



direct news

Association for Public Service Excellence • December 2012/January 2013 • ISSN 16465-2493

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Editorial

Another year has gone but we survived; albeit with a few bumps and scrapes.

2012 has not been an easy year with a further round of spending cuts for many councils that have resulted in some very difficult and painful decisions. APSE members have risen to the challenge and fought hard to ensure that frontline services continue. However we recognise that for many this has meant inevitable reductions in services, whether in terms of the frequency of delivery of those services or greater rationing on access to some services. We need to recognise that there is an inevitable tipping point at which the mantra of 'more for less' is finally reached.

Throughout 2012 APSE has continued with our pledge of producing high level research to support our members through this difficult time. The Ensuring Council research highlighted that there is little support for 'hollowed out' councils. The research found that elected members and officers support the ability of local councils to make positive interventions in the local economy, and develop responsive local services, rather than 'enabling models' which can strip away local democratic accountability for service delivery.

Similarly our research on Municipal Entrepreneurship referenced case study local authorities that have seized the initiative to develop a spirit of entrepreneurship in the delivery of local services. From rescuing a film studios to secure local jobs through to catering operations the USP of these councils is that they have dared to take a calculated risk to benefit their local communities. But these are to mention just two of our extensive research programme much of which has been achieved through our successful partnership with De Montfort University and the Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

As we head into 2013 APSE is already putting in place exciting new arrangements for its unique performance networks service; ensuring that the future of the service not only continues to provide the excellent range of support and reports to our members, but to develop new work streams and to respond to the emerging performance frameworks throughout the UK. The abolition of the Audit Commission creates a greater onus on local councils to provide their own reporting of performance under the transparency agenda. APSE performance networks will be well placed to ensure that its members are on the front-foot in meeting these new challenges.

So it is goodbye to 2012 which we survived! And hello to the new challenges of 2013. As one strong voice for the frontline APSE will be there for our members whatever the economic tide brings to us in the new year.

Cllr. John Kerr Brown, APSE National Chair



High time we reimagined the high street

Alice Darley, Head of Regeneration Strategy and Policy, at the Department for Communities and Local Government, looks at how councils can work with local people to reimagine urban spaces to revitalise declining High Streets.

Local news stations often lead with reports of declining local high streets and depressing images of shops boarded up and lifeless town centres. But is there more that local councils can do to counteract the decline? I would argue most definitely yes!

Our high streets are under pressure. Shopping habits have changed with the growth of out-of-town shopping developments and supermarkets; on the growing popularity of internet shopping; and of course a harsh economic downturn.

These are structural changes to which

we must respond. I believe the solution is not about trying to reverse the tides of change but about working with them. High streets need to build upon their strengths without chasing the past.

There are of course some harsh realities we need to face up to. Some high streets may need to shrink in size and incorporate some changes of use. But the challenges high streets face bring exciting opportunities too. We are entering a new era of local partnership working, and together we can make our high streets thriving places. With creative thinking, you can put your area on the map, attract new people

and reinvigorate community pride.

Local high streets need to find their unique selling point. High streets are historic trading hubs. But the high street USP is about far more than the shops and services located there. It's about a different mix; a social interaction; and a different kind of experience to the internet or out-of-town shopping alternatives. Making the most of your high street USP is about emphasising and increasing this experience in a way that resonates with local characteristics and local history to avoid "clone town". And think about what draws people to internet and out-of-town rivals – what elements

of this can you incorporate to update your high street experience?

Once you identify your high street's USP you can work with local people to develop a shared vision that will meet a diverse set of needs. In delivering this, it is important to remember that our town centres and high streets consist of more than buildings and roads. The spaces in-between are what hold them together as a place – the pavements, squares, alleyways, junctions and foyers. All too often these spaces are used as no more than thoroughfares, when they can be so much more.

We have seen, during our work at DCLG, some fantastic examples of how local councils, residents and businesses have worked together to reinvent their urban spaces to create vibrant places which people can enjoy, and bring energy and vitality to the high street. A further reason to visit, and to linger when you do.

Open store frontages and market stalls can provide a tasting plate of the exciting array of goods and services on offer in the surrounding buildings, and can also add to the mix of goods on offer. Seating, greening and art installations can create pleasant places to stop, linger and meet, and can improve visual appeal, biodiversity, drainage, noise and air quality. Streetscapes can be decluttered and designed to improve access and movement, whilst enhancing sense of place and visual appeal through for example local materials and style, local craftsmanship and vistas. Think also about the approach to the high street, including routes from public transport hubs, and the relationship between pedestrians and other road users. Events and entertainment can be the final ingredient, adding noise,

smells and excitement to the high street experience, drawing visitors from near and far.



Rather than being an eyesore and a drag on the local economy, empty shops and business premises can be used as temporary homes for business start-ups, community groups and galleries or workshops. Even the windows could be a potential display space for an artist or an arts project by a local school. And many occupied buildings are actually under-used or are open only at certain times – think about what else they could house. For example, perhaps a library could include craft stalls or an art gallery, or host yoga classes in the evening. A café could provide the venue for an evening book club....



There are endless possibilities and endless opportunities – it is now for local councils and their partners to seize the day and reimagine their

urban spaces to revitalise their local high streets.

The Government has put in place several measures to support you in this mission. Perhaps most well-known is our Portas Programme, as part of which **'Reimagining Urban Spaces to Revitalise Our High Streets'** was launched in July 2012 and provides inspirational case studies and a huge range of creative, often simple, ideas for using urban spaces to create a buzz within the local high street. The Portas Programme has also supported the creation of 27 'Portas Pilots' and a

further 340 Town Teams, the 'Love Your Local Market' campaign, the creation of the Future High Streets Challenge X-Fund, the High Street Innovation Fund, Enterprise Business Connectors, and next year will see the launch of the Business Improvement District Loan Fund.

The regeneration toolkit **'Regeneration to enable growth: A toolkit supporting locally-led regeneration'** was first launched in January 2011 and was updated in January 2012. It helps councils by sign-posting a range of policies and programmes, flexibilities and powers that can help stimulate the local area.

The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the 'town centre first' approach, and confirms local council responsibility to recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and proactively support their viability and vitality. Local councils have also been given greater freedoms and flexibilities. The door is wide open for you to show the world what you can do.

Alice Darley is Head of Regeneration Strategy and Policy at the Department for Communities and Local Government

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Photos this page:

The Brick Box, Brixton and Tooting Markets

An inspector calls



Janet Viney, one of HM Inspectors of Health and Safety at the HSE explores issues for local authorities in the collection and recycling of waste.

The health and safety record of the waste industry is not a particularly good news story. The fatality rate for workers is twice that of the construction industry and nine times the rate for 'all industries'. In fact only agriculture fares worse than the waste and recycling industry so it is easy to understand why this sector remains very much a priority for HSE.

Currently HSE have a number of inspection initiatives to try to improve the health and safety performance of the waste and recycling industry. One area that is being targeted is waste collection activities which account for over 70 per cent of incidents within the industry, most associated with household/municipal collection activities.

Local authorities have a key role in delivering such services and HSE have been carrying out an inspection initiative with all 407 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. This started in October 2010 and is due to be complete in October 2013.

HSE, in consultation with the industry, has published online guidance to help Local Authorities comply with their health and safety duties, regardless of whether they deliver the services in-house or contract out. The guidance is structured to reflect the key stages of the contract management process and outlines a number of important features and principles of good practice associated with each of these steps.

This inspection initiative provides the opportunity to ensure that local authorities:

- are aware of the guidance;
- have benchmarked themselves against the guidance; and,
- identify and prioritise any actions they need to take to improve with appropriate timescales.

The interim findings at the mid point of the inspection initiative were reported to delegates at the APSE Conference in November 2012.

Councils have a legal obligation to manage health and safety, as do service providers, whether they are in-house or contractors. These joint responsibilities should be reflected in the contract documentation. However as of March 2012, we found that nearly one fifth of local authorities are not

following important health and safety guidelines when procuring and managing waste and recycling contracts.

Meanwhile, more than a quarter (26%) of councils visited were found to have sub-standard frameworks for monitoring and reviewing health and safety, and 28% sub-standard risk assessments of activities.

In addition, one Prohibition Notice and 27 Improvement Notices were served, including five in reversing assistant training and two in transport management.

While there is clearly room for improvement we also found that councils are performing well in a number of areas including manual handling, health and welfare, vehicle transport and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

In summary, the areas that Local Authorities and contractors should focus more attention on are:

- Procurement and management of the service / contract;
- Monitoring and reviewing the contract;
- Route risk assessment;
- Hearing protection and,
- Monitoring the effectiveness of supervision.

All Local Authorities will have received a visit by October 2013 and follow-up visits will be paid to councils who are found to be non-compliant.

Further general guidance can be found on HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/waste/index.htm

Specific guidance for Local Authorities on procuring and managing waste services can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/waste/services/index.htm>. This includes case studies and advice.

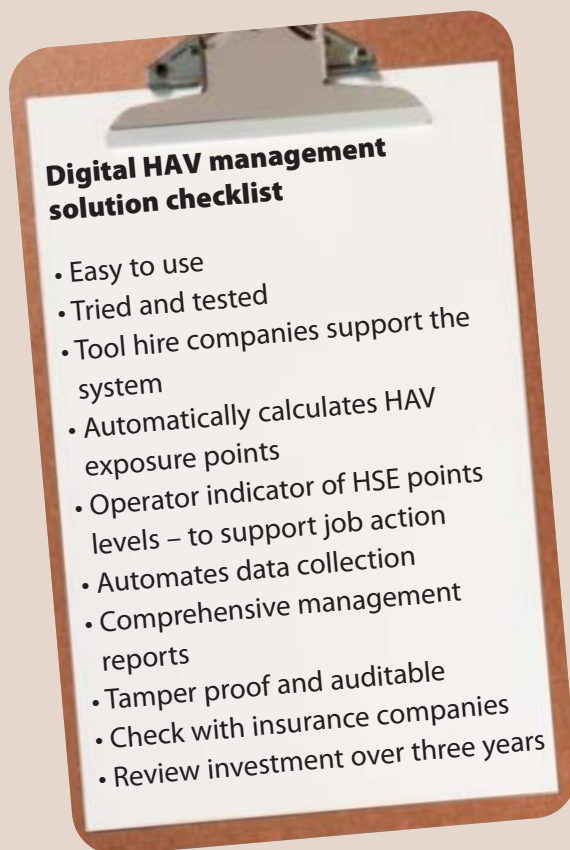
As part of the inspection initiative we want to make sure that local authorities are aware of the guidance by which they can benchmark their performance. The guidance will be updated as the study continues and we would of course welcome further case studies from the waste and recycling industry that could be included.

*Janet Viney, HSE
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How can continuous digital HAVS monitoring support H.S.E. compliance?

The H.S.E. requires you to manage numerous actions to lower HAVS exposure which continual digital monitoring can better support above any other method. If the correct digital HAV management system is chosen it can not only better support H.S.E. requirements and guidelines but return an improved welfare and financial return.

Continuous monitoring can support the assessment of a HAVS risk as well as an on-going review far more effectively than paper based monitoring which is proven to be inaccurate and unmanageable. Some digital monitoring systems can be attached to tools and measure trigger time to calculate and display when the HSE EAV and ELV points system levels are reached. This promotes tool sharing and education on improved working practises so workers may never get close to dangerous levels on a daily basis. This type of measuring allows the operator to get on with the job knowing exactly where they are in relation to their allowable exposure. Removing the worker from the process also removes guess to provide a tamper proof and auditable solution.



Do not think...

- Monitoring HAV is therefore managing HAVS risk;
- Simply keeping workers under the ELV level is enough to comply with HSE regulations;
- Digital Monitoring is expensive;
- Digital Monitoring is a one stop shop for HAVS management.

Digital Monitoring offers...

- Greater worker awareness and education of work/tool sharing;
- Reduction in workforce interruption;
- Help better manage HAV exposure reduction;
- Is lower cost than paper based monitoring;
- Improve worker welfare;
- Better protects your company against claims;
- Improves tool utilisation and cost;
- Measures improvements through your actions.

Monitoring is not enough!

But this is not enough and as stated by the HSE, just monitoring HAV exposure is not managing your HAVS risk. Ensure your digital solution not only logs exposure points but which tools are being used, by whom and for how long.

This information is vital in better understanding where operators are at risk by knowing which tools are outputting the most vibrations, to whom, why and when? This data can be used to support not only alternate tool utilisation but also tool training, work sharing and other HAVS reduction actions far more effectively.

Crucial to viewing this data requires the automation of the data collection and reporting to make this a realistic solution. The last thing you want is to have to collect the data from each monitoring device and manually download data. Also your time is valuable and not everyone is a HAVS expert so the better the reports the better you can manage your HAVS risk.

So in summary if the correct system is chosen it can be the best solution to not only help to support HSE and legal requirements but return an improved welfare and financial return which paper based monitoring cannot.

Contact: For further information on continuous monitoring please visit www.reactec.com phone 0131 221 0930 or email: info@reactec.com

All change in waste



Ben Sheppard and Alison Ogley of Walker Morris assess the impact of the recent changes to the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

On 1 October 2012 important changes to the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (the Regulations) came into force affecting the duties of waste collection authorities and waste disposal authorities. Some of these changes apply now and others will apply from 1 January 2015.

Background

The Regulations transposed the Waste Framework Directive into English law and imposed duties on collection authorities and disposal authorities to follow the waste hierarchy in relation to the collection of waste and the handling of collected waste.

The greatest impact of the recent changes to the Regulations is likely to relate to the collection of waste. The changes arose in light of a judicial review challenge brought by "the Campaign for Real Recycling", who claimed that the Regulations failed

to correctly transpose the Waste Framework Directive. Although the case was adjourned while Defra amended the Regulations, in an attempt to comply with the Waste Framework Directive, the Campaign is continuing to pursue the judicial review and a hearing is scheduled for February 2013.

Key change

Whereas regulation 13 previously stated that commingled collection of waste paper, metal, plastic or metal (being separate from residual waste) could be regarded as separate collection; the change means that from 1 January 2015 recyclable items will need to be collected separately (and commingled collections will not be allowed), provided this is "technically, environmentally and economically practicable".

Failure by a collection authority to comply with this duty will be an offence.

Statutory duties:

Waste hierarchy

Regulation 12 is in force now and provides:

"An establishment or undertaking which imports, produces, collects, transports, recovers or disposes of waste, or which as a dealer or broker has control of waste must, on the transfer of waste, take all such measures available to it as are reasonable in the circumstances to apply the ...waste hierarchy as a priority order."

Collection authorities and disposal authorities are now under a duty to "take all such measures available to it as are reasonable in the circumstances" to apply the waste hierarchy. Should a collection authority or disposal authority not comply with this duty it will commit an offence.

What constitutes "all reasonable measures" will require careful thought. It is not clear at this stage how the

courts will interpret this wording, but collection authorities and disposal authorities will need to consider carefully what steps they are and should be taking to comply with the waste hierarchy.

Commingling of collected waste

Regulation 14 requires that, from 1 January 2015, a collection authority or disposal authority must "take all such measures available to it ... as are reasonable in the circumstances" to ensure that any waste paper, plastic or metal which has been collected separately is not then mixed with other waste.

Again, the meaning of "all such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances" requires consideration in each case. Collection authorities and disposal authorities should consider whether they must make changes to their current systems to ensure that by 1 January 2015 separately collected waste is not being commingled. Failure to comply with this requirement is an offence.

What about sanctions for non-compliance?

Any collection authority or disposal authority failing to comply with regulations 12, 13 or 14 will be committing an offence.

Under Regulation 42 the sanction in the event of summary conviction is a fine of £5000; and if convicted on indictment the sanction is an unlimited fine.

Conclusions

The duty on collection authorities and disposal authorities to comply with the waste hierarchy is in force now. All waste authorities should therefore give careful thought to their waste collection, transfer, recycling, treatment and disposal arrangements and ensure that they are taking all measures available to them to apply the waste hierarchy as are reasonable in the circumstances.

They should also be thinking now about the duties coming into force on 1 January 2015 and ensuring they are prepared for these changes.

While Regulations 13 and 14 do not require separate collections of food waste or green waste, the potential for recycling or recovery through composting and anaerobic digestion of organic waste should not be ignored. Not only is it relevant to the application of the waste hierarchy, but anaerobic digestion can play a key part in a disposal authority's renewable energy strategy, helping realise a economic, community and environmental benefits as part of the low carbon and sustainable resources agenda.

Now is the time for waste authorities who have not already done so to examine what the Regulations mean for them and their future plans for waste management; including their short, medium and long terms strategies for a robust and sustainable waste management strategy.

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Data, data everywhere

A report back on the APSE performance networks seminar 2012

A packed seminar programme greeted delegates at this year's working seminar with opening plenary sessions followed by interactive workshops, an awards dinner (for our most improved and best performing councils) and culminating in a symposium session on the final day. Here we highlight the salient points to emerge from the event.

The seminar opened with a key note address via video link from Rt Hon. Margaret Hodge MP who is chair of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee. The Committee is one of the oldest in the House and is highly respected across all political parties as a means to both integrate and assess the spending of public money and accountability for that public money. The committee produces a staggering 50 reports each year.

Ms Hodge emphasised that the committee is informed by data from the national audit office and looks across the whole range of value for money and efficiency considerations in its work. An essential aspect of the work of the committee is the importance of protecting the public purse. Emphasis was placed on the need for useful data to inform decision making processes in public policy and concerns were raised that where public policy is not properly enacted one can often find an absence of data to help understand the decision making processes. Evidenced based decision making in public policy terms is essential argued Ms Hodge.

In a view that was shared by the audience Ms Hodge also explained that there are now a plethora of public service providers, whether from the private or third sector, and this could create problems from an accountability and value for money perspective. It was essential, said Ms Hodge, that

the committee could still 'follow the taxpayer pound into those organisations'. It was also essential to avoid 'data dumping' and explore how the public sector could be accountable whilst providing data in a sensible and understandable way. This was a theme that was to also emerge from the seminar workshops.



In a strategic address to the seminar, Kersten England, Chief Executive of York City Council, explained the context of the direction of travel within York. Against a back drop of rebalancing the private and public sectors the funding reductions to Local Authorities are hitting hard. Coupled with commitments to both localism and the 'Big Society', there are clearly drivers for more services to be run by the community. However Ms England explained that these changing dynamics in the public sector are colliding with the simultaneously, rising demand for existing services, due to the both the economic situation and demographic pressures. Ms England said that the 'greatest need for transformation comes when there is scarcest resource to deliver it'.

As a response to these challenges within York the focus has been to invest in innovation and lasting change, focussing 'upstream' and redefining the perceived role of local government. There has been, Kersten

explained an unrelenting focus on priorities and a keen desire to start 'talking outcomes, not boundaries'. For the City of York itself this is about becoming a city of enterprise and creating resilient, and capable communities and a political desire to drive out poverty.

Michael Hughes, now an independent consultant but a former director of studies at the Audit Commission, outlined some of the problems that emerge from the diverging performance frameworks across the UK administrations. Hughes warned against weakening the collection of data but said it was important to understand the type and importance attached to data and that it should remain accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete.

Michael also stressed that for performance networks there is a critical need to assess how the service could and should develop to best respond to the changing and emerging data and performance information needs of the membership.

APSE Assistant Chief Executive, Mark Bramah, addressed delegates on the challenges, that the sector faces both in terms of the divergence of the UK wide frameworks in performance management but also the renewed emphasis on transparency and access to meaningful data. There are, Mark said 'some critical questions that we must ask ourselves as participants and users of performance networks data and reports.' Bramah posed a series of questions for delegates including whether or not the service should widen its offer to cover new services and or deepen the offer to build more into current services.

Mark was keen to stress that the use of data will remain a meaningful way in which to hold public services to account but that flat data was no longer sufficient. Using data in order

to drill down in to how and why or where services could improve was as critical as completing data collection itself. To be of value to performance managers the data needs to remain both accessible and meaningful. Specifically for elected members the use of data as a way to hold service managers and other providers (externally commissioned or contracted services) was a valuable resource and probably one that is currently under-exploited.

Friday morning saw a good debate and discussions with two guest plenary speakers, Richard Partington, Managing Director of Telford and Wrekin Council and Jonathan Portes a renowned economic advisor.

Richard explained that with Telford and Wrekin their use of data is channelled through a 'data observatory' which has created a single corporate team from portfolios to ensure cohesive, joined-up analysis of data. Through this approach, said Richard, they have delivered staff and operational savings. The approach has enhanced capacity by improving the skill and knowledge set of team members – eradicating single point of failures and 'making corporate connections' who are responsible for supporting service performance, the corporate agenda and partners. This involves working with the Health Services and the Police. The use of data in this way helps to sign-post new and emerging issues to inform the evolution of the council's priorities.

Jonathan Portes, is the Director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and was previously Chief Economist at the Cabinet Office, where he advised the Cabinet Secretary and Number 10 Downing Street on economic and financial issues, including the impacts of the recession and policy responses.

Mr Portes provided a high level analysis of the economic and demographic forecasts of the UK and the impact of the fiscal challenges on the public sector. Mr Portes outlined the potential for a

'nightmare scenario' of an increased dependency ratio, low public sector productivity growth and the demographics of an ageing population creating an increased share of spending on pensions, health and social care with consequential higher taxes on workers. This would lead to a relative decline in living standards, lower quality services and political tensions.



However Portes said that there is still the potential for an economic alternative and in longer term projections people will be better off. Immigration, although creating short term pressures on public finances in for example health and education will have a positive long-term effect in redressing the balance between working people and those in retirement. Some of the recent announcements in the Autumn statement appear to reverse some of the tightening on capital spending and this could have a positive impact on growth and employment, but this is set against the backdrop of an economy that is flat-lining ('bumping along at the bottom'). It was never said Mr Portes a good idea to cut spending during an economic downturn as this risks worsening and lengthening the impact of the recession.



Workshops

Around the seminar working groups met under service area themes to discuss both service based reports and forward looking data and performance benchmarking issues. As well as the opportunity to share and learn from best practice authorities the working groups were asked to identify the key issues that they would wish to see develop over the coming year. Some strong themes emerged consistently across the groups:

The service areas would welcome a 'template data dashboard' to show performance across a range of service areas; this would include some headline indicators to help demonstrate data transparency and for this to be available in different formats to replicate on council websites or newsletters or in other media. Whilst there are caveats as to how understandable or meaningful this would be (and dependent upon broad participation across a range of areas within performance networks) this is an area now actively under consideration

The service areas would also welcome more use of 'satellite' or sub-regional groups to share data and more importantly the process benchmarking to understand performance improvement and share tools and techniques on service improvement methods within specific services.

Many areas also wanted to make use of supplementary surveys to support some of the data intelligence fed by performance networks data or to access specific / bespoke reports when noticeable trends emerge from data. A good example of this is the increase in central establishment charges which appear to show that frontline services are sharing a much higher or disproportionate level of costs compared to the services delivered through these charges.

Over the coming year and as part of the APSE performance networks development plan, the working and benchmarking groups will continue to take these challenges forward and of course report back to the membership!

Performance Network awards 2012



Building cleaning best performer

Hartlepool Borough Council • Hull City Council • Midlothian Council Plymouth City Council • St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council Staffordshire County Council • Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council • Wolverhampton City Council

Winner: Midlothian Council



Building cleaning most improved performer

City of Edinburgh Council • Gwynedd Council • Hull City Council Inverclyde Council • Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council • Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Winner: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council



Building maintenance best performer

A1 Housing Ltd, Bassetlaw District Council • Chesterfield Borough Council • Clackmannanshire Council • Falkirk Council • Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council • Moray Council • Nottingham City Homes, Nottingham City Council • Nottinghamshire County Council • West Dunbartonshire Council

Winner: A1 Housing Ltd, Bassetlaw District Council



Building maintenance most improved performer

A1 Housing Ltd, Bassetlaw District Council • Broxtowe Borough Council • Chesterfield Borough Council • East Renfrewshire Council Falkirk Council • North Ayrshire Council • Nottingham City Homes, Nottingham City Council • West Dunbartonshire Council

Winner: West Dunbartonshire Council



Civic, cultural and community venues best performer

Arnold Hill Community Centre - Gedling Borough Council Baglan Community Centre - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council • Grangeway Community Centre - Halton Borough Council The Spa Bridlington - East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Winner: Baglan Community Centre - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council



Civic, cultural and community venues most improved performer

Burton Road Community Centre - Gedling Borough Council • Mozart Drive Community Centre - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council • Murdishaw Community Centre - Halton Borough Council • The Spa Bridlington - East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Winner: Burton Road Community Centre - Gedling Borough Council



Education catering best performer

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council • Bradford Metropolitan District Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council • Clackmannanshire Council • East Renfrewshire Council • St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council • Solutions SK, A Stockport Council Company

Winner: East Renfrewshire Council



Education catering most improved performer

Bradford Metropolitan District Council • Cheshire West and Chester Council • East Renfrewshire Council • Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council • Nottinghamshire County Council • Sunderland City Council • Wolverhampton City Council

Winner: Cheshire West and Chester Council



Highways and winter maintenance best performer

Argyll & Bute Council • East Dunbartonshire Council • East Riding of Yorkshire Council • Hartlepool Borough Council • Hull City Council • Midlothian Council • Moray Council • Orkney Islands Council

Winner: Moray Council



Highways and winter maintenance most improved performer

Aberdeen City Council • Clackmannanshire Council • Durham County Council • Fife Council • Glasgow City Council • Inverclyde Council • City & County of Swansea

Winner: Glasgow City Council



Parks, open spaces and horticultural services best performer

Cardiff Council • Conwy County Borough Council • Denbighshire County Council • Fife Council • Halton Borough Council • North Lincolnshire Council • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council • West Dunbartonshire Council • Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust

Winner: Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust



Parks, open spaces and horticultural services most improved performer

Bassetlaw District Council • Broxtowe Borough Council • Clackmannanshire Council • Denbighshire County Council • Fife Council • Hull City Council • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council • Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Winner: Broxtowe Borough Council



Refuse collection best performer

Darlington Borough Council • East Lothian Council • East Riding of Yorkshire Council • Kettering Borough Council • North East Derbyshire District Council • North Lincolnshire Council • West Lindsey District Council

Winner: West Lindsey District Council



Refuse collection most improved performer

Enfield London Borough • Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council • Hartlepool Borough Council • Kettering Borough Council North East Lincolnshire District Council • Oxford City Council • Preston City Council

Winner: Enfield London Borough



Sports and leisure facility management best performer

Beverley Leisure Centre - East Riding of Yorkshire Council • Bramcote Leisure Centre - Broxtowe Borough Council • Canolfan Hamdden Plas Ffrancon - Gwynedd Council • Copeland Pool - North Country Leisure, Copeland Borough Council • Energise - City of York Council Lammas Leisure Centre - Ashfield District Council Lifestyles Garston - Liverpool City Council • Wentworth Leisure Centre - North Country Leisure, Northumberland County Council

Winner: Beverley Leisure Centre - East Riding of Yorkshire Council



Sports and leisure facility management most improved performer

Arnold Leisure Centre - Gedling Borough Council • Bramcote Leisure Centre - Broxtowe Borough Council • Canolfan Hamdden Dwyfor - Gwynedd Council • Haltemprice Leisure Centre - East Riding of Yorkshire Council • King Alfred Sports Centre - 1610 Limited • Lifestyles Garston - Liverpool City Council • Monkton Stadium - South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council • Selston Leisure Centre - Ashfield District Council

Winner: Canolfan Hamdden Dwyfor - Gwynedd Council



Street cleansing best performer

Bassetlaw District Council • Conwy County Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council • Eastleigh Borough
Council • Gedling Borough Council • North East Derbyshire
District Council • Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council • Wakefield
Metropolitan District Council

Winner: Eastleigh Borough Council



Street cleansing most improved performer

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council • Conwy County
Borough Council • Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council •
Eastleigh Borough Council • Gedling Borough Council • Hull City
Council • North East Derbyshire District Council • North Tyneside
Metropolitan Borough Council • Oxford City Council

Winner: Conwy County Borough Council



Street lighting best performer

Denbighshire County Council • Durham County Council • East
Lothian Council • East Riding of Yorkshire Council • Hartlepool
Borough Council • Midlothian Council • Swindon Borough Council

Winner: Denbighshire County Council



Street lighting most improved performer

Cardiff Council • East Lothian Council • East Riding of Yorkshire
Council • Fife Council • Hartlepool Borough Council • Inverclyde
Council • North Ayrshire Council • Vale of Glamorgan County
Borough Council

Winner: East Riding of Yorkshire Council



Transport operations and vehicle maintenance best performer

City of Edinburgh Council • Conwy County Borough Council •
Durham County Council • East Renfrewshire Council • Gedling
Borough Council • North East Lincolnshire District Council •
Sheffield City Council • South Gloucestershire Council

Winner: Durham County Council



Transport operations and vehicle maintenance most improved performer

East Ayrshire Council • East Dunbartonshire Council • North East
Derbyshire District Council • North East Lincolnshire District
Council • Renfrewshire Council • South Gloucestershire Council •
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council • Thurrock Council

Winner: North East Derbyshire District Council



The role of local government in green deal

Everyone seems to be talking about the Green Deal. At every authority I visit there are discussions ongoing about it and what it will mean for local authorities. This is remarkable in itself, considering that many local authority officers are deeply sceptical about whether the Government's flagship energy efficiency initiative will work at all!

My own advice has been, and remains, that every local authority needs to understand what Green Deal is and what impact it could make in its area; moreover, it needs to ensure that it has a foothold of influence in its development. It may be a trite analogy, but once the bus has gone, such influence will be impossible. So what everyone wants to know, is how to gain that influence at lowest cost and maximum value?

In the Climate Change and Renewables Working Group recently I sketched out six potential models for Green Deal. These were:

- 'The ostrich'; bury your head in the sand and ignore it all. Not recommended!
- 'The cheerleader'; stand on the

side and encourage everyone else to do it. Not much influence possible here.

- 'Less is more'; this is perhaps the most interesting of the models and involves a very low input of resources, but a much more potent application of leadership at local level.
- 'Play a role'; this simply denotes doing something in Green Deal, whether that be undertaking the assessor role or undertaking the building works or whatever.
- 'A consortium approach'; joining together with others to provide the service.
- 'The full monty'; ie becoming a fully fledged Green Deal 'provider' yourself.

The three main options are: less is more, consortium and the full monty and these merit further examination.

To dispose of the latter first, not many authorities will become Green Deal providers. This is because to do so requires a substantial investment in monetary terms, as well as a complex mix of accreditation and negotiation of sources of finance. The provider effectively does everything, includ-

ing entering the contract with the consumer and arranging the works and finance. This means that the highest level of regulation applies. Maybe the larger city and urban authorities might consider this, but it is likely to be a small group.

The consortium approach perhaps makes more sense. Here, the Council joins with a funder, a big brand name to front the operation, a contractor to do the fitting work, an assessor, PR company and so on. The Council's role in the consortium is negotiable but if it has brought them together, will be able to wield considerable influence, despite not funding the whole operation. The obvious role for a Council in such an arrangement is the Green Deal assessor, as this has to be independent and the Council's covenant will be attractive to other partners.

Finally there is the favourite for the group of authorities that are not amongst the largest urban areas, do not have large funds to invest in Green Deal or the ability to secure managerial or political support for a major operation. This time, its all about being canny.

In many areas, it will not be the large national companies that engage with Green Deal, but the smaller, local and regional players. That group will struggle as much as everyone else to understand Green Deal and to put together a suitable offering. Here the Council can strike a deal: you work with us and we will help you. The Council's part might be an educative process, to help the public understand Green Deal and what it does; awareness and effective communications are key here. It might also have an educative role with local companies, helping them to understand it and shape an offering. That might include imparting data and gauging the level of interest on the part of consumers.

So what does the Council get in return? Remember, under this model, it has no direct role in Green Deal delivery. But it could, as part of its awareness campaign, set up a Green Deal select list of local contractors who want to work in the area and pass

this on to the public, via its website. In return, the Council will get influence as to who is on that list, what their offering is and other key areas, such as a requirement about numbers of apprentices, local labour and the creation of a local supply chain to support this work. This is a genuine bargain, whereby the Council is helping the local economy and they, in turn, are assisting with the achievement of Council economic development and employment goals. And all for a very modest investment in money, even if it is more substantial in time and effort.

There is no right or wrong here, it is just what fits your authority. However, the first two offer no real gain and may be unwise, bearing in mind the new duties to report under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. Whilst the provider role is the ultimate position of power, it may well be a step too far for the majority of authorities, bearing in mind the cost and effort

required (particularly as Green Deal's success is not yet assured either). To play any role, you need experience and capability, for example in building maintenance work. If that is no longer undertaken in your authority, then it may not be possible to go down that route.

So most authorities that have recognised the potential for Green Deal as a regeneration and community tool, and have also recognised the need to become involved now, have determined a route short of becoming a Green Deal provider. Here, you can achieve the aim of being a 'place shaper' and a 'change maker' without massive investment of resources, just a commitment of time and leadership.

Stephen Cirell is a consultant on low carbon and renewable energy projects with APSE Solutions and is author of A Guide to Solar PV Projects for Local Government and the Public Sector -www.stephencirell.co.uk



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Fair Game

Dr Neil King and Rob Bailey discuss the findings of new research on the future of local authority sport and recreation services and suggest survival strategies for 2013 and beyond

The economic uncertainties meant that last year was certainly not an easy one for local authority sport and recreation services. With the Autumn statement confirming public sector spending being set to reduce further the financial pressure on the sector looks set to continue for another five years.

But rather than wringing our hands in despair, we need to look at what can be done to protect and enhance these important services in the new year and beyond. Demonstrating the contribution local authority sport and recreation services make to a whole host of wider health, well-being, social and economic outcomes will be vital to ensuring services survive and thrive.

Local authority sport and recreation services in England: What next? published by APSE this Winter, examines the impact of budget reductions on local authorities, analyses their responses to cuts and assesses options for the future.

Our research drew upon more than 100 survey responses from local authority sport and recreation managers along with in-depth interviews in a number of councils. It will come as no surprise that sport and recreation has been undervalued in local authorities around the country. Long before public sector budgets cuts hit, sport and recreation was already regarded as a 'Cinderella service' and its status has weakened in two thirds of councils over the past decade.

We found that sport and recreation services were already struggling financially prior to the last Comprehensive Spending Review and funding cuts have worsened the situation. Local authority sport and leisure departments have been downsized and become fragmented. Only a third of respondents in the research thought the 'voice of sport' was adequately represented in their authority.

The research also revealed, however, that the impact of budget reductions has varied among councils. This shows that, while the overall situation is difficult, action taken by individual managers and authorities can have a positive impact. Factors impacting upon resilience of local authorities' sport and recreation services include;

political priorities, modes of service delivery, and ability to make a business case for investment.

The final point is especially important. It shows that local authority professionals who value sport and recreation need to act as a matter of urgency, take a proactive approach and make an evidence-based business case for future provision of these services. Despite the tough financial climate, sport and recreation has vital role in ensuring health and well-being, social cohesion and local economic development. It is up to us to gather evidence that demonstrates this – and to shout about it.

Our research analysed a range of models that apply to current provision of local authority sport and recreation services. We found that the traditional 'welfare-orientated' model, which views sport and recreation as a citizenship right and relies upon subsidies, is possibly unsustainable. The 'market-orientated' model, which views residents as consumers and fosters a contracting culture, can compromise equity, quality and accountability. Application of the 'mutual state' model, based upon developing community and voluntary sector capacity, remains patchy as it is highly dependent upon specific local circumstances. While a number of councils wish to adopt the model of merging services, this is proving complex in practice.

So if these models are not sustainable for the future, what is?

Having examined different approaches, our findings show that a more robust response is needed to the serious challenges faced. We therefore believe that the best way forward for local authority sport and leisure is by combining the 'ensuring council' approach with a 'pre-emptive' model showing a clear business case for investment in sport and recreation.

The ensuring council has been developed by APSE as a viable model for responding to future challenges across local government. The model draws upon the concept of an 'ensuring state', put forward by leading academic Professor Anthony Giddens.

Applied to local government, the principles reflect the stewardship role of local authorities and recognise that they have to have the capacity, knowledge, skills and ability to intervene effectively on behalf of local communities.

An 'ensuring council' is one that is able to balance macro imperatives against micro dynamics that exist in local communities. Applying the principles of the ensuring council to sport and recreation means joining up the day to day provision of services at community level with an authority's broader strategic vision. It means management teams responsible for sport and recreation can establish a clear and coherent relationship between the financial, social and political components of their service.

But this is not enough. A pre-emptive approach must also be adopted. This requires; a long-term perspective, political support, innovative leadership, a business case based on strong evidence and maximising use of assets. It means innovative leaders and pro-active staff working towards realising wider community benefits in the delivery of sport and recreation services.

The pre-emptive or pro-active authority will be in a stronger position to defend specific aspects of the sport and recreation portfolio. Examples of pre-emptive activities include: promoting low cost health-related programmes such as swimming to GPs; aligning services to the new 'outcomes framework' for education; tailoring services to fill gaps where youth services have been cut; and emphasising links with community safety.

As a starting point, we recommended that an emphasis should be placed on collating evidence, based on data, to be disseminated in support of the case for retaining sport and recreation services and that officers pro-actively demonstrate the value of sport and recreation to

elected members. Professional bodies, improvement networks and independent researchers can be drawn upon to help assess opportunities and build a stronger case for retaining and potentially expanding services.

Local authority managers who take a pro-active approach in defining sport and recreation services around the emerging health agenda, seeking new opportunities and ensuring they are fulfilling the authority's core values, will be best prepared for current and future financial challenges. They will also ensure that the capacity is retained to provide services that underpin a long-term vision for their communities and residents.

Dr Neil King is a senior lecturer at Edge Hill University's Department of Sport and Physical Activity and director of Halliwell King. Rob Bailey is the APSE principal advisor on sport and leisure. For a copy of Local authority sport and recreation services in England: Where next?, written by Dr King and published by APSE, contact: rbailey@apse.org.uk or download free of charge from the APSE website.



Report back...

A round up of APSE activity throughout November and December



top left: Andres Pinero Ruiz

top right: Titel Lia

bottom: Lindsey Brooksbank

The Apprentices

Congratulations to all our finalists and winners in the APSE apprentice awards throughout 2012.

Building Skills (Housing and construction) apprentices, kindly sponsored by UCATT

- Andres Pinero Ruiz an apprentice joiner from Fife Council.
- Titel Lia a plumber from the City of Lincoln Council.
- Lindsey Brooksbank a plumber from East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

Mark Martin, from UCATT, the awards sponsor, said 'apprenticeships remain a terrific career choice for young and

older people, giving them skills which they will use for life and opportunities to pass on what they have learnt to future generations, as they have learnt from their own mentors'.

The other finalists were:

- Daniel Wall from Kirklees Council (apprentice mason)
- Adam Marshall from Neath Port Talbot Homes (maintenance operative)
- Steven Bell from South Lanarkshire Council (apprentice joiner)
- Katie Burns from East Ayrshire Council (apprentice joiner)
- Karen Hainsworth from Kirklees Council (apprentice gas fitter)
- Debbie Dunn from South

Lanarkshire Council (apprentice plumber)

- Ewan Cameron from Dumfries and Galloway Council Council (apprentice electrician).
- Karim Sultan from South Tyneside Homes (an apprentice plumber and gas fitter)
- James Donaghy from West Dunbartonshire Council (apprentice electrician)

Environmental and Transport Apprentices

The apprentices for Parks and Horticulture Services were kindly sponsored by Nordic Pioneers and for our Transport apprentices Faun Zoeller kindly provided their support.

The horticulture finalists are:

- Louis Jones of Wakefield Council
- Joanne Winters of Brent London Borough
- Caspar Scallen of Middlesbrough Council
- Stuart Burns of North Lanarkshire Council

The Apprentice winner is Finulla McCloskey of Glasgow City Council,

The transport and vehicle maintenance finalists are:

- Mathew Roberts of East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Dean Baker, London Borough of Redbridge,
- Kayleigh Fisher of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- James Penny of Wakefield Council

The apprentice winner for transport and vehicle maintenance is Michael Guinnane of North Lanarkshire Council.

Faun Zoeller have once again kindly agreed to take all the finalists in this category on a site visit to their state-of-the-art production facilities in Bremen, Germany

England

Leaner greener estate management

APSE addressed an interesting event on the transformation of the public sectors estate, organised by Westminster sustainable business forum 'Leaner and Greener: Delivering effective estate management.' This identified that local government in England's property portfolio was worth £250billion and that £7billion could be saved in annual running costs by better space utilisation.

Green Island

APSE hosted its annual Environmental Services Seminar at a new venue, The Hinckley Island Hotel in Leicestershire, in order to develop in response to APSE members needs, an outside trade exhibition. The seminar received a number of high profile speakers including an address from Alice Darley Head of Regeneration Strategy and Policy and DCLG and Janet Viney of the Health

and Safety Executive. CIWM chief executive, Steve Lee also provided a well-received address to delegates.

KC sunshine

APSE northern hosted a special member event at the KC stadium Hull on refuse and performance issues. This provided an opportunity to share concerns and matters of interest at a regional level particularly on performance benchmarking in refuse collection services and street scene.

Roam around Chester

An event in November at Chester, provided APSE northern member authorities with a timely opportunity to explore the emerging issues under the Community Right to Challenge and Assets of Community Value. The event was well received by members because it provided an opportunity to share how other councils were responding to the challenges of the new legislation and guidance.

Around the conferences

APSE participated in the public sector 100 conference at the QEII centre London on the issue of school meals on the £50 billion obesity epidemic and how school meals could help to tackle the growing health problems. Insourcing public services was the next topic for debate at with an address to the TUC by APSE chief Executive Paul O'Brien, and following that an event on the green agenda for local government saw APSE address a seminar led by BIP solutions. An event hosted at Parliament by Cost Sector Catering named APSE's Paul O'Brien as one of the top 20 most influential voices on public sector catering.

Wales

Tracking winter

maintenance in Wales

A special Winter Maintenance seminar allowed Welsh local councils to debate and discuss the issues of best practice in winter maintenance, new vehicle technology including tracking devices and pressure of winter gritting programmes.

Northern Ireland

Duelling makes a return

APSE Northern Ireland hosted a leisure event looking at dual use facilities, such as turning school and sport pitches over to community use during off peak periods. The seminar included case study examples from across Northern Ireland.

Talking rubbish

A waste disposal meeting took place in December with the Minister for the Environment Alex Attwood and allowed for comprehensive discussions on waste disposal issues, development in the sector, operational arrangements and future requirements.

Scotland

Scottish fayre

APSE Scotland hosted its annual soft FM seminar in November at the Westerwood Cumbernauld. Delegates heard from Kerry Crichton of Education Scotland who spoke about the curriculum for excellence, and James Withers from Scotland Food and Drink who talked about the links between national food and drink issues within public procurement reform.

Dates for the diary

In February APSE Scotland will host the building and housing seminar which will be held at Peebles on the 21 and 22 February. Forthcoming working groups and advisory groups for Scotland are now on the APSE Scotland web pages.

Edinburgh talks local

APSE addressed a symposium hosted jointly by academics from both English and Scottish universities and the representatives of Scotland's third sector organisations which highlighted some of the potential perverse outcomes of too legislative an approach to Localism within England and comparing approaches with the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill in Scotland.

Let's get the full picture

A focus on Parkinson's disease

Steve Ford, Chief Executive of Parkinson's UK explains the latest awareness-raising campaign for APSE's corporate charity

At Parkinson's UK the funds, which organisations like APSE have generously helped to raise, go towards our research, campaigning and support activities. There are 127,000 people living with Parkinson's in the UK. As it is such a misunderstood condition we've launched a new campaign to raise greater public awareness.

Our campaign includes adverts appearing on billboards and in newspapers across the UK.

The adverts take everyday images, such as a cup of tea, a pair of shoes - and mix them up, to represent how Parkinson's can affect messages the brain gives to the body. They show that with Parkinson's, everyday tasks become incredibly difficult.

To coincide with the adverts, we have also revealed the results of a

poll which shows just how little the public knows about the condition. Shockingly, three quarters of Britons (77%) have little or no knowledge at all about Parkinson's. And worryingly, the research has also uncovered some troubling attitudes towards those living with the condition.

More than 1 in 10 people (16%) reported that they would feel annoyed, embarrassed or uncomfortable if they encountered someone with a tremor - one of the more visible symptoms of Parkinson's. These findings underline what we've been hearing from people with Parkinson's across the UK - that the general public simply don't understand the condition. Disturbingly, because Parkinson's is so poorly understood, those with the condition tell us all too often that they are on the receiving end of these embarrassed and uncomfortable looks.

At the extreme end of the equation this woeful lack of knowledge means people with Parkinson's have been arrested simply for not smiling at a sporting event, or refused service by taxi firms because people have mistaken speech problems - a common symptom of the condition - for drunkenness. Things clearly need to change. To think that Parkinson's is seen as no more than a tremor is plainly wrong.

I hope that this new campaign will help to dispel some of the myths surrounding Parkinson's in a powerful way, so that people with Parkinson's gain the understanding and respect they so desperately need.

For more information about the work of Parkinson's UK please visit our website at www.parkinsons.org.uk

Automatic APSE data collation is great news for fleet managers

A new module for the Fleetmaster Fleet Management system aims to reduce the amount of time required to complete the APSE Management Data template for transport and fleet. By providing an interface between the data you collect as a fleet manager and the data you need to complete your APSE template Fleetmaster provides a valuable way to integrate your data and save time.

The APSE Management Data template collates data on County Councils' fleets on a detailed 'vehicle by vehicle' basis; sub-totals the information into 26 vehicle groups; and produces KPI statistics on annual vehicle maintenance. Many councils still use manual completion which can be time consuming but Trapeze Group has created a new 'APSE module' for its Fleetmaster system, which automatically populates

the APSE template information at the touch of a button.

The majority of the data required for the completion of the template already exists within Fleetmaster, so the 'APSE module' simply collates this information and automatically passes it through to the APSE Management Data template.

All that is required is for the information to be validated – saving the fleet manager a huge amount of time and resource.

What is populated?

The first five pages (Profile, Mileage, Charges, Downtime and Costs) of the APSE Management Data spread sheet template require fleet information. These pages can be automatically completed by Fleetmaster, while the Summary Table, Output and TABLE pages can be automatically popu-

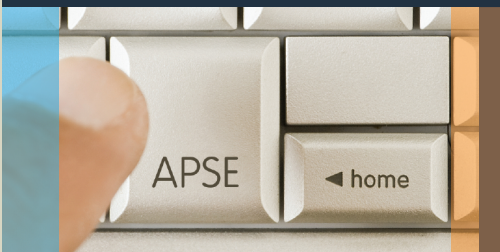
lated from the entries by running the appropriate macros within the spread sheet.

That leaves just three pages (Other Information, Staffing Calc and Staff Absence Calc) to be manually completed by the councils, as this information is not held within the Fleetmaster product – dramatically reducing the overall labour required.

About Fleetmaster

Fleetmaster is a comprehensive fleet management system designed to control and monitor all aspects of operating a fleet of vehicles and associated workshop facilities. It enables an organisation to control and manage true fleet vehicle costs; increase workshop productivity and performance; increase vehicle equipment and plant utilisation; and effectively manage budgets and actual costs analysis.

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Fleetmaster: the complete fleet management system

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- Increase vehicle equipment and plant utilisation
- Effectively manage budgets and actual costs analysis

APSE has not endorsed this product



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