners and finalists	12
Developing sports professionals on and off the field	
IMSPA	20
Who benefits?	
Sampson Low, UNISON	22
Firm foundations for new homes	
Milan Radulovic, ARCH	23
Streets ahead on lighting	
Stephanie McCall, AGMA	24
APSE Briefing notes and people pages	26
Events diary	27
DAF trucks advertisement	28



Editorial

Magic numbers

It has been a bit dismal of late so the welcome snap of late Autumn sunshine provides an appropriately bright backdrop to celebrate our APSE service award winners and finalists 2011. Congratulations to all of you. It is a good opportunity to remind local communities and of course the local media about the valuable services that you provide. Remember you can download press ready images from the website or contact us directly for details. Get your message out there!

The annual seminar was a great success and again getting away from recent doom and gloom I am delighted that our seminar was packed with useful insights into service improvement, innovation and entrepreneurship. One of our motivational speakers was Fergus Chambers, who is retiring as managing director of Cordia, a Glasgow Council company. If anyone outside of local government had heard Fergus's contribution they would have assumed that he was embellishing the role of a local government manager. Fergus described his career path dealing with public health and catering issues from E-coli to BSE peppered with huge public policy changes on everything from nutritional standards in school meals to the school rebuilding programme. The world in numbers from Fergus was startling delivering

- 15,000 home care visits
- 14,000 alarms monitored
- 10 million school meals per year
- 62,000 children crossing busy roads
- 800 buildings cleaned daily
- 200 homes receive special aids daily
- 200 vulnerable children transported daily

These numbers are extraordinary because to so many of you they are ordinary. It is easy to become fairly blasé about the services we provide; about the volume of high quality services and diversity of our services delivered to literally hundreds of thousands of our citizens throughout the UK. Whether it is the number of bins emptied, meals served or highways gritted these are magic numbers. Magic numbers that make a difference to people's lives. So less of the gloom and let's be proud of the magic numbers!

Best wishes

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive

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Take your partners

As Councils try and come to terms with implementing huge cuts to their budgets and local NHS administration budgets are slashed, the financial challenges ahead are becoming much clearer. One North West Council and Care Trust have come up with an innovative solution that deals with this, as well as offering improvements, to how health services are commissioned. Graham Burgess, Chief Executive of Blackburn with Darwen Council and NHS Blackburn with Darwen, explains.



A unique partnership between Blackburn with Darwen Council and NHS Blackburn with Darwen Care Trust Plus is helping meet the government's stringent cost saving targets and at the same time bringing real improvements to how services are delivered. The local Council and NHS has become the first area to create a fully integrated senior management team across the NHS Care Trust Plus and Council to deliver around £2m savings on management costs across both organisations which can be redeployed to front line services.

The first phase of the new structure was my appointment as the joint chief executive and a new single executive team made up of a deputy chief executive and two managing directors dedicated to health services and local government respectively. At the same time, a merging of back office functions has successfully been implemented, starting with communications and marketing which delivered £100k in savings followed by a joint intelligence unit and HR.

The move has delivered over £3million savings across both organisations and put them in a strong position to respond to the NHS reforms. This was born out of our long standing commitment to work with the local NHS. Even with such a strong partnership there will always be duplication of activity and expenditure, but now more than ever we need to find ways to save money to protect frontline services.

We have a unique offer that no-one else can match. We have the commissioning expertise of social care and NHS staff who already work in partnership at the Care Trust Plus, we can provide democratic accountability through our elected councillors and, above all, we can give GPs the opportunity to influence local authority services like leisure, housing, regeneration which are among the key social determinants of health as well as providing efficient back office services. We know that 70% of health and wellbeing is influenced by social factors rather than the NHS. By bringing the Council and NHS closer together, NHS practitioners can work alongside colleagues across the Council and influence decision on these areas.

We took the decision to build commissioning around the family and not the organisations and recognised that the one thing we all had in common was our goal to achieve an outcome that benefits the family or the individual living in our borough. Two such examples being our "think Family" and "re-fresh" programmes.

Our Think family approach has meant we had to remove barriers that ten years ago we would not have thought possible. It has required a wholesale cultural change to move away from traditional models of commissioning towards a family approach but the result is greater service coherence. Our unique and innovative model brings together a wide range of partners from the public, voluntary and community sectors, working at neighbourhood level with pooled resources to support families. Our new approach aims to break the cycle of dependence on services by identifying families who are ready to change, enabling them to choose their own solutions and then fast-tracking the services they need.

The integrated Refresh programme has begun to tackle the horrendous legacy of inactivity that has plagued our borough for years and presented itself on our hospital wards. In 2006 we had the UK's third worst level of adult physical activity. Through joint investment from the NHS and the Council and a co-ordinated service redesign to remove barriers preventing people from accessing leisure and health services, we have begun to turn this around so much so that in 2010 we had the second highest increase in physical activity levels. It wasn't simply down to our leisure services being free for local people, it was about volunteers and professionals across both the NHS and Council collaborating, jointly commissioning and giving local people one point of contact to improve customer service. Furthermore, it is about our Council-owned buildings providing health drop-in services to make it as easy as possible for people to access the care that is on offer.

The health reforms risk creating a change in the psyche amongst the public as they may believe their local GP can pull all the strings when it comes to healthcare provision. To ensure the GPs are not constrained they will need to be able to call upon support from across the NHS and local government. It is for this reason alone that a Care Trust offers the greatest opportunity

to fulfil these demands. GPs do have the best idea of what is required to help treat the patient in front of them and the CTP model does offer a better solution to emerging CCGs that not only opens up NHS services but also allows the CCG to directly influence the policies and decisions of a local authority.

This is about creating an organisation that can coordinate commissioning on behalf of the individual and that links up the CCG, NCB and the local authority as it strives to get the best level of healthcare available. Furthermore, crucially, it would maintain integration of management and back office functions which could then potentially provide the basis of support for CCGs and avoid disruption and additional costs. It's been a challenging journey as we have sought to build links across two very different organisations but a worthwhile one. We are all striving to achieve the same goal which is to improve the health and future life chances of our citizens and in Blackburn with Darwen we believe we have created the right structures to help achieve that.

Contact: Marc Schmid, Head of Communications and Marketing at Blackburn with Darwen Council & NHS Care Trust
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A Southern Cross to bear for local councils

The recent difficulties experienced by Southern Cross bring into focus the potential problems faced by Local Authorities commissioning care when care homes providers face financial difficulties or fail. Here Andrew Johnson of Walker Morris solicitors explains the key issues.

Southern Cross as a group provided (at its peak) care for in the region of 37,000 residents, in approximately 750 care homes. The Southern Cross business model meant that it did not own the freehold interest in the homes it operated, it generally leased them. Downward pressure on fees allied to rising costs meant that the company was struggling to pay rents as they fell due. A failure to pay rents in accordance with leases would ultimately result in Landlords becoming entitled to forfeit the leases and take possession of the properties. It appears that this is what has happened in relation to a large number of Southern Cross homes. Southern Cross, and the failure of providers generally, is of growing concern not only to local councils who face some real practical and legal issues but also of course to the worried families of those currently cared for a multitude of social care providers.

Legal Context – Providers obligations

There are a number of legal considerations in play in relation to care homes providers. Typically there is an umbrella service contract between the Local Authority and the care home provider, and also an individual contract in relation to each resident (see *R (on the application of Forest Green Care Homes Limited) v Pembrokeshire CC* [2010] EWHC 3514 (Admin)).

The care home provider typically owes contractual obligations to both Local Authority and resident. Those obligations will deal with the provision of appropriate accommodation, the giving of notice and other related matters. However, the extent to which those obligations will be of assistance in the context of a failure will, in all probability, be limited, albeit to a degree this will depend on the form of insolvency process. The three most likely insolvency scenarios are dealt with below:

1. Administration – an Administrator is appointed to take control of the affairs of the business. The Administrator's first objective is, if possible, to rescue the business as a going concern. Therefore, Administrators are likely to look at way of keeping homes open, at least initially. If this is not possible the Administrator is obliged to achieve the best possible outcome for the benefit of creditors as a whole. If the Administrator takes over and trades the home he or she may incur a liability to other contracting parties in respect of post appointment

obligations. Any claims by residents and Local Authorities in respect of pre-appointment matters (such as in respect of fees paid in advance) are likely to be unsecured claims in the Administration.

2. Administrative Receivership – this is strictly speaking not a form of insolvency proceeding but a remedy which allows a secured creditor (typically the company's funder) to allow for realisation of the company's assets. It is unlikely that a Receiver would want to take on the obligation of running a care home on a long term basis (as to which see below).

3. Liquidation – this involves the appointment of a liquidator who collects in and distributes the company's assets and dissolves the company. A liquidator will not run a home as a going concern. Any claims which resident or Local Authority may have against the home would be unsecured claims in the liquidation.

As can be seen from the above analysis if a home enters some form of insolvency process there is very limited scope for claims against the company operating the home to offer any practical form of redress or assistance. Further, the relevant contracts are likely to contain provisions allowing for termination in the event of insolvency.

There are no legal powers held by Local Authorities to prevent the closure of homes by an Administrator, Liquidator or Receiver. Care homes are private businesses and Local Authorities do not have any powers to intervene in a decision by the owner of that business to cease trading (although they do have powers to try and deal with the fallout of such decisions, as to which see below).

Whilst the Government has given a number of assurances, in terms of the protection of residents in the context of the potential closure of Southern Cross homes, the reality is that problems of this type are likely to fall to be dealt with by Local Authorities. It does not appear that the Government intends to offer much by way of practical assistance to deal with the fall-out (see the Hansard transcript of the most recent debate about Southern Cross).

Legal Context – Local Authority's obligations

A Local Authority is under a number of statutory obligations the net effect of which is that is obliged to deal with the inevitable fallout from the actual or potential closure of Homes.

Section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1984 impose a duty on Authorities to make arrangements for residential accommodation. Section 50 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 makes Local Authorities responsible for carrying out assessments and providing community care services.

Beyond these statutory obligations further potential obligations and responsibilities may arise. Residents may be able to successfully argue that rights under the Human Rights Act 1998 are engaged when decisions fall to be made by Local Authorities in relation to care provision (see *Watts v UK* [2010]). Whilst claims made by residents for Judicial Review are likely to be more difficult to make out, the possibility cannot be completely discounted.

Practical Implications for Local Authorities

If an Administrator is to run a home, or indeed if a home is to be run by a landlord in a Southern Cross situation, then the Local Authority would have to ensure that the Administrator or Landlord (or perhaps more likely the person contract to run the home on their behalf) is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Local Authorities need to be aware of the possibility of Administrators refusing to run homes as going concerns on the terms previously agreed with the home. If Authorities determined that moving the residents is not an option consideration would have to be given to putting in place amended arrangements or using Part 1 Local Government Act 2000 powers to put in specific support to overcome trading difficulties, offer other assistance or potentially purchase the home in question.

In making decisions about residents continuing placement in homes (and associated decisions about funding and engagement with Administrators, Receivers etc) Local Authorities would have to be aware of, and guard against, the possibility of challenge. A practical way to minimise the scope for such challenges is to engage with residents (and relatives and carers as appropriate) at the earliest opportunity, and ensure that consultations can be shown to be full and informed.

If homes are to close then various practical matters would need to be borne in mind:

- Informing relatives/carers of the position if necessary;
- Identifying residents who have special needs or require specialist assessment;
- In respect of residents placed by other Authorities, informing the Authority of the position.
- Identifying the funding basis for residents in homes in order to provide an audit trail of who carries financial responsibility for them;

Feedback from APSE Members Consultation

APSE members at a recent APSE social care advisory group want to see much stronger protection or 'buffers' surrounding the use of residential homes. Concerns were raised that homes in the past have been used by landlords as attractive investments – divorcing the 'business' of caring for vulnerable people from the market mechanisms that seek greater returns on property investments and rental streams.

APSE members also warned about a tipping point on capacity. Whilst it is accepted that there will be plurality in service provision councils should consider the ability to retain some local capacity to intervene and to also act as a market regulator

Advanced payments to care providers were also a thorny issue. Whilst not wanting to exacerbate cash-flow issues in the sector there is a need to balance and retain a negotiating position on contracts and ensure the best value element of care contracts is not forgotten or neglected in the process

Councils should also remember, said many APSE members that as TUPE is likely to apply in the event of a council taking over a care home the issue of not having the capacity to run homes is less likely since skilled staff would be potentially transferred over to the local authority allowing continuity of care for older people as well as continuity of local employment

APSE members were also reminded of their broad powers, such as well being powers, and the ability to hold land and property. This could help to identify meaningful ways to intervene such as novation of care contracts and taking on a lease from a residential home landlord through assigning the lease to the Council. Notwithstanding the Council would be minded to renegotiate the terms including rent payments under any lease.



Contact: andrew.johnson@walkermorris.co.uk (Pictured)

Ministry of Excellence in Rotherham

Rotherham Borough Council was named the APSE Overall Council of the Year in Service Delivery 2011. Here the authority's Chief Executive, Martin Kimber, explains its winning formula for successful local service provision.



Above: Martin Kimber

Rotherham, like every other authority in the country, has and continues to face, some very tough times. However, despite the economic climate I am delighted that we are still meeting the needs of our customers - the people of Rotherham - and that this has been recognised by these awards.

I was really pleased to learn that Rotherham was a finalist in five of the 21 different categories for service delivery and was judged to be a category winner and also the Overall Council of the Year.

One of our winning entries was for our wonderful Shop Local scheme. This exemplifies the approach we take in Rotherham. Geared to boosting trade in the town centre, it has attracted an amazing 11,000 Loyalty Card holders since its launch last July, and shows the strength of partnership working between council, community and traders.

It highlights the 'can-do' attitude that persists right across the authority, and recognises that we create the right conditions for everyone in our town to contribute solutions to the difficult community challenges we face. Both before and since the economic constraints, officers and local members have always worked closely with customers and other partners and have listened and learned. They have then applied innovative, but realistic, schemes to meet community needs.

To me the awards demonstrate this authority's determination to continue to run excellent innovative public services for the people of Rotherham despite this being a time of great austerity. Public services are very much in the spotlight at the moment, but I think that all the entrants for the APSE awards demonstrate that whatever challenges we face in our communities, local councils are a central part of the solution. My congratulations go to my colleague officers for their hard work and dedication in delivering strong front line services.

The Winning services:

Ministry of Food

Rotherham's Ministry of Food, the first of its kind in the world has provided what has proved to be an incredibly popular and valued local service. It has engaged with around 8000 local people and evaluation suggests that the vast majority of those that have benefited from a series of cookery lessons have made positive changes to their diet, impacting on their health. To maintain the projects process in these tough financial times it was last year established as a social enterprise.

Shop local campaign

Shop Local and boost your local economy, be rewarded for your loyalty and benefit from exceptional products and customer service. That is the message underpinning Rotherham town centre's Shop Local scheme and so strong it is, that a staggering 10,000 people registered for their Shop Local loyalty card 6 months into its launch.

Rotherham Council joined forces with 100 businesses in order to build a strong offer to retain shoppers and encourage new visitors during extremely difficult economic conditions.

Home from Home

Driving up the standards in Residential Care

Our innovative partnership with residential and nursing care homes 'Home from Home', made up of Health & Social Care Staff, Age Concern and volunteer Customer Inspectors:

- Tests standards along with resident/relative/staff perceptions
- Assesses customer experience, contractual compliance and professional competence
- Bronze, Silver or Gold rating
- Encourages continual improvement in raising standards through a premium payment.

The final report and rating provides prospective residents and their relative's comprehensive information to enable them to make an informed choice.

Rotherham Carers' Corner Team

The Rotherham Carers Corner Team dedicates their time to supporting carers in Rotherham. They coordinate over 20 services from a central location and through outreach sessions across the borough.

They have developed innovative techniques to support carers through partnership working with public, private and voluntary sector organisations. They demonstrate clear understanding and empathy with carers as evidenced through the B&Q discount card scheme, incorporation of carer mystery shoppers and innovative centre facilities such as the Ninetndo Wii.

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APSE Annual Seminar 2011

Conference report

Simon Parker, Chief Executive of the New Local Government Network opened the first session of conference exploring what will happen to public services if the state pulls back from provision.

Mr Parker said that the current agenda was 'not a traditional outsourcing agenda' but that developments such as the Localism Bill and the need to respond to budget reductions right across the UK would mean more diversity of provision and that this would include co-production, SMEs, personal budgets, neighbourhood working and pressure on services to be much more self-sufficient, commercial and innovative. He concluded that this would create challenges for all areas of the public sector.

Director of Studies at the Audit Commission, Professor Michael Hughes, followed on from this opening debate exploring both the differences and similarities in emerging performance management and measurement arrangements across the UK. Professor Hughes highlighted that if local politicians are to respond to new challenges decisions need to be informed by information and that information should be probed by questioning performance. What can we do better? What did we achieve? Are we spending too much? Can we invest to save? Can we be more efficient? However the emphasis was on monitoring and reviewing performance. He urged delegates to

develop a cost-conscious culture through communicating the importance of costs, making sure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities, creating a positive dialogue between finance and business models and ensuring decisions are based on sound costing information.

Three strong views: One strong debate

A lively panel debate providing a Chief Executives perspective, a legal perspective and a trade union perspective on future policy direction took place with Jan Ormondroyd, Chief Executive of Bristol City Council, Judith Barnes, Head of Local Government at Eversheds LLP and David Arnold, Green Policy Officer at UNISON. Ms Ormondroyd said that for Bristol, a budget reduction of £28 million for 2011/12, which represents around 7% of the Council's budget and savings of £70 million to be made over 4 years. The council has sought to protect front-line services and the most vulnerable service-users with the aim of finding efficiencies in the way in which the council works, reducing overheads and cutting management costs – amounting to 80% of savings. Judith Barnes said that whilst there was high level talks within Government a number of legislative changes that council frontline services would need to respond to are already making their way through the statute books. Ms Barnes highlighted new examples of where policies are being

implemented through legislative changes and guidance including the Community Right to Buy/Transfer, the Community Right to Build, the Community Right to Challenge, and changes to neighbourhood planning. David Arnold of UNISON questioned the need for the austere budget setting arguing that there are choices surrounding economic growth. Mr Arnold stressed that councils have a real role in stimulating local economies. Highlighting forthcoming research on green jobs and skills he argued that investing at a local level in areas such as renewable energy would not only create local jobs but help to tackle climate change issues at a global level whilst potentially addressing fuel poverty within poorer communities. He urged councils to think about the interdependency of the public and private economies, the two he argued cannot be divorced.

Service delivery: which model works?

With new and emerging models of frontline service delivery being pushed by Government Ministers a symposium session brought together leading experts with Steve Davies of Cardiff University exploring whether co-operatives and mutuals really offer viable democratic alternatives to existing service delivery models. Neil McInroy of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies argued that whatever delivery models are adopted for local services they need to help protect and shape



Simon Parker



Prof Michael Hughes



John Howard



Jan Ormondroyd

local economies. He also said he deplored the criticisms of 'ideologically driven' arguments as if ideology were a bad thing stating that in fact ideology created a place for genuine debate. Paul O'Brien, chief executive of APSE said that there was now clearly a myriad of local service delivery models but the challenge was to maintain local capacity and democratic accountability. Local services he said had always been delivered in a plural context but it would be foolish to forget the reasons councils developed their own capacity to deliver services, including its legitimate role to regulate the markets, and pricing, to protect the public purse and ensure services continue, even if they are commercially unattractive. Alan Johnson of the Enterprise Foundation said that the private sector can deliver ethically sound services but the public sector should be demanding more of contractors. He argued strongly that public sector clients should be including Apprenticeships as an integral part of growth plans and that skills gaps needed to be filled. Mr Johnson also said that local jobs were a critical part of the equation and that this can support the localism agenda.

Innovation in the frontline

Colin Ranson, Assistant Head of Community Services at Sunderland Council, provided one of the highlights of the seminar with a humorous look at the ever-changing times we all live in but the serious message was one of a need for an optimistic outlook on public service delivery, embracing change and to recognise that changes mean for all managers taking on new and challenging roles. His message was it is not easy but it is worth it! Mark

King, of south Gloucestershire Council provided delegates with some real practical help in the thorny area of income generation. Mr King explained that their approach was not to penalise citizens with punitive charges but to recover realistic charges for services, such as the recovery costs from insurers for certain damages to highways. He also explained that they had taken a more commercial approach to using capacity to help the local economy, through for example the winter gritting service that helped open a local airport and cleared retail parks to help with trading whilst generating income for the service. Manjeet Gill, Chief Executive of West Lindsey District Council, explained that the approach taken in West Lindsey was innovation through a spirit of municipal entrepreneurship. Ms Gill outlined that rather than simply reduce budgets they had actively sought to keep services going and had taken bold steps to invest to save. Manjeet highlighted that the entrepreneurial council was about leadership, income and trading, co-production and volunteering, and multi-skill roles and collaboration as well as investing to save in the longer term

The green panel symposium

A special symposium session introduced by APSE national secretary for 2011-2012 Dougie McMillan explored the green challenges facing local councils. Richard Lyle, MSP, of the Scottish Government was critical of the differences in recycling and approaches to waste management across the UK and said that better collaboration was needed if we are to meet the challenges of climate change, which he said were vital not just to the UK but to the global

economy. Mr Lyle said that the poorest suffer the harshest impact of the developed nation's collective failure to tackle climate change. Stephen Cirell, APSE's specialist associate on renewable energy highlighted the way in which councils can affordably implement solar energy but he emphasised that councils need to be quick off the mark to exploit the opportunities provided by feed-in tariffs but should keep the benefits for their local communities, rather than allowing the benefits to go beyond local councils. Richard Auton of Walker Morris solicitors highlighted the work carried out with APSE on the sustainable procurement toolkit and he urged councils to think about 'green issues' at the start not during or towards the end of procurement processes. The benefits of integrating procurement early on in any procurement strategy were measurable and very beneficial to not just the climate but to local communities and economies. Dr Andy Lees, of the Welsh Assembly Government outlined the waste prevention strategy within Wales and targets for recycling now stand at 70% by 2024/25 whilst aiming for further reductions. Dr Lees also said that they were interested in not just policy but action and as a result were addressing a collections blueprint, behaviour change, extending retailer producer responsibility and new legislation. He did confess, to the amusement of delegates, to having put the wrong waste in the wrong bins for his own home, which the local council duly didn't collect! (A slight embarrassment for the Government's Head of Waste Strategy!)



Judith Barnes



David Arnold



Steve Davies



Neil McInroy



Paul Sanderson



Phil Barton



Dr Andy Rees



Richard Auton

Neighbourhoods and street scene services

Phil Barton, Chief Executive of Keep Britain Tidy opened the neighbourhoods debate highlighting the latest campaign from the group the 'Love where you live' campaign. Phil did however warn that the local environment is crucial to how areas are perceived and that whilst it might be tempting to concentrate on the bigger issues within local government how we look after our local areas and neighbourhoods will be how councils are judged by local citizens. This theme was followed by Paul Sanderson, Director of Environmental Protection at St Helens Council, who emphasised the value of street lighting design on neighbourhood services. Paul urged delegates to consider and evaluate how street lighting can impact on crime, accident rates and socio economic issues. St Helens are an exemplar council in developing consultancy mechanism on street lighting as well as being a leading authority on the 'BLISS'

project to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions on street lighting design.

The neighbourhoods session was ended by a showcase of last year's APSE overall council of the year award winners, Stockton on Tees Council. Chief Executive Neil Schneider, highlighted the councils winning formula. Many delegates commented about Neil's enthusiasm not only for his own role but for the council as a whole taking home with them his key message 'Communicate and communicate again!'

Amiss not to mention....

Fergus Chambers retiring director of Cordia, a Glasgow City Council Company who provided delegates, post the APSE AGM with a witty tour of local government past, present and future and Kenny Harris of Headsurfing who provided the end of seminar motivational address to the delight of APSE delegates.

Contact: mbaines@apse.org.uk



Steve Cirell



Richard Lyle MSP



Neil Schneider



Kenny Harris



Manjeet Gill



Paul O'Brien



Alan Johnson



Colin Ranson



Mark King

Service Awards 2011



The Harry Browns provide a traditional Bristol welcome

“A huge thank you to Bristol City Council for your warm South-West welcome to our delegates” Cllr Jim Docherty

Pictured: Cllr Jim Docherty presents a gift from APSE to Bristol City Council, recieved by the Right Honorable, his Worship the Lord Mayor Councillor Geoffrey Gollop



Stockton on Tees Borough Council

1. Best Employment & Equality initiative

Sponsored By Unison

Finalists:

Aberdeen City Council
 Ballymena Borough Council
 Cardiff Council
 City of Edinburgh Council
 North Lanarkshire Council
 Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Winner: Stockton on Tees Borough Council

"Skills for Life"

'Care For Your Area' services are an award winning organisation – whether it be winning Britain in Bloom twice in the last three years, winning Entente Florale Gold in 2010, achieving 6 Green Flag Awards or picking up the LGC Management Team of the Year and APSE Council of the Year – the team are recognised regionally and nationally as deliverers of customer excellence.

What lies behind this success story is an unequivocal commitment to the continuous personal training and development, health and well being of all our front line staff.

2. Best Elected member development initiative

Sponsored By Kyron Energy & Power

Finalists:

Bristol City Council
 Powys County Council
 Warrington Borough Council

Winner: Bristol/Bath and North East Somerset/ North Somerset



Bristol/Bath and North East Somerset/ North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils (a partnership submission)

and South Gloucestershire Councils (a partnership submission)

"A Partnership Approach to Councillor Development"

The formation of a joint Unitary Authority Councillor Development Group has enabled councils in Bristol, Bath & North-East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire to become an effective partnership, sharing best practice, pooling human and financial resources and establishing firmer, healthier relationships across the sub-region. The group is councillor led and offers the 266 Councillors enhanced development opportunities plus a comprehensive, flexible and innovative development programme enabling them to serve their communities more effectively.

3. Best Housing & regeneration initiative

Sponsored By City Building Glasgow LLP

Finalists:

City of Edinburgh Council
 Clackmannanshire Council
 East Renfrewshire Council
 Leicestershire County Council
 South Yorkshire Police
 Wolverhampton Homes

Winner: Wolverhampton Homes

"Transforming All Saints: Turning empty homes into eco-homes"

Wolverhampton Homes is an ALMO, which manages Wolverhampton



Wolverhampton Homes

City Council's 23,500 properties. We worked with our Decent Homes partners, Bullock, FHM and Thomas Vale Construction, to transform empty homes in All Saints, one of Wolverhampton's most deprived areas, into eco-homes.

As well as helping to regenerate the All Saints area, the aim was to increase awareness of energy efficiency and trial new eco technologies.

The project was a huge success placing Wolverhampton firmly on the map for sustainable social housing.

4. Best Efficiency initiative

Sponsored By APSE

Finalists:

Belfast City Council
 Brent Housing Partnership
 City of Edinburgh Council
 Dorset Works Organisation
 Larne Borough Council
 Leicestershire County Council
 Solutions SK
 South Tyneside Homes

Winner: Solutions SK (A Stockport Council Company)

"Smart SOLUTIONS Save the Day"

Solutions SK's 'School Scene' catering continues to work closely with its partners and suppliers to develop creative and innovative ways of delivering its service whilst demonstrating considerable efficiency savings to future proof the business.

The business approach at present is



Solutions SK (A Stockport Council Company)

East Ayrshire Council

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

focussed on and committed to the mantra, 'How to deliver more for less' and works to the best value approach principles.

Specific areas of focus include: back office, labour, service delivery, food cost, marketing and new terms and conditions.

5. Best Healthy living initiative

Sponsored By ASSIST / LACA

Finalists:

East Ayrshire Council
East Lothian Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Gedling Borough Council
Leicester City Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
South Ayrshire Council

Winner: East Ayrshire Council

"Food for Life"

East Ayrshire is regarded globally as a leader in the development of sustainable food strategies for schools.

The use of organic, locally sourced fresh and unprocessed food, adopting new procurement and supply chain practices, has contributed to reducing the average distance food travels by a third, reductions in CO2 and carbon and demonstrating a social return on investment of £6 for every £1 spent.

Most importantly the strategy has assisted in reducing childhood obesity by a third over two years.

6. Best Public/ private partnership working

Sponsored By Walker Morris

Finalists:

Bristol City Council
Cleveland Police Authority
Liverpool City Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Yorkshire Police
Warrington Borough Council & Manchester Working Ltd

Winner: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

"Shop Local initiative"

Shop Local and boost your local economy, be rewarded for your loyalty and benefit from exceptional products and customer service. That is the message underpinning Rotherham town centre's Shop Local scheme and so strong it is, that a staggering 10,000 people registered for their Shop Local loyalty card 6 months into its launch.

Rotherham Council joined forces with 100 businesses in order to build a strong offer to retain shoppers and encourage new visitors during extremely difficult economic conditions.

7. Best Public/ public partnership working

Sponsored By Eversheds

Finalists:

Denbighshire County Council
East Renfrewshire Council

Gateshead Council
Rossendale Borough Council
Salford City Council
Tayside Contracts
Trafford/Stockport & Wigan Councils
Wolverhampton City Council

Winner: Salford City Council

"Project Gulf – Powers of Public Partnership in Tackling Organised Crime"

Project Gulf is a trail blazing initiative involving public sector partners working collaboratively to tackle serious organised crime.

This nationally acclaimed project has used the synergy of partnership, including national public bodies, to relentlessly pursue organised criminals and prevent their ability to exert power and influence within communities.

This project has strategic collaborative leadership between the partners, clear objectives and an accountable management structure.

Project Gulf has achieved wide ranging and far reaching results which have impacted on organised crime.

8. Best Public/ voluntary partnership working

Sponsored By De Montfort University

Finalists:

Broxtowe Borough Council
Fife Council
Gedling Borough Council



Salford City Council



South Gloucestershire Council



Clackmannanshire Council

Larne Borough Council
Milton Keynes Council
Peterborough City Council
South Gloucestershire Council
Strathclyde Fire & Rescue

Winner: South Gloucestershire Council

“South Glos Exercise On Prescription Partnership”

South Gloucestershire's Exercise on Prescription (EOP) pathway is an excellent example of successful partnership working between statutory agencies and the voluntary sector – South Glos Leisure Trust and South Glos Dance

It offers adults with a condition which would benefit from increased physical activity, a range of community-based interventions such as gym activities, aqua-fitness, dance, conservation work, health walks, weight management, and cardiac/stroke rehabilitation.

Highly popular with patients, it provides real choice, resulting in impressive success rates.

9. Best Community & neighbourhood initiative
Sponsored By Ian Williams and the Green Accord

Finalists:

A1 Housing Bassetlaw Ltd
Clackmannanshire Council
Durham County Council
Milton Keynes Council
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

South Gloucestershire Council
South Yorkshire Police

Winner: Clackmannanshire Council

“Imagine Alloa - One Year On”

Imagine Alloa invested £2 million to transform Alloa town centre through streetscape improvements and public art. The involvement of the community allowed the development of skills and jobs, while the legacy of the improvements is a revitalised local economy, making a name for Alloa as an arts destination.

One year on, not only have the perception of Alloa changed significantly (Mori report wave 1& 2), culture and the arts are embedded in the heart of the town.

Small business start-ups, in a time of recession, have increased by over 30%.

10. Best Information & communication technology initiative

Sponsored By Consilium Technologies

Finalists:

Bristol City Council
Broxtowe Borough Council
City & County of Swansea
Darlington Borough Council
Glasgow City Council
Salford City Council
Stoke on Trent City Council
Thurrock Council

Winner: Glasgow City Council

“Labportal – Web Access to Live Client Data (from carbon copy to cyberspace)”

The object of the project was to provide live sample details, results of analysis and final reports to clients over a secure website that could be accessed without client installed software and from any PC or mobile device with an internet connection. Following a short feasibility study, the project team worked with a private sector partner to develop and enhance this web based application. Stakeholder engagement featured throughout the project and there are now around 300 users of the system.

11. Best Environmental initiative

Sponsored By Johnston Sweepers

Finalists:

Aberdeen City Council
Belfast City Council
Leicestershire County Council
London Borough of Merton
Renfrewshire Council
South Tyneside Homes
Stafford Borough Council
Tayside Contracts

Winner: Belfast City Council

“Littering. It's not a good look”

The Community Awareness Team promote and deliver an anti-litter message to the entire community through our campaigns and projects. We work to empower communities to take ownership of their areas and keep them free from litter and environmental crime. We



Glasgow City Council

do this through public awareness campaigns, education, business partnerships and community-led projects. Last year we worked with 50 community groups, facilitated 81 community cleanups, 53 businesses and 82 schools to achieve this. Through this work we strive for a litter-free Belfast

**12. Best service team
Construction & building**
Sponsored By Trukrax Vehicle
Racking Systems

Finalists:

City & County of Swansea
Darlington Borough Council
Derbyshire County Council
Kingstown Works Limited
Newcastle City Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Tyneside Homes

Winner: South Tyneside Homes

**“South Tyneside Homes –
Property services”**

South Tyneside Homes' has its own in house team Property Services who deliver repairs and improvements to South Tyneside Council Housing stock. Over the past year, the vast majority of our work has been to deliver improvements to our Sheltered Accommodation Schemes to implement the Decent Homes standard. These residents are some of our most vulnerable customers with specific needs and requirements. This project has made a difference to customers' lives but has demonstrated cross section working and exceptional planning.



Belfast City Council

**13. Best service team
Catering**
Sponsored By Robert Wiseman
Dairies

Finalists:

Cardiff Council
Dumfries & Galloway Council
Gateshead Council
Liverpool City Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Salford City Council
Scottish Borders Council
Stockton on Tees Borough
Council

Winner: Gateshead Council

**“Movie Meals – A Box Office Hit
for Gateshead Schools!”**

'Movie Meals' were developed to make pupil meal times fun and exciting. Customer insight gained through our Strategic Marketing Review identified that parents, pupils, and schools wanted customised marketing materials and promotions.

Our approach engaged pupils and parents through effective use of colourful flyers promoting a series of 'Movie Meals'. Each flyer included a themed menu and a reply slip for parents to book a school meal for their child. 'Movie Meals' were effective in increasing school meal numbers.

**14. Best service team
Building/ facilities cleaning**
Sponsored By Numatic
International

Finalists:

Dumfries & Galloway Council
East Ayrshire Council
Gateshead Council



South Tyneside Homes

Hull City Council
Liverpool City Council
Middlesbrough Council
Warwickshire County Council

Winner: Liverpool City Council

**“Liverpool – Cleaner and
Greener”**

Liverpool City Council's Building Cleaning Services Team has been looking at ways to make the service more environmentally sustainable. In doing so we have introduced changes in the way we do things in a way that supports and promotes the services we offer in a positive way, while at the same time, supports the council's aims in demonstrating significant reductions in carbon emissions and reducing the effect its activities have on the environment.

**15. Best service team
Highways, winter
maintenance & Street
lighting**
Sponsored By Nu-Phalt

Finalists:

Conwy County Borough Council
and Denbighshire County
Council
Newcastle City Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Gloucestershire Council
Staffordshire County Council
Stockton on Tees Borough
Council

Winner: Conwy County
Borough Council &
Denbighshire County Council

Since the appointment of the



Gateshead Council

shared Head of Service, Denbighshire and Conwy Council's Highways Service have undertaken major changes through the implementation of an integrated service model. To date, Harbour and Maritime, Street Works, Passenger Transport, Parking Services and Street Lighting have all merged to provide significant financial savings.

In addition, the next phase of service transformation has been developed which will involve the integration of Network Management, Design and Highways Maintenance and Construction Functions.

The project is an example of what can be achieved through an incremental approach to collaboration. Fundamental to the program's success has been our ability to engage across sectors and authorities to harness the most talented and skilled people to deliver sustainable change.

16. Best Service Team Transport & Fleet

Sponsored By Northgate Vehicle Hire

Finalists:

Dumfries & Galloway Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Fife Council
Gateshead Council
Powys County Council
Stockton on Tees Borough Council
Thurrock Council
Wakefield Council



Liverpool City Council

Winner: Dumfries & Galloway Council

"Fleet Management Team – Driving Forward Change"

Dumfries & Galloway Council's Fleet Management Team is driving forward change.

In 2010/11 the section of 6 staff:

- Implemented a new corporate car pool;
- Rolled out a new fuel management system;
- Implemented vehicle tracking;
- Brought in direct input of workshop data;
- Procured and began deploying electric vehicles within the fleet; and
- Began providing Fleet Management services for the NHS locally

in addition to normal duties. Oh, and they moved offices too!

17. Best Service Team Waste & Recycling

Sponsored By Smartstreets

Finalists:

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Bridgend County Borough Council
City & County of Swansea
Conwy County Borough Council
Maidstone Borough Council
Newcastle City Council
Scarborough Borough Council
Solutions SK

Winner: Newcastle City Council



Conwy County Borough Council & Denbighshire County Council

Newcastle is currently recognised as the UK's most sustainable City. One key element of this accolade is recognition of the success in both increasing recycling rates and reducing the amount of waste to landfill. This achievement is the result of significant endeavours from a small team established to drive this agenda. From a low baseline the energy commitment ability and tenacity of the team has been vital in securing the success currently being recognised locally and nationally.

18. Best Service Team Street Cleansing and Streetscene

Sponsored By Scarab Sweepers

Finalists:

Broxtowe Borough Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Gedling Borough Council
Milton Keynes Council
Nottingham City Council
Wakefield Council

Winner: Nottingham City Council

"Achieving Britain's Cleanest Big City status"

Nottingham has ambitions to become a world-class city. To do this, we need to be grounded in things that really matter to local people and ensure that our city is clean, green and safe.

These are the challenges laid out in the city's Sustainable Community Strategy and Council Plans and why Councillors have invested in financial and operational resources



Dumfries & Galloway Council

to have teams based in neighbourhoods, with local knowledge and ownership of their areas: working with local people to transform their communities.

19. Best Service Team Parks, Grounds & Horticultural

Sponsored By
SGM Contracts LLP

Finalists:

Broxtowe Borough Council
City of Edinburgh Council
Gateshead Council
Nottingham City Council
Sefton Council
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Winner: City of Edinburgh Council

“Edinburgh’s Parks: A Capital Success”

The City of Edinburgh Parks & Greenspace and Neighbourhood services illustrate how to successfully drive improvements across a city’s open space “estate”. They use matrix working as a means to widen service ownership, bring the service closer to people and embed recognised best practice. This traditional “Cinderella Service” is now internally and externally recognised as being a top performing, evidence based, innovative and continually evolving service that responds with professionalism and enthusiasm to what customers want.



Newcastle City Council

20. Best Service Team Sports, Leisure & Cultural

Sponsored By Toltec

Finalists:

Broxtowe Borough Council
City of Edinburgh Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Gedling Borough Council
Reading Borough Council
Sheffield City Council
South Somerset District Council

Winner: East Riding of Yorkshire Council

“East Riding Leisure: Going beyond what customers expect”

East Riding Leisure team has been tackling the Health agenda in innovative ways including a motivational interviewing approach improving the customer experience and retention. Customers now quote this as the single most influential contributor to their successful behaviour change.

Coupled to this is the development of innovative and groundbreaking technology keeping in touch with customers, which understands customer need whilst helping them achieve their goals and aspirations.

A customer centric delivery, which is self financing ensuring sustainability and value for money.



Nottingham City Council

21. Best Service Team Social Care

Sponsored By UNISON

Finalists:

Bridgend County Borough Council
Durham County Council
Manchester City Council
Northamptonshire County Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Stockport Council
Thurrock Council

Winner: Thurrock Council

“Workforce Planning and Development in Social Care”

The drive, passion and energy of the Workforce Planning and Development team at Thurrock Council puts them at the forefront of developing social care skills in-house and with private, voluntary and independent sector partners.

Recognised nationally, the team equips the workforce to meet local safeguarding priorities; helps shape the future of fieldwork; ensures all providers are able to increase their ability to deliver flexible and responsive work; and leads and develops training strategies across children and adult services and with outside bodies.



City of Edinburgh Council



East Riding of Yorkshire Council



Thurrock Council

22. Overall Council of the Year in Service Delivery
Sponsored By DAF Trucks

Finalists:

- City of Edinburgh Council
- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Milton Keynes Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Stockport Council/ Solutions SK (A Stockport Council Company)
- Stockton on Tees Borough Council



Overall Council of the Year:
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

APSE would like to thank all sponsors of the Service Awards 2011 for their support



Developing sports professionals on and off the field

2011 will be remembered as the year in which history was made in the sport and physical activity sector. For the first time, the one million professionals working in the sector have the opportunity to join one professional development body representing every one of its members with a unified voice.



IMSPA, the Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity, was created to drive standards of professional practice within the sector, and its potential to do so was recognised in April this year with the award of a Royal Charter by the Privy Council. In August, the Institute was also proud to welcome sporting icon Lord Sebastian Coe among its key ambassadors.

It's a timely development in the industry, given the build-up to London 2012, which has put British sport under the spotlight. Never has it been more important to deliver effective leisure services across the UK, and to support the training and development of the professionals behind them.

That said, the challenging economic climate is such that budgets are coming under pressure, and cutbacks in spending on professional development appear a tempting option to some leisure employers. But such a policy demonstrates chronic short-sightedness when it

comes to managing expenditure, and fails to recognise the many advantages of a continued commitment to professional development:

- The ability to motivate and stimulate employees by offering continuous challenges in their roles and opportunities to learn.
- The attraction and retention of talented people in a competitive job market through the offer of professional development opportunities as part of a benefits package.
- The creation of highly skilled employees who are empowered to share best practice and learn from each other to drive professional standards.
- The promotion of an innovative organisational culture in which employees are given the skills they need to put forward new ideas for improving practices.
- Improvements to output quality thanks to a highly skilled workforce, and a consequent positive impact on the bottom line.

Rather than cutting back on professional development due to the recession, it is more important than ever to invest time and resources into training and education. Only through doing this can your business ensure that when economic conditions improve, your workforce will be well prepared to drive it forward effectively. For leisure operators in particular, it is also necessary in relation to the vital role the sport and physical activity sector plays in improving the health of the nation. In short, professional development should never be considered a 'nice to have' by any functioning business, but a crucial cog without which the organisational machine simply cannot continue to operate efficiently whilst maintaining the quality of its output.

Thankfully, IMSPA has already won a host of supporters when it comes to driving professionalism in leisure service delivery. As well as establishing a memorandum of understanding with Sector Skills Council SkillsActive, the Institute has also joined forces with over thirty

Corporate Partners, Skills Development Partners and Registered Suppliers since launching its partnership packages in September. Employers across the country are recognising the importance of professional development within their workforce. Leisure recruitment advertisements are already emerging which list IMSPA membership as an application criterion. And of course, when it comes to winning business amongst public sector organisations, engagement with a recognised professional development body such as IMSPA can only be an advantage.

But whilst IMSPA's partnership packages are designed to transform attitudes towards professional development at board level, the impetus for change is not coming solely from employers. The Institute aims to guide people working within the sector who wish to progress in their careers, creating a clear path that will help them reach the levels they aspire to. For those individuals who want to excel and receive recognition for doing so, it offers and supports individual development journeys, and offers the opportunity to work towards Chartership status. The first 'batch' of chartered IMSPA members will be awarded in 2012, and will spell the start of a new era for professional standards in the sport and physical activity sector.

Contact: email Laura King at laura@citydesksport.com

A New Chair for a New Era

Miles Templeman, Director General of the Institute of Directors, has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity, succeeding Marc Newey whose term as Interim Chairman of the Institute draws to a close at the end of September.

Mr Templeman brings a wealth of experience in strategic and marketing direction, having worked with big name brands and companies including Royal Mail, Accenture, Levis and Stella Artois. He is also a Board Member of Young Enterprise, Enterprise Insight and The European Confederation of Directors' Associations (ecoDa).

Commenting on his appointment, which he will take up on October 1st, Mr Templeman said:

"I am delighted to have this opportunity to lead IMSPA at such an early phase of its development. The interim board has done an excellent job of paving the way forward for the Institute in securing Chartership, which represents a real turning point in the sport and physical activity sector. With the Olympics fast approaching, the sector is under the spotlight like never before, and I relish the challenge of delivering a professional body that can help it live up to, and exceed expectation."



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Who benefits?

Government plans to shake up the housing benefit service have stirred up serious concerns over the future for claimants and staff. Here Sampson Low, policy officer of UNISON explains the trade unions concerns



A new Universal Credit, which lumps together all the benefits, is being pushed through under the Welfare Reform Bill. However, there is no guarantee about how housing benefit is going to work alongside the others. At the moment this looks likely to result in a poorer quality of service for a higher price.

Vulnerable benefit claimants will receive less attention from staff, as redundancies and local office cuts remove face-to-face contact. At the same time, the cost of breaking huge outsourcing contracts to put the Universal Credit in place could run into millions of pounds.

UNISON has 20,000 benefits' members working for local authorities, housing associations and private contractors. These members deliver the most complex of benefits in record time. Fraud investigators have an excellent record in prevention, detection and prosecution. These members are now fearful of their future, a rise in fraud and how the shift to online delivery and call centres will affect claimants.

A recent survey by the Local Government Association found that councils had face-to-face contact in up to 80% of claims. This type of contact helps reduce errors and speed up claims for the vulnerable. Removing face-to-face contact will lead to a huge loss of local housing expertise, when we know that many councils in deprived areas have seen these type of interviews

make a real difference to the efficiency of the service.

Despite the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) assuming that 99% of Universal Credit claims can be dealt with by phone or Internet, we know that many claimants will struggle if they are not able to speak to staff in person, to solve problems and provide paperwork. They will also have to rely on the post, or scanning items - sending off all their important documents and hoping that they get them back in time to make the next rent payment. The mounting cost of phone calls and access to the Internet is also a big issue for these people.

As well as making the process more complicated and the detrimental impact on quality, the cost incurred to make these changes is huge. Housing Benefit services are often combined with Council Tax and other benefits, as part of a general service on a long contract with a private company. Larger back office, or shared services outsourcing contracts, with a contractor like BT, can last for 20 years.

Cancelling these contracts early will result in rocketing penalty charges. A UNISON survey in the summer of 2011, based on Freedom of Information requests, revealed that more than 16% of authorities have an external contract to deliver Housing Benefit, with either a private contractor, or another public authority.

We will be raising our concerns during the second reading of the Welfare Reform Bill, as our Housing Benefit staff and those who rely on them deserve to know what lies ahead. There has been much debate on the policy of Universal Credit, but not enough on the practical delivery - how 6 million of the poorest citizens in the UK will cope without face to face help? The Government must rethink their plans and allow councils to retain responsibility for Housing Benefit services under the new Credit. This is the most efficient way to deliver a high quality, cost-effective service.

Contact: s.low@unison.co.uk

Firm foundations for new homes

As the Government launches an inquiry into new housing supply, Milan Radulovic MBE, leader of Broxtowe BC and chair of the Association of Retained Council Housing, argues that building by councils can offer value for money along with social and environmental benefits

When my authority built eight bungalows and four flats back in 2007 these were among just a few dozen local authority properties to have been constructed that year in the whole of England.

The £1.5m project was funded using Broxtowe's own capital resources and Section 106 contributions. We went on to secure funding, to be matched through prudential borrowing, under the Homes and Communities Agency's Local Authority Newbuild (LANB) programme. A total of 25 new eco-homes are currently being completed in our borough.

ARCH lobbied alongside APSE for opportunities for councils to build and we were very pleased that construction was able to get under way in other councils across the country thanks to LANB. It is a huge shame that the programme was so short-lived when there are still 1.76m households on local authority waiting lists and large-scale building would give the economy a much-needed boost.

The department for Communities and Local Government Committee has decided to undertake an inquiry into the financing of new housing supply and we sincerely hope that the great potential of local authorities to directly build is properly explored.

ARCH believes that council housing can have economic as well as social and environmental benefits and commissioned APSE to undertake research into the value of council housing. The research report, Firm Foundations: The holistic benefits of house-building by stock retained councils, examines progress of ARCH members in delivering new homes. A survey by APSE's principal advisor for housing, Phil Brennan, found that ARCH members had either constructed, were in the process of constructing, or were about to build some 1,500 new council homes.

The report features case studies demonstrating how stock retained councils have built to high standards within tight deadlines required by the LANB fund. It includes a modelling exercise showing that direct building offers good value for money. The research also assessed costs to the national purse associated with homelessness and poor housing. This is costing the National Health Service an additional £2.5bn a year plus an additional £1.8 bn a year in policing costs. Added to this, every £1 investment in new housing generates £3.51 of economic output. There is therefore a strong macro-economic argument for investment in new affordable homes.

The research on house-building by councils is a follow up to Under One Roof: The holistic benefits of stock retained council housing, which was also produced by APSE for ARCH. It proves the value councils can bring to building new homes when given a chance and the added social and environmental benefits of stock retained authorities being direct providers.

We are pleased that the HCA's latest affordable homes programme acknowledges the local authority direct development role. The self-financing regime will allow councils more local control but the full implications of the new arrangements are still emerging. ARCH members have the desire and ability to build. We sincerely hope that the new system will allow us to do so.

Caps on borrowing under the new self-financing settlement resulting from the reformed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) system, should be limited to provide sufficient scope for councils to borrow to fund new affordable homes. There is also a long-held argument that borrowing by councils to build new affordable homes should be taken out of the Public Sector Net Debt in line with the fiscal rules applied in other European countries.

New social housing is a means of reducing costs of other services, such as health and police. It pays for itself in the form of rents. It also stimulates the economy. The business case for council building set out in Firm Foundations should therefore be given serious consideration.

The deadline for submissions to the Government's inquiry into housing supply is 21st October and this is expected to consider how the reform of the HRA system might enable more funding to be made available for local authority new-build. Let's hope that it comes up with some sensible, long-term answers.

Contact: pbrennan@apse.org.uk

Copies of Firm Foundations can be downloaded in pdf format from the ARCH website: www.arch-housing.org.uk

Copies of Under One Roof are also available from Phil Brennan at APSE. Email: pbrennan@apse.org.uk



Streets ahead on lighting

The AGMA street lighting electrical connections project has not only demonstrated effective cooperation between local authorities but produced tangible savings.

The Project

Since 2001, Wigan Council has played an active role in trying to influence the monopoly situation in the provision of unmetered electrical connections to street lighting equipment. In 2002, Ofgem first proposed that Independent Connection Providers (ICPs) could be used to provide some of the unmetered electrical connections to street lighting equipment. The type of connections that could be undertaken under contract are:

- new service connections on greenfield sites;
- transfer of service;
- permanent disconnection of service.

However, no local authorities explored this option due to the lack of available accredited ICPs in the market place and the limitations on the connections to be undertaken.

Ofgem reviewed the situation and carried out a nationwide consultation exercise. In November 2004, it published a decision document that indicated further opportunities for LAs to commission unmetered connections, as follows:

- Rent a jointer from the host DNO;
- Employ an ICP managed through a tri-partate agreement with the local authority and the DNO.

These options had a very limited uptake, primarily due to the excessive cost charged to the local authority in the rent a jointer

scheme as well as the continued limited number of accredited ICPs and other issues including host DNOs being obstructive in allowing ICPs to operate on their networks

More recently in 2006, Ofgem introduced a requirement for all DNOs to set-up and agree tri-partate agreements and introduced a Service Level Agreement document for monitoring performance.

With the more robust approach from Ofgem, the DNOs have now put in place a process for ICPs to operate a financially viable service. Consequently, there are a number of accredited ICPs now operating in the market place.

However, the market for ICP street lighting connections is still relatively immature. Wigan Council undertook a benchmarking exercise to understand the market and the savings that could be achieved should this service be opened up to full competition and include AGMA partners. This benchmark proved that a saving of 20-30% could be achieved by undertaking a competitive process.

AGMA Procurement Hub was approached by Wigan Council to support a collaborative procurement project including options appraisal process. This identified that no such similar framework existed that could be utilised by AGMA and other participating authorities. A project was initiated, and included 12 local authorities, to procure a street lighting connections framework agreement. The procurement project utilised the technical skills of the Wigan street lighting team with input provided by other AGMA partners via the AGMA Street Lighting Engineers' Group. Steer and approvals were provided by the project board for the project, the

Network Management Group.

This positive collaboration led to a framework being established in September 2011 which includes 7 providers over 2 geographical 'lots' who can be called-off on a ranked, cascade basis. The framework also allows for mini-competitions to be undertaken which could provide further savings in addition to those highlighted above.

The key outcomes from the project:

1. Local authorities are set to make significant savings by calling-off services from this framework.
2. Procurement knowledge and expertise has been shared with a technical service area with relatively little experience in larger scale procurements.
3. The profile of gaining value for money in street lighting connections has been raised across AGMA. Wigan Council is now the designated procurement category lead for Street Lighting across AGMA.
4. This collaboration has brought together AGMA partners and other participating authorities in active dialogue and positive project delivery.
5. This project has provided an opportunity for market stimulation in the street lighting connections market where services are still not widely opened up to competition.

This project has made a difference to...

Street Lighting services provided by AGMA partners and other participating authorities. It will also make a difference to local residents who will now have less disruption when street lighting connections are being undertaken in their residential areas.

This project has made a difference because...

This framework agreement will, in effect, offer the participating authorities a "one-stop shop" for the installation, replacement and electrical connection of street lighting equipment.

In addition, the project will make a difference to the following:

1. Enhances Performance – The participating authorities can now utilize providers on the framework agreement to undertake all works associated with replacing lighting columns. The AGMA Street Lighting Engineers' Group now has full control to manage and direct the work programme in conjunction with providers on the framework. There are also savings in time; the traditional approach for a typical installation usually takes between 5 – 6 weeks. However, this can now be reduced to 1 day or one visit to site per column.
2. Minimizes Disruption – Deploying a "one-stop shop" approach, lighting units can be installed, connected and removed on the same day. No wait between new unit being installed and old unit removed, no excavations left open and only one visit to site instead of current 7 site visits associated with the same process. Therefore, meaning less disruption to residents in their local areas and less traffic disruption which, in turn, satisfies Traffic Management Act requirements.
3. Better Use of Resources – A one-stop shop approach means there will be one point of contact as one provider, on being called-off from the framework, is managing the site and is responsible for all works. Historically, three contractors were involved in the same process. This new approach will lead to less administration of processing orders, greater transparency, accountability and

enhanced performance monitoring.

4. Savings – Savings of c. 24% from previous financial year spend by calling-off services via this collaborative framework agreement.

We are particularly proud of this project because...

The collaboration sought to stimulate the market in a service that has not historically been extensively competed. It has enabled the local economy to be stimulated by including some local suppliers on the framework agreement. It has also brought together a wide range of AGMA and other participating partners all with the objective of making improvement and efficiency savings.

If I could go back and do one more thing differently, I would...

Ensure additional resources were available at the start of the project, in particular to develop the specification, as this required an extension to the project timescales due to limited resource availability.

"Wigan Council recognises the benefits improved street lighting provides to all sectors of our community and the importance of cost effective service delivery. To this end, Wigan's long standing ambition has been realised with the development and deployment of the Independent Connections Provider scheme. The benefits of a 'one-stop shop' approach are clear and unambiguous and will ensure that during the most challenging financial times, Wigan Council is assuring value for money." Mark Tilley, Head of Infrastructure, Wigan Council.

"The recently developed framework agreement for street lighting connections will deliver considerable savings at a time when we are all looking for more efficient ways of working and budgets are limited. The collaborative arrangement supported by the AGMA Procurement Hub will encourage competitive rates, better use of resources, provides the opportunity to realise other maintenance benefits, will minimise disruption and reduce delays on the network. I am proud to be involved in this process as chair of the Network Managers' Group and would like to thank all those involved for their hard work in delivering this innovative project." Jim McMahon, Director of Major Projects, Stockport Council and Chair of the Network Managers' Group.

Projected Efficiencies and Timeframe:	Partners involved
c.£2.4m over a 4 year timeframe	Bolton Council
	Bury Council
	Manchester City Council
	Oldham Council
	St Helens Council
	Stockport Council
	Tameside Council
	Trafford Council
	Wigan Council
	Transport for Greater Manchester
Lancashire County Council	
Warrington Council	

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APSE people pages...

Cllr Jim Docherty, South Lanarkshire Council



APSE National Chair 2011- 2012

At the APSE annual general meeting Cllr Jim Docherty of South Lanarkshire Council was nominated by APSE Scotland as the new APSE National Chair for 2011-2012. APSE's constitution rotates the position of National Chair each year to each of our areas reflecting APSE's UK wide status.

As is traditional at the AGM, Cllr Docherty outlined his vision for APSE saying that 'In these difficult times for local government it is often hard to be able to set strategic goals and to have a vision about where we are going over the next few years. So my aspirations for APSE are quite pragmatic and based on continuing the good work of my predecessors and building a sustainable and viable organisation

for the future'. Cllr Docherty went on to say 'APSE is a sound organisation both financially and in terms of the range of services it provides to its membership. On my watch I want to ensure that APSE is a well run and commercially focussed organisation that continues to provide excellent value for money to its member authorities. In these challenging times it is well managed and sustainable organisations that will continue to survive. Local government needs organisations like APSE and we have a duty to ensure that APSE continues to respond effectively to the needs of its membership. So under my stewardship it will be steady as she goes; building on the sound foundations already put in place in order to continue to provide cost effective and quality services to the wider APSE membership'.

Cllr Docherty will be assisted as National Chair by the newly appointed APSE National Secretary Dougie McMillan who has pledged to ensure the aims and objectives of APSE and our member authorities continue to be met throughout the coming year.

APSE briefing notes update

Briefing notes and research reports produced since the last issue of Direct News

11-53	New Best Value Statutory Guidance	September 2011
11-52	Community Right to Challenge	September 2011
11-51	Cleaning state of the market survey	September 2011
11-50	Scottish Government Programme	September 2011
11-50	Community right to challenge policy order	September 2011
11-49	Scotlands public finances address the challenges	September 2011
11-48	The Halal Dilemma	September 2011
11-47	SEPA waste data strategy for Scotland	September 2011

For more information on the briefing notes and research reports, contact the APSE office on 0161 772 1810 or visit our website at www.apse.org.uk

Events diary

Date	Event	Venue
October 11	Managing attendance in local government - Scotland	Glasgow ●
October 11	Agency worker directive	London ●
October 12	Senior managers PRINCE2® Project Management	Manchester ●
October 13	Cleaning in food premises – a manager's toolkit	Nottingham ●
October 13	Building Cleaning Advisory Group	Manchester ●
October 14	Cemeteries and Crematoria - Supervisory skills for team leaders	Manchester ●
October 18	Sports and Leisure Advisory Group	Manchester ●
October 21	Catering Advisory Group	Manchester ●
October 27	Involving your community	Manchester ●
October 27	Scottish Regional Council	Aberdeen ●
November 2	Highways advisory group	Manchester Town Hall ●
November 2&3	Environmental Services Seminar 2011	Stoke on Trent ●
November 2	Preparing for a catering services in-house bid	Leeds ●
November 3	Building Maintenance Advisory Group	Manchester Town Hall ●
November 7	Preparing for a leisure services in-house bid	Manchester ●
November 9	One day Sports Development Seminar	Manchester City Football Club ●
November 9	Preparing for a street cleansing in-house bid	Leeds ●
November 9	NI Fleet Transport Seminar	Down, Northern Ireland ●
November 11	Preparing for a building cleaning in-house bid	Manchester ●
November 16	Wales Environmental services advisory group	Llandrindod Wells ●
November 17	Wales Catering and Cleaning services advisory group	Llandrindod Wells ●

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