



# direct news

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## Why youth unemployment needs localised solutions

CLLr Anne Western,  
Derbyshire County Council

## The Pedestrian Pound: Rediscovering the value of walking friendly high streets

Dr Rachel Lee

## Fire Starter: Fire risks posed by waste

Peter O'Reilly, Greater  
Manchester Fire and Rescue  
Service

## A new look at park life

Alternative funding sources  
for parks and greenspace in  
the wake of budget cuts

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a calm lake in the foreground. Several ducks are swimming in the water. The shoreline is composed of large, dark, rounded rocks. In the background, there is a dense forest of evergreen trees, and beyond that, a range of mountains under a clear blue sky. One prominent mountain peak is dark and rocky, while another to its right has patches of snow or light-colored rock.

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## Editorial

### A dose of commonsense

As we go to press in this edition of Direct News the British Medical Journal has issued an article which is critical of council spending decisions on public health budgets, citing them as being used for non-public health purposes. I fundamentally disagree with these assumptions and I'm frustrated by those who would be happy to see the continuing harsh divisions of both services and budgets.

It isn't rocket science to work out that councils already have a positive impact on public health. By providing good local leisure centres it helps the public to become physically active. By taking a proactive role in school meals and nutrition, including support for families, we can help to tackle the obesity crisis. And councils know best their local communities needs and can therefore target support.

However, it is not just the obvious health related services, like leisure or school meals that can bring a positive benefit to our communities. Services such as building maintenance can help in planning housing support and adaptations to help older people remain, with support, in their own homes, whether social housing or owner occupied homes. Environmental and neighbourhood services can play a part in this too with the ongoing growth of schemes such as assisted refuse collection and assisted recycling services. And we have seen a plethora of initiatives grow in areas like Knowsley where Parks and open spaces are part of a strategy to use assets for greater public good. With projects such as walking schemes designed to tackle a locally identified priority of poor lung health, but with the dual benefit of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

All council services are part of a much bigger jigsaw that make a real difference to the lives of communities but in turn support other areas of the public sector purse. Anti-crime initiatives and nipping anti-social behaviour in the bud has a real impact on police budgets. Supporting older people beyond the service boundaries of adult care or hospital admissions helps manage both care and health budgets. Educating children to eat healthy and exercise goes beyond the school gates and takes a positive message right into the heart of families. Organising waste collections to maximise waste as an asset, for example in waste to energy schemes can help reduce the impact of CO2 and address fuel costs and fuel poverty.

So my message to those who are accusing councils of squandering health budgets is very simple, integrate or become irrelevant. We cannot continue to operate in a silo mentality, public funds are scarce and we need to ensure they are spent wisely and not wasted. The real exciting agenda of today is focusing on prevention not cure and that's a role that local authorities have demonstrated they can play well. Hopefully Government departments are starting to wake up to the fact that it is better to invest to save now rather than pay an extortionate price to cure problems later.

Best wishes, *Paul*

# Better Eating, Better Learning: a new context for school food



*Lynne Carter, Policy Manager at the Learning Directorate, Support and Wellbeing Unit of the Scottish Government explains how they hope to drive further improvements in Scotland's school food.*

Scotland has a good story to tell about school food. Since the launch of Hungry for Success in 2003, food served in schools has had to meet significantly higher standards, set down in legislation, whilst the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence has seen huge strides in providing children and young people with the knowledge and skills they need to make better lifestyle choices. To build on this progress the Scottish Government asked an expert working group to refresh the guidance on school food and food education and drive further improvements at a national and local level. 'Better Eating, Better Learning – A New Context for School Food' published last month.

The working group members represented a diverse group of stakeholders including ADES, headteachers, caterers and facilities managers, suppliers, parents and carers, Food Standards Agency Scotland, Scotland Food and Drink, COSLA, and, through Children in Scotland, children and young people. The group were united in a vision to improve the life chances of children and young people through the food choices they make now and in the future. They understood how investment in school food would reap benefits and that school food matters - both what children eat and what they learn about. More could be done to use school food to help address the health, environment and educational challenges that Scotland faces.

Through Better Eating, Better Learning the Scottish

Government sets the agenda for school food for the coming decade. It lays bare the challenges Scotland faces and highlights the opportunities presented by the changing policy and legislative landscape for parents, teachers, caterers, local authorities, children and young people, and suppliers to work together to drive further improvements in school food by:

- using school food as part of a whole school approach to support learning as an integral part of the curriculum;
- serving school food that drives dietary behaviour change and supports our health and environmental goals;
- championing fresh, seasonal, local and sustainable produce;
- celebrating provenance and ethical sourcing;
- inspiring future generations who are proud of, and contribute to, Scotland's ambition as the 'Land of Food and Drink';
- ensuring that school food provides affordable access to good nutrition for all children and young people and optimising the uptake of school meals, in particular for those children and young people receiving free meals; and
- supporting children and young people, their parents, teaching and catering staff, to enjoy and value school food for its quality, provenance and appeal and in doing so to enable them to understand the relationship between school food, culture, health and the environment.

The guidance is divided into 7 subject sections: Food

"We want this document to make a real difference. The future challenges around food are recognised in the need to reduce overweight and obesity in the population, to deal effectively with climate change and to build Scotland's resilience as global competition for food increases. We believe that investing in school food now will improve Scotland's health and save money in the longer term. If its central role in health and wellbeing is recognised and it is given the strategic importance it deserves, school food can contribute substantially to our national and local educational, social, economic and environmental objectives."

*The Better Eating, Better Learning working group*

and Health; Food and Learning; School Food and Drink Provision; The Dining Experience; Sustainability through Food; Training and Support, and; Communication and Engagement. Each section: raises a challenge; explains why it matters; provides examples of effective practice, and; encourages improvement. It includes some interesting facts and statistics to help understand the significance of school food - for example that local authorities spent £66.1 million on food purchasing in 2012/13, and 90% of that was school food expenditure.

The guidance and accompanying 'self-evaluation tool' aim to help everyone see how their role contributes to improving the life chances of children and young people. Some sections will be immediately seen as relevant – a caterer may read the 'Food and Drink Provision' section first just as a teacher may read 'Food and Learning', or a procurement specialist may read 'Sustainability through Food'. But the guidance will have most impact where partners join forces in a whole school and strategic approach to school food and food education. So caterers get involved with food education, and teachers work with caterers to influence and value school food provision. The more engaged are all partners, including parents and children and young people themselves, and the more school food is included in planning at a corporate and school level, the more likely the success of any changes. And those involved in school food need to be supported to drive and deliver this agenda. The Training and Support section of the guidance is clear on this point.

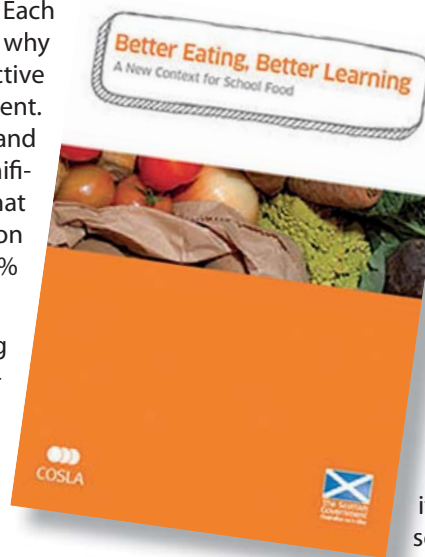
Ultimately Better Eating, Better Learning is about inspiring transformational change in school food which will help Scotland develop a nation of knowledgeable consumers making the right food choices which to support our health, sustainability and other goals.

Inspiring a positive food culture requires a fundamental change in diet and menu design. Creative, well-presented menus need to excite, challenge and nourish children and offer an appealing variety of colour, texture and taste. They need to increase children's 'vocabulary of food', widen their knowledge and appreciation of different foods and tastes, and support the health and wellbeing 'food and health' experiences and outcomes in Curriculum for Excellence.

At the same time school food needs to champion fresh, local, seasonal and sustainable produce, and to celebrate provenance and ethical sourcing in order to inspire future generations to help Scotland realise its ambition as the 'Land of Food and Drink'. This is about bringing Scotland's Food and Drink Policy into the classroom and school dining area.

There will not be an overnight change. Food, menus and suppliers may change but it is through education and

training and young people and caterers understanding the 'value of food' that food culture and behaviour change will eventually come about.



Food in school matters enormously for the wellbeing of future generations but is unfortunately often tagged as a marginal service or an inconvenient necessity for schools. In fact school food is incredible for its capacity to contribute to a wide ranging agenda from health improvement to climate change. It impacts on the health and education of children and young people as well as the environment and economy and school food is an ideal entry point for young people to learn about the impact of food choices. So while it is a service that works to commercial disciplines, Better Eating, Better Learning makes it clear that it is foremost an health education service.

For more information visit <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/03/1606>

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# Why youth unemployment needs localised solutions

*Cllr Anne Western, leader of Derbyshire County Council, explains why reducing youth unemployment is a priority for her authority and calls for greater national recognition of local government's role in tackling this national crisis*

There is no denying that youth unemployment is a major national issue, with latest official figures showing it stands at 917,000. In Derbyshire, we have identified hotspots where this is a significant problem – in some of the former coalfields and industrial areas, it had taken a long time to build employment prospects and aspirations back up and the latest recession has wiped out much of the good work that was done. In January this year, there were 3,240 young people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance in the county, which is higher than the English average. This means we are pulling out the stops to help our younger residents access jobs, training and skills that will stand them in good stead for the future.

National government's focus seems to be almost exclusively on academic performance, with little attention to vocational skills and work experience. This leaves a question of how we support the country's 50% of young people who don't go to university or into employment. Where careers guidance used to sit with local authorities, it is now delegated to schools, many of which are finding it difficult to commit time and resources to vocational skills and preparation for the world of work. National programmes such as the Work Programme are not taking account of local practical circumstances and cultures, leaving councils to fill the gaps in ways that meet the specific needs of their communities.

There is also an unhelpful undercurrent of negative stereotyping, which criticises young people for not being able to turn up on time and looking smart. But this fails to recog-

nise structural problems in the employment market, sometimes resulting in long term unemployment in generations of families, not to mention underemployment in the shape of insecure, zero hours contracts. Over-qualification also ripples through the jobs market, leaving people without qualifications with little chance of even poorly paid jobs in many cases.



Local government is well placed to understand the specific needs of local communities and in the case of Derbyshire we know that the semi-rural nature of the county means transport is a big challenge – particularly in the Dales, Peak District and former coalfields – making it difficult for young people to get to where colleges or jobs are located. This also makes it difficult for training providers to reach young people as there are 'diseconomies of scale'. When writing our manifesto for last May's elections, we found youth unemployment was a major issue affecting families, as confirmed by a subsequent survey. So we decided to make it a priority.

As I explained during a recent workshop at the Association of Labour Councillors, many of the things we are doing in

Derbyshire are similar to councils across the country. We are investing £1m in 500 council apprenticeships in a variety of roles, including business administration, creative digital media, health and social care, land surveyor and highways technician. We are working with Chesterfield College to support 400 apprenticeships in the private sector. We are incorporating requirements for apprenticeships into procurement and contracting.

In addition to this, we have introduced measures that are Derbyshire specific. For example, the national apprentice

rate is only £2.68 an hour and we knew that some young people found that unfeasible when they had to pay for transport, so we have increased it to the national minimum wage level of £3.72 at 18. We are among the funders investing in Wheels to Work Derbyshire, a transport project hosted by Rural Action Derbyshire, which now helps some 200 young people a year to lease mopeds and bikes to get to work or college, with the option of buying them at some point if they wish.

Our emphasis on youth unemployment links with economic development work at Local Economic Partnership level. The Derbyshire Economic Partnership has a working group on education and skills and a strong relationship with the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce helps build a clear picture of what skills are needed by local employers. We run one of the largest skills festival in the East Midlands, which was attended by 12,000 people in three locations last year and brought together young people, their parents and carers, colleges, training providers and employers.

We are working with Bolsover DC on the Raising Aspirations project, which is expanding opportunities for teenage parents and young people who have not had any further education. In the first four years of the project we worked with 488 young people not in work, training or education, and helped 311 of them into a job, training or education. Talent Match is using Big Lottery funding to support young

people into sustainable employment.

We also run projects for people with learning disabilities, such as the Bolsover Woodland Enterprise, which trains people in woodland management. For our care leavers, we aim to act as a proper corporate parent and the team offers a range of services to help them gain skills and training that will improve their opportunities and find post-16 education, training and employment.

We also fund a supported apprenticeships scheme, which has now been in place for four years. More than 20 young people have already stepped into full time permanent employment after completing their apprenticeship training and the team continues to support more young people in taking up places when they become available.

Councils' understanding of both community needs and local economies mean they are well placed to lead local initiatives on youth unemployment. As one of seven local government leaders who are part of Ed Miliband's Local Government Innovation Taskforce, I am making the case for central government to devolve some resources to local level for promotion of youth skills and employment. So far, these ideas seem to be getting a good reception and, for the sake of many thousands of young people who might otherwise face a lifetime of unemployment, I hope they do not fall on deaf ears.

Contact: [jenny.hodgkinson@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.hodgkinson@derbyshire.gov.uk)

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# Fire starters

*Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service is concerned like many about the fire risks posed by waste transfer sites and the development of refuse derived fuel storage facilities. Peter O'Reilly, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, at Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, explains the issues.*

Like many areas, across the UK, commercial and industrial waste within Greater Manchester is an extensive commercial industry. There are clear business opportunities involved in recycling waste and many businesses have exploited the expansion of waste as a commodity, developing new business in collecting, transporting and recycling waste and then selling on the recycled materials for additional financial gain. A lucrative market area for the recycled materials is the derived fuel industry. Refuse derived fuel (RDF) consists largely of combustible components such as plastics and biodegradable waste which can be incinerated alongside traditional sources of fuel to produce electricity.

As yet there are few plants in the UK that can deal with RDF and so it has traditionally been exported. In recent times however it has become apparent that these market areas are becoming very competitive, in part due to transfer issues and EU rules. As a result some companies are now seeing a reduction in available outlets for their materials, which has resulted in them having to store large quantities of waste on site, prior to disposal. This has created much larger quantities of the RDF materials being stored as opposed to exported, potentially increasing fire risks.

Recently Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has dealt with a number of large fires at these type of plants; many burning for a number of days because of the complexities in how such fires have to be safely managed and to avoid contaminating water supplies.

Fire incidents at such sites can be recurrent, complex and problematic. Incidents at these sites can also have a significant environmental impact. One such incidence

in the Bredbury area of Stockport created a fire that was intense, covering an area of approximately 100 metres by 100 metres, and involved around 1,500, one tonne bales of waste; the waste had of course been recycled to produce an efficient RDF fuel source. The fire continued to burn for 26 days, smouldering for a further seven days. The resultant smoke plume caused air quality issues for residents in both Stockport and Tameside Boroughs, and the effects of the smoke were noticed as far away as Leeds.

There is extensive legislation governing waste management, the majority of which is regulated by the Environment Agency (the EA). The EA is the enforcing agency regulating waste activities including matters such as permitted waste transfer; storage and treatment, moving hazardous waste, and registering carriers and brokers of waste.

The EA issues permits to operate on a two tier system dependent on the risk presented by the site. On issuing the permit the EA commence an inspection regime on a risk based approach to monitor site operations.

Where poor performance is identified the EA will, where appropriate, issue suspension notices where site conditions breach the requirements of the permit license. However in spite of the regulations there is potentially a lot more which the public sector agencies could be doing on a joint basis to both minimise risk and deal effectively with fires when they occur.

Following incidents within the Greater Manchester area Greater Manchester Police held a multi-agency structured debriefing in August 2013. This led to further joint working with Greater Manchester Police Civil Contingencies and Resilience Unit and involves the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, local authorities, Public Health

England and the Environment Agency amongst others partner agencies. The work involved the production of a report which highlighted a number of areas of good practice, areas for development and improvement and made a number of recommendations including a proposal that all agencies should review their agency access to 'Hazard Manager' and consider utilising it for incidents where the weather, particularly wind, can have an impact on the incident or the response. 'Hazard Manager' is a one-stop information source for the emergency response community. It is an interactive web portal using maps which can be overlaid with weather and incident related information. It acts as an information tool for keeping emergency responders up-to-date with the very latest information and developments as they happen. The report also led to the introduction of a service wide waste transfer coordination group, which will help to ensure better cross-agency working in the future.

Tackling fires in waste transfer sites is also becoming a national issue. In the wake of two recent serious fires at a waste recycling site in Smethwick, West Midlands, and at an electrical recycling centre in Sittingbourne, Kent, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) is looking to work closely with key partners to review current safety guidance on waste transfer and recycling sites.

However, at the moment, Fire and Rescue Services need to work within the current regulations and in spite of grow-

ing concerns new tougher regulations remain elusive. So what can local authorities do to help ensure safety in their own areas in the absence of more detailed regulations? Well local authorities can look at their own procurement arrangements in relation to waste, and integrate into those processes good systems of checks and balances, about where their waste is going to; helping to ensure that only responsible sites are used. Regional or sub-regional coordination with partner agencies is also vital - this issue cannot be tackled in isolation by any one public body. There needs to be a coordinated approach involving fire and rescue services, police services, local authorities, ambulance and public health services as well as the utility companies and of course the industry itself. And we can also help each other by sharing best practice!

Contact: Peter O'Reilly, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Prevention and Protection, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Email: oreillyp@manchesterfire.gov.uk

**We would like to hear about how other authorities have responded to this issue and APSE has offered to coordinate responses or facilitate a future discussion for interested parties. If you have something to share or would like to be involved in a future network meeting about this issue please email Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk**



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*The LANTERNS project aims to evaluate whether reducing night-time streetlight for environmental and energy reasons, has any impact on road traffic crashes and crime. Dr. Phil Edwards, Department of Population Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine explains the approach to gathering evidence to support decision making on street lighting at a local level.*

Most developed countries of the world can be seen from the night sky by the luminance of their towns and cities. These bright lights were a sign of modern, well-administered and affluent societies. That is, until climate scientists declared a 95% probability that climate change is due to human activity since the 1950s, and bankers' mistakes allowed the world to slip into major economic recession (the UK debt now stands at over £1.3 trillion). So Government declared the need for widespread austerity measures, and local authorities have been forced to implement cuts in levels of public services. Some street lights are now going out.

Many proposals to reduce street lighting, particularly in urban areas, have attracted considerable public and media concern. Expressed concerns have centred on crime, public perceptions of safety, and road safety. However, potential positive impacts of reduced lighting have also been noted, in particular for amateur astronomy, and in reducing the negative health impacts some have claimed from 'light at night', such as disrupted sleep. To date, there is little robust evidence on which to judge whether these concerns are well-founded. There are therefore policy imperatives to generate good quality evidence on whether reductions in street lighting provision are associated with public health effects.

The LANTERNS project was commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to assess the impact of street lighting reductions on two important public health outcomes: road traffic injuries and crime. The adaptation of street lighting across the UK by local authorities is being used as a 'Natural Experiment'. LANTERNS will use a controlled interrupted time series analysis to assess evidence for any changes to road traffic injuries and crime that are

associated with switching off street lights at night (e.g. part-night lighting) or with reducing lighting levels (e.g. dimming or trimming). The project will also compare the societal costs of lighting adaptation schemes against the societal benefits in a cost-benefit analysis framework, and explore public opinion on the potential for reducing streetlight at night.

**Data sources** - Every local authority in England and Wales was approached in 2013 with a request for the specific locations of all street light columns where part-night lighting, dimming or trimming has either been implemented or is planned, together with the month and year that changes were introduced. For road traffic injuries, STATS19 data for the period 2000-2012 have been obtained. STATS19 is the official dataset of personal injury road collisions and casualties that occur on the public highway in the UK. These data include the date, time of day, location (easting and northing of location of the road traffic collision), severity (slight injury, serious injury, fatal injury) by type of casualty (pedestrian, cyclist, car occupant, powered two-wheeler) for all road collisions. For crime, data from the police.uk website have been obtained from December 2010. These data include the month, name of roads where incidents occurred, approximate geographic co-ordinates, and type of crime. A disadvantage of this publicly available data set is that time of day is not included; however the project will assess the validity of these results by comparing them with results using samples of detailed crime data (i.e. including exact time and location) from a sample of police forces.

**Analysis** - Using a Geographical Information System (GIS) we will link data sets to a road segment database that includes the characteristics of all classified and unclassified roads. Each road segment will be classified according to

the type of street lighting reduction scheme (e.g. part-night switch-off; 'dimming'; etc.) and by the census 'Lower Super Output Area' within which it is located. GIS will also be used to generate adjacent areas around streets (i.e. streets that are not part of lighting reduction schemes but which are adjacent to streets that are). From the combined dataset, counts of crimes and road traffic injuries for each road segment will be generated by month and by year. The road segments will allow stratification of results by area deprivation (i.e. based on Index of Multiple Deprivation of areas) and whether they are adjacent to streets where lighting has been reduced. As it is difficult to define appropriate population denominators to estimate rates on individual road segments, analyses will be based on change in counts within each road segment.

For optimal control of biases the analysis will compare changes in counts of crimes and traffic injuries in roads before and after lighting is reduced, relative to trends seen on other roads. The estimated effect is therefore specific to roads with decreased lighting compared with other roads. Additional analyses will examine potential biases relating to 'regression to the mean' (arising from the fact that low numbers of traffic injuries and crimes may be factors in the decision to reduce street lighting in some areas). For this, the analyses will be repeated excluding data for periods of one and two years before changes to street lighting were implemented. Evidence for diffusion of crime and displacement of road accidents and crimes from better-lit nearby roads will also be investigated, and evidence for a 'lag' effect of street lighting reduction will be examined by modelling change in effects on events by month since implementation of lighting reduction.

For the cost-benefit analysis the monetary values of street lighting provision (infrastructure cost, maintenance costs, and energy consumption) are being obtained. Data on the monetary values (i.e. economic and societal costs) of road traffic injuries are being assembled, as well as the economic and societal costs of crimes by type of crime using Home Office definitions. The societal costs of street lighting schemes will be compared against the societal benefits in a cost-benefit analysis framework. By the end of 2013 data had been received from a total of 42 local authorities of England & Wales. Part-night lighting had been introduced in 14 (33%) of these areas, dimming of lights in 24 (57%) areas, and trimming lighting times in 16 (38%) areas. A national workshop is to be convened in September 2014 with local authorities and third sector organisations to learn how our results might be of most use.

To participate in LANTERNS please contact:  
LANTERNS@LSHTM.ac.uk Tel: 020 7958 813

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## Gloucestershire County Council embraces cloud-based Symology Insight solution for street works

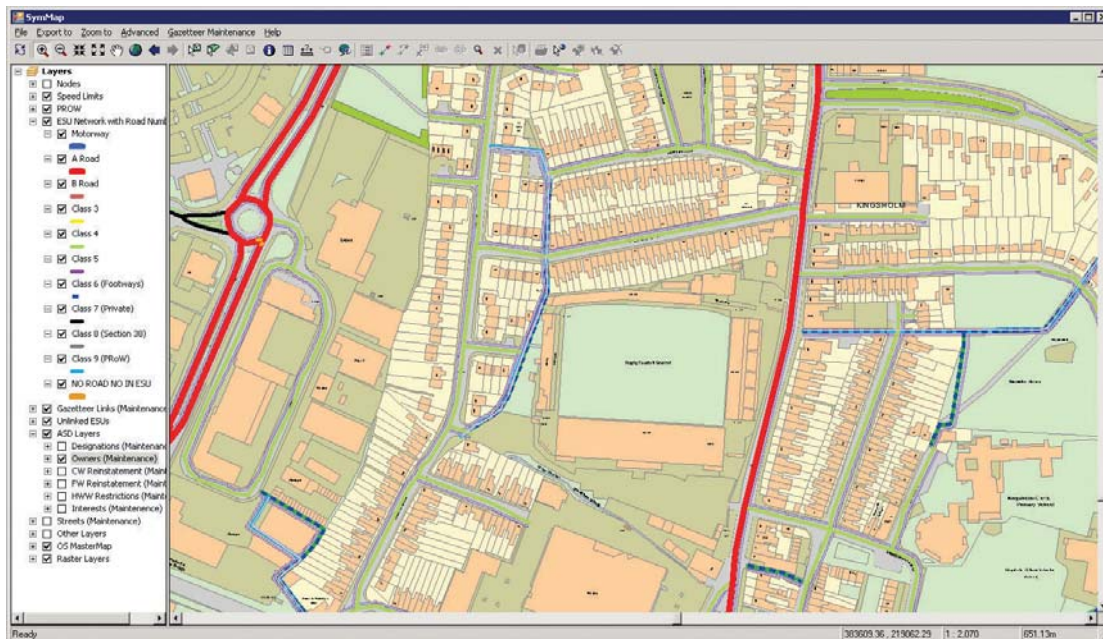
Under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) all Utilities and Local Authority Works Promoters are required to electronically send and receive details of all applicable street works in accordance with the Electronic Transfer of Notifications Technical Specification.

The EToN technical specification is periodically enhanced, with each new version bringing additional capabilities to simplify working practices and create efficiencies. The next revision of EToN is Version 6, which comes fully into force on 1 April 2014. In October 2013 Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) decided to review their Street Works Management solution in order to ensure EToN 6 compliance by the mandatory deadline. Their review led to a decision to replace their existing software solution with Symology's Cloud based Insight for Street Works Solution. In the process, GCC managed to become one of the first authorities in the UK to become EToN 6 compliant, some four months in advance of the deadline and with it they

achieved tangible efficiency improvements.

Gloucestershire County Council were in a position where they had used their existing system across its highways provision for more than 25 years so the introduction of Symology's Insight solution into Traffic Management schemes signified a new era for the Network and Traffic Management team. Based on advice from their ICT team they decided to go for a managed services solutions. After researching options they settled on the cloud based 'Insight for Street Works' solution from Symology - the UK's leading supplier of Street Works systems and a leading supplier of Highway Asset Management systems.

In December 2013, Gloucestershire's Network and Traffic Management team started using the new solution to manage the coordination and monitoring of all works within the county. Symology's Insight Mobile software is also used by the County's Street Works Inspectors in the field, and Insight is further used by the County for Street Gazetteer and Additional Street Data Management.



Phil Cameron, Traffic Manager at Gloucester County Council explained that as the ICT team had advised it would be best to go for a managed service, it was agreed that as the Street Gazetteer data was closely linked (and fundamental) to the Street Works system. Therefore not only made did it make sense - but would also be best practice - if the two databases/areas of work, were joined with the same provider for uniformity and business continuity. Symology's knowledge of the Street Gazetteer package made this a possibility.

In terms of practicalities in choosing the Managed Service cloud based delivery the IT requirements were as simple as arranging secure web access. This models means that there is no need to manage servers, backup or any related IT administration. The delivery was quick and easy and it only took three months from agreement to a successful go-live date – as planned.

Phil explains the key advantages that the Insight solution has provided to GCC's traffic management team, "We liked the main system and the Insight Mobile solution; Symology were also brilliant about making changes to help us manage our NSG network, which had worked very well with our previous system and we didn't really want to lose any functionality. For this specific project, GCC had some pre-defined requirements for maintaining an additional identifier on its ESU records, in order to pass road classification information to the GCC corporate mapping solution. Symology were able to automate the creation and allow ongoing management of this identifier with ease.

The sticky point when moving to a new solution is always how to migrate the data safely, and the reassurance they gave about moving our data was encouraging. Symology gave us the confidence that they would provide a 'business as usual' solution for us, with a minimal level of data or ICT related risks."

The Insight Mobile solution enables users to interact remotely with the central Insight system, and it has become a central component of Symology's Highways

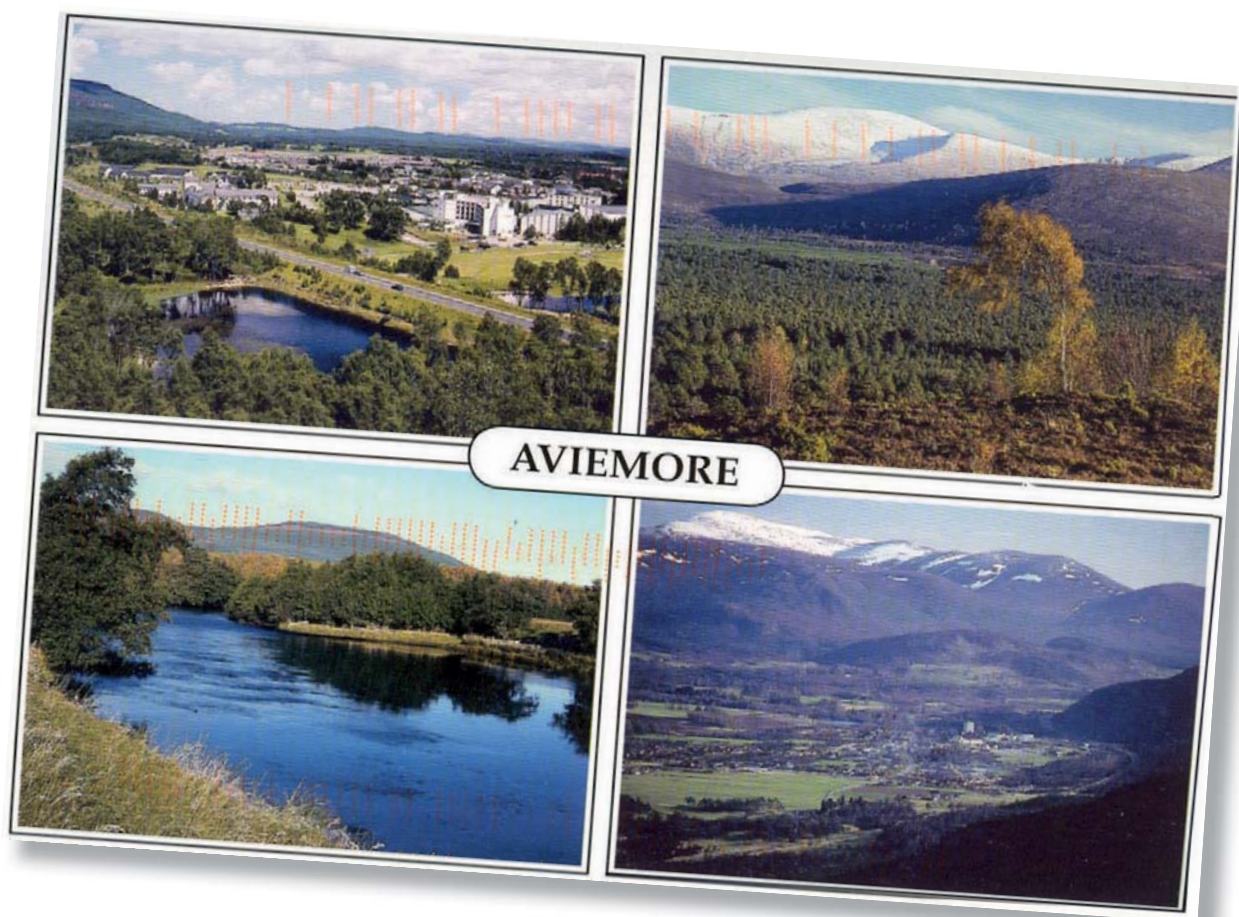
Asset Management software. When asked about specific advantages provided by Insight Mobile Phil explains, "We knew from the beginning of the project that we would need an effective mobile solution. Insight Mobile was the best option for our inspectors. Now they can capture information 'on the fly' and then easily and accurately upload that information whilst out on-site or at the end of the day. With each inspection record we can take photographs to back-up the reason why we have failed an inspection. These can be sent from the field and be seen immediately by the relevant Works Promoter within a matter of minutes. This really helps to reduce wasted time on disputes.

With ETon 6 becoming industry standard as of April 1st 2014 one of GCC's main concerns was the migration of data from the old system to the new one but the experience of Gloucester County Council is that the switch-over project happened quickly and relatively smoothly, considering that a data migration exercise from the previous supplier was also required.

Ian Howells, NSG Custodian for the GCC's Traffic Management team, comments, "The support after 'Go-Live' has been very good and my initial concerns of being under a 'managed service' environment – where you can't help but feel that you lose some control, have been allayed by the help and service we have been given. The good reports I've had from other Authorities who recommended Symology proved very accurate and I would not hesitate to give the same feedback to other Authorities who are thinking of taking the cloud based solution on-board.

Phil Cameron sums up by saying 'We evaluated all suppliers on their merits and functionality. Symology's Insight solution stood out as being the most flexible and adaptable which would give both a smooth transition, along with the mapping functionality that we needed to go forward. Symology gave the confidence that they would provide a 'business as usual' solution for us.'

Contact Scott Hutchinson [Scott.Hutchinson@symology.co.uk](mailto:Scott.Hutchinson@symology.co.uk)



# Focussing on Aviemore Scotland's largest public sector fleet, waste and grounds services seminar and exhibition 2014

**O**n Tuesday 6 May there will be a Highland gathering with a difference as the 2014 APSE Scotland fleet, waste and grounds seminar and exhibition opens in Aviemore. Against the glorious backdrop of The Cairngorms, local government specialists in fleet, waste and grounds services will gather with the UK's leading suppliers to debate the future of these services and to explore new and exciting innovations within the industry.

The event will open with a great opportunity for delegates to visit the leading trade exhibition in Scotland, including a huge outdoor exhibition showcasing the latest tech-

nologies in vehicles and fleet. Delegates will have a great opportunity to take part in interactive demonstrations and question suppliers about their latest products and pricing - hopefully driving a hard bargain for the public sector!

But the Aviemore event is much more than a trade show. The seminar will be opened by Joe FitzPatrick MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business, who reports directly to the First Minister. The Minister will provide a keynote address at the event. The presence of the Minister shows the importance of the sector to the local economy in Scotland and no doubt the Minister will be emphasising

the need for the fleet, waste and grounds sector within Scotland to be as green and efficient as possible.

APSE chief executive Paul O'Brien will also explore the strategic issues for the sector looking at the outlook for local government refuse, fleet, street scene and parks services including reporting on the results of APSE's latest 'state of the market' survey results for the sector, and findings from data benchmarking.

Driving the debate on electric vehicles will be Mike Foster, a Senior Project Manager with Transport Scotland, followed by a tour of responsibilities for Fleet Managers from Joan Aitken, the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland. The fleet debate will continue exploring issues of compliance and awareness, recent technical guidance, working times issues and drivers hours with Margaret Simpson, Country Manager for Scotland, FTA. An emerging area of concern for local authority managers is the requirements to check driver's licences, so a welcome addition to this year's programme is Richard Brown, Managing Director of Licence Check who will explore risk based checks and assessments.

Developments in managing and reducing waste are never far from the thoughts of APSE member authorities and Willie Wilson, SEPA's Waste and Enforcement Manager, will highlight the implications of new regulations and landfill targets. Overall seminar sponsor Zero Waste Scotland will highlight the issues of health and safety in the waste industry and looking at what local authorities can do to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements. Food for thought will come from Stratton MacDonald of South Ayrshire Council who will look at the benefits and challenges of food waste collection - a topic which many APSE members are grappling with.

Remembering that councils do the 'nice bits' of environmental services, day two of the seminar will explore the big picture for Parks and Open Spaces within a Scottish context, with an opening day two address from David Jamieson who is the Chair of Greenspace Scotland. David will explore the issues of community involvement in Parks, look at Greenspace naturalisation and whether our parks are climate change resilient. Delegates will then hear from Steve Shaw of Aberdeen City Council, the winners of the prestigious APSE Performance Networks Award for the Most Improved Parks Service in 2013.

A broader vision of parks, streetscene and local environmental services will be provided by Glynn Humphries and Ian Jones of Wakefield Council. The Humphries and Jones double act will share their experiences of delivering great

social value through their services including the much reported Wakefield 'Get Into' programmes, apprenticeships and work placements.

Not forgetting the APSE fire and rescue membership, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will explore the journey of change looking at the transition towards a national body, and the ongoing development of fleet efficiencies with Iain Morris, Head of Assets and Scott Roberts, Fleet Manager, at the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

It would be amiss not to consider the ongoing preparations for the 2014 Commonwealth Games which will be proudly hosted in Scotland. The Games promise to be a wonderful sporting occasion but they also bring operational challenges. Andy Waddell, Head of Roads at Glasgow City Council looks at the preparations for a successful Games and the crucial transport strategy to keep the city moving. Ronnie Dinnie, Head of Neighbourhood Services at West Dunbartonshire Council will follow with a showcase in better vehicle utilisation to improve performance in street cleansing whilst Scotland Excel will share their expertise in collaborative procurement for environmental goods and services with Graeme Beattie, Senior Procurement Specialist and Gary Mooney, Regional Procurement Analyst.

Finally, there will be a presentation on Falkirk Council experiences of a 3-week collection cycle for waste and recycling with Louise Bradney, Recycling and Collections Advisor at Zero Waste Scotland; Louise's contribution will no doubt generate a debate of some interest as Scottish local authorities seek to grapple with reducing budgets and meet the new commitment towards a zero waste Scotland.

As well as ample opportunities for learning through our seminar sessions, the Aviemore based seminar is one of the most opportune events for local government decision-makers and service heads to come together and share best practice, while providing the opportunity to get to terms with new technologies, industry innovation and exemplar developments in fleet, equipment and ancillary supplies from bin lifts through to floor lifts with everything in between! During times of increasing challenges and with growing demands placed upon the local government sector, APSE's Aviemore event provides a genuine opportunity for like-minded elected members, officers and suppliers to come together and help to meet the ongoing challenges within the sector.

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*You can reserve your place now by contacting Laura McNab at APSE on 01698 459 051 or emailing [lmcnab@apse.org.uk](mailto:lmcnab@apse.org.uk)*



APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Services Seminar and Exhibition 2014 is kindly sponsored by Zero Waste Scotland

# Vision Techniques: 25 years of vehicle safety solutions

**M**arket leader Vision Techniques are celebrating 25 years of vehicle safety solutions with their most successful year to date. Attending this year's APSE Aviemore event in Scotland, they'll be demonstrating their VT Live recording system which continues to grow in popularity.

"This has been our most productive year ever with exponential growth of our VT Live system; which records, downloads and instantly reviews footage from any device and location using wifi." Explains Andrew Kelly, Sales manager for Vision Techniques.

The system has seen a major growth in

sales this year thanks to its integration with other vehicle systems, including their Banksman radar product, which detects objects when reversing and can automatically break if a hazard is too close.

"VT Live has the ability to tag specific events and archive the footage for later viewing. So, for example if a vehicle with an integrated Banksman radar detected a hazard when reversing, that video clip can be independently saved along with GPS location data for later review by a fleet manager."

The Live system has proven most successful when integrated with other safety systems, as proven with their

popular OWL partnership, combining digital video recording with a vehicle telematics system, provided by CMS Supatrak.

Vision Techniques will demonstrate the VT Live system; streaming live footage from fleets from around the country to PC's, laptops and most importantly, mobile devices, which will be exhibited at the APSE event.

"We're very excited for this year's APSE Aviemore event and are looking forward to highlight the improvements that have taken our recording system to the next level, and demonstrate how interconnectivity can provide a solution for any vehicle safety needs."

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# The Pedestrian Pound



## *Rediscovering the value of walking friendly high streets*

*Dr Rachel Lee, Policy and Research Coordinator*

First it was out of town shopping centres and retail parks; now online shopping from the comfort of home or on our smart phones is taking its toll. In the face of increasing choice, shopping as a share of all the trips we make is falling and high street spending now accounts for less than half of all retail expenditure. From the humble shopping parade to our town and city centres, the challenge is the same – how to attract and retain pedestrian footfall on our high streets.

At Living Streets we know that safe, attractive and enjoyable pedestrian environments are part of the solution. We believe that good quality public realm includes: 20 mph speed limits; safe, convenient places to cross the road; accessible, clean, well maintained and uncluttered footways; well positioned seating; public toilets; green infrastructure, and; attractive and active street frontages. To help us build the business case for investment in our public spaces, we asked independent research company Just Economics to focus on the commercial returns of better streets.

This is a very challenging area to measure because every intervention, like every place, is different. Drawing on both academic and 'grey' literature, they found evidence to suggest that, when well planned, improvements to public spaces can improve footfall by up to 40 per cent. Living Streets' report, the Pedestrian Pound, examines the impact

that improving the pedestrian environment can have on existing business performance, urban regeneration, and consumer and business satisfaction. While 'hard' quantitative assessments are rare, there is a good body of case study evidence to suggest that investment in the public realm is good for business.

For example, the Heart of the City Project in Sheffield, which involved the reconstruction of the Peace Gardens, reported a 35 per cent increase in footfall in the city centre and a net increase in spending of £4.2 million. Higher employment can be inferred from higher turnover. In this case it was calculated that between 341 and 527 net additional jobs were created based on attribution rates of 20 to 90 per cent depending on the proximity of the new employment to the public realm improvements.

In London, Wanstead High Street achieved an average increase of 98 per cent in pedestrian numbers after enhancing the walking routes between its two stations, the bus terminus, school, library, and high street. There is evidence that also shows that pedestrians and cyclists spend more over a week or month than people arriving by motorised transport – because they visit more often.

Most urban regeneration projects aim to improve public spaces in some way, on the understanding that this stimulates and supports new markets and opportunities. Again,

there case study evidence suggests that redevelopment coincides with increases in new business. For instance, prior to its redevelopment the Temple Bar area of Dublin was home to 60 businesses; ten years later this had risen to 450 businesses and a 300 per cent increase in employment. Most growth took place within 4 years of the area's transformation before the economic boom of the late 1990s.

Few studies attempt to model the impact of improving streetscapes and public spaces on tourism. One that did looked at the effect of rebuilding the North Terrace of Trafalgar Square. The transformation of the pedestrian environment there led to an increase in visitors of over 300 per cent – to the point where this is now the third most popular attraction in London.

The effects on increasing property prices and rents are well documented, with a reasonable range being between 10 and 30 per cent. For instance, refurbishment of The Square in the small coastal town of St Anne's on the Sea in Lancashire – which included pavilions for seating and retail uses, landscaping, public art, open seating spaces and a performing arts arena – is estimated to have contributed to increasing rental values by up to 10 per cent and reduced vacancy rates from 25% in 1998 to 4 per cent in 2006.

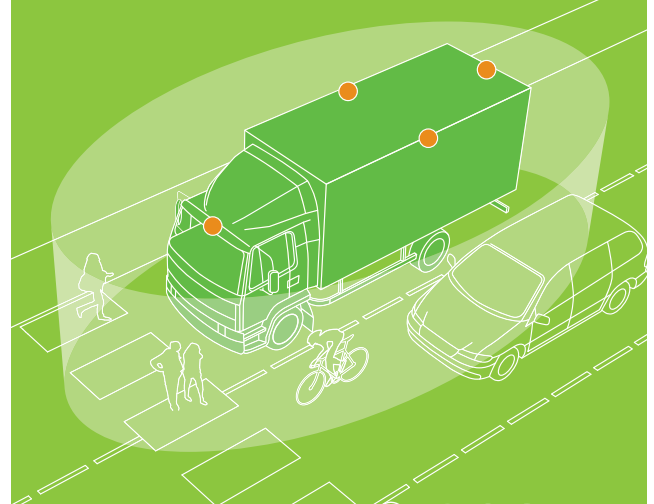
This is good for business of course, but there is a cautionary note here. Regeneration and renewal is often located in areas of deprivation with the intention of improving local economic performance and reducing unemployment. Gentrification can mean that resident communities and small businesses lose out. From Living Streets' perspective this underlines the need for community consultation (for example, through Community Street Audits) and involvement at every stage from design to implementation.

Perceptions of an area really matter – they can raise a community's confidence, encourage businesses to invest and, of course, attract visitors. Both Leicester and York are investing significantly in their pedestrian environments with the aim of boosting visitor numbers. 'Connecting Leicester' is a series of projects designed to reverse the impact of the car and encourage visitors to explore the rest of the city, and 'Reinvigorate York' is catering to the 7 million visitors to the city each year whose main activity is 'stroll around and enjoy the ambience'.

For some places, attracting footfall is about maximising the visitor experience, but saving our shopping parades and town and city centres is more complicated. Local authorities and communities need more control over their locality through the planning process and high streets need to rediscover their purpose at the heart of their communities. Retail is not and never was the end of the story. We need to recognise the value of our high streets as walking friendly places where we might live and work, spend time with friends, access a range of services (e.g. health and education) – and maybe even pop to the shops as well.

*Dr Rachel Lee Policy and Research Coordinator  
Rachel.lee@livingstreets.org.uk*

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# A new look at park life

*APSE's recent seminar at Old Trafford considered ways of reducing costs, generating income and seeking alternative funding sources for parks and greenspace in the wake of budget cuts*

**A**PSE's parks and green space seminar was a chance to consider what the future holds for parks services and share ways in which local authorities can reduce costs, generate income and seek new funding sources to ensure service quality within this challenging context.

Grounds for Change brought together more than one hundred and fifty delegates and speakers at Manchester United Football Club on 20th March 2014. Opening the event, APSE's chief executive, Paul O'Brien, said: 'Intensive pressure means local government has to start thinking differently. For parks and greenspace, as for all council services, this means maximising the opportunity to achieve additional outcomes and wider public value.' He described how APSE's 'ensuring council' vision for local government, can be applied: 'The ensuring council is a more self-confident, self-reliant model. It is lean, but not hollowed out and retains the capacity to respond to public policy issues on behalf of communities and face challenges head on.'

Paul Todd, Green Flag Award manager at Keep Britain Tidy, said that while there were 1,344 applications for Green Flag status this year, councils report a decline in staffing and budgets and there is a worrying trend for those in the North to be worse hit by cuts than those in the South. Love Parks week has been expanded into a year-long campaign to mobilise public support for parks. He highlighted the

'invest to save' argument, citing figures showing the results of inactivity cost the NHS £5.5bn a year when better green space would make people 24% more active. Following on Dr Katherine Drayson, research fellow for the environment and energy unit at Policy Exchange, said DCLG data indicates an average 10.5% decrease in spending on open spaces between 2010 and 2013. She said there is a lack of information on parks nationally and stressed the need for accurate data to provide an evidence base to demonstrate their value.

The seminar explored practical ways of facing up to funding challenges. Eddie Curry, head of parks and open spaces Nottingham City Council, described how his authority has secured £21.5m funding for park and play area regeneration from a range of sources over the past five years. Replacing cuts in budgets with external income means 50% revenue costs are now generated by his team, while customer satisfaction is 87%. He explained: 'We have motivated the team to look at smart projects and income generation opportunities, mapping sites to create strategic evidence and focus resource where needed.'

Wallace Turpie, operations manager (streetscene) at North Ayrshire Council, discussed how £1.64m savings over three years are being delivered as the result of a service review. This addressed high costs and high levels of sickness absence through a new strategic plan and service delivery

model. Trade unions were engaged from the outset and involved throughout the introduction of a new job profiles. The authority brought a number of functions in-house, looked at skills, work patterns and depots, created training and development opportunities and involved staff in decisions about procurement of products. The result is a more flexible workforce and better outcomes.

Delegates enjoyed hearing Tony Sinclair, grounds manager at Manchester United FC, speaking about the maintenance regime, technology and investment required to keep a premiership football ground in peak condition. Rachel Edwards, from the Department of Communities and Local Government's Big Society Community Rights Division, outlined her department's latest guidance on allotments. Barrie Hall, senior solicitor, Beachcroft, gave a legal perspective on managing and defending claims concerning play areas and parks footpaths.

Drew Bennellick, head of landscape and natural heritage at Heritage Lottery Fund, described opportunities including Parks for People and Our Heritage grants. There is greater emphasis on maintenance in new applications, he said, and Heritage Lottery Fund is providing more support for projects post-completion and sharing good practice. A new on-line tool, Prosperous Parks, shares ideas on how to generate income

Lydia Ragoonan, Rethinking Parks programme manager at NESTA, described a £1m fund to find new business models that will sustain the UK's public parks in the face of funding cuts. 'There are a lot of ideas out there already that can help meet challenges and we want to see if we can adapt and scale them up,' she said. Ms Ragoonan added 'Rather than seeing parks as a problem they should be used as a solution to other problems such as youth unemployment or the ageing population,' she said.

Clare Over, project development officer at Mersey Forest, discussed the public health benefits of Natural Choice, a joint venture Liverpool Primary Care Trust, providing £380k funding for 38 community projects. When green infrastructure across Liverpool was mapped in 2009, disparities in access to green space between affluent areas and less affluent areas were identified. 'There is a clear link between green space and mental health and a huge amount of evidence on the role of green space in reducing mental and physical health inequalities as well as improving air quality,' she said. Evaluation of Natural Choices by the University of Essex showed an 18% increase in wellbeing..

All the speakers at the event pointed to a need to take a fresh look at the UK's parks and greenspace - and to measure and maximise their benefits in responding to community issues as a means of ensuring their future.



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## Move over Lord Sugar ...

The APSE highways and engineering apprentice award winners 2014!

Mike Davies and Callum McNulty won the awards for the Highways Maintenance and Engineering categories in the APSE Apprentice of the Year awards at the recent Roads, Highways and Street Lighting Seminar in Newcastle upon Tyne. Mike from Caerphilly County Borough Council and Callum from Glasgow City Council put together portfolios of their college work, provide detailed diaries of work based projects, submitted references, photographic evidence and progress reports from their employers and colleges as well as going through an interview in order to come out as winners. The 9 finalists were top quality candidates and were all recognised as part of the awards ceremony. Their council employers were also recognised as training providers supporting local young people into the employment market.

The APSE awards were kindly sponsored by Multihog, DBI and Symology.

### Jobs, training and a wage thanks to Nottingham City Council

Young people across Nottingham are getting a step on the career ladder thanks to Nottingham City Council's commitment to apprenticeships.

The City Council is bucking the trend during National Apprenticeship Week with an exciting new intake of 50 young people into the Neighbourhood Services Department.

The new apprentices were welcomed on Monday 3 March,

the start of National Apprenticeship Week, at an event at the Woolsthorpe Depot in Bilborough.

The event also saw the announcement of the Nottingham Jobs Pledge, a new initiative by One Nottingham and the City Council, in partnership with Working For Youth, that encourages the city's employers to commit to improving employment outcomes for local residents. As part of the pledge the Council will help employers create employment and training opportunities.

Cllr Nicola Heaton, Portfolio Holder for Community Services at Nottingham City Council, said: "We are delighted to be able to support these young people into work and offer them a supportive environment where they can develop, learn new skills and earn money.

"The Council has been successfully running apprenticeship schemes since 2009 as a way to promote and develop entry level posts and in the past year the Council has taken on 100 apprentices, the biggest to date. We show commitment in the management, coaching and mentoring support we give our apprentices and for this financial year, we have got a 95% retention rate."

Neighbourhood Services has been consistent in championing the Apprenticeship Scheme across the council and have recruited apprentices year on year. Ten of the new apprentices are being supported by the Priority Families Programme in Nottingham - a partnership run by the Health and Wellbeing Board and led by Nottingham City Council. The programme focuses on helping families with the most complex problems, such as getting people into training or work, improving school attendance and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.



# Carbon Management at North Tyneside Council

**W**hen North Tyneside Council's Cabinet approved its Carbon Management Strategy in 2010, setting a 34% reduction target for its carbon footprint by 2015, 5 years ahead of the national 2020 target, officers knew they would have to radically rethink how the Council viewed and managed its energy consumption. Through the development of an innovative approach to carbon management using 'carbon budgets' and an holistic behaviour change campaign the authority has already reduced its carbon consumption by 13% and is on track to hit its ambitious target.

The Council's Carbon Management Strategy set out the hierarchy of energy reduction activities that the Council would follow to achieve its carbon reduction targets. Starting with a review of the Council's assets (including buildings, vehicles and street lights) and how they were managed, maintained and decommissioned, followed by an investment programme and finally developing the business case for renewable and low carbon energy systems, each level of the hierarchy was underpinned by the active engagement and empowerment of key staff and the Council's 'Watch Your Step' campaign.

Energy consumed in buildings makes up nearly three quarters of the Council's carbon footprint so the Council understood that performance managing those buildings effectively to reduce energy consumption was going to be imperative in achieving the carbon reduction target. With over 200 operational buildings including schools, the Council's initial focus was on the top 50 consuming sites

and bespoke carbon reduction targets – carbon budgets – which reflected local operational factors were issued to those sites.

The carbon budget replaced the traditional financial budget for energy in each building and a relevant officer in each building was appointed as carbon budget manager. All energy financial budgets were held within the corporate finance team. It was felt that using a carbon metric as the target for each building was more consistent year on year than a financial target which is driven by a volatile energy market. Traditionally building managers have faced escalating utility costs year on year and have felt that even with a reduction in consumption, the financial target could not be achieved. Through issuing building managers with carbon budgets, the Council has empowered the managers to achieve targets that they can control. The Council classes this as an extremely innovative approach, strongly supported by a behavioural change campaign called Watch Your Step.

However, it was made clear to each carbon budget manager that achieving that target was their contribution to the Council's overall energy budget management and that performance would still be managed through existing governance structures. This important change from a financial metric to a carbon emission metric was introduced under the governance and guidance of a Strategic Environment Board, made up of Senior Managers and Cabinet Members.

The Council recognised that to meet the individual build-

ings targets, it would need to empower key individuals such as building managers to drive localised changes and initiatives and has supported them to do this through provision of accurate and regular energy consumption data, training sessions and information packs demonstrating how to make simple no and low cost changes to reduce energy consumption and the Watch Your Step campaign.

Over 700 energy meters were installed with automated meter readers and key staff trained in using the online output data to understand and manage their buildings energy consumption. The monthly collation of energy performance data informs carbon budget managers of current performance compared to previous years, including the baseline year. Intervention sessions are arranged with carbon budget managers when targets are not being achieved and case studies have been developed and publicised showing positive interventions, including outcomes.

In celebration of the first year of the carbon budgets and the Watch Your Step campaign the Council hosted an awards ceremony in which the best achievers in the following five categories were recognised for their contributions to the reduction in carbon emissions; Service Team, Individual effort, School, Public Building (non school) and Overall Achiever.

The carbon budget process has now evolved and in year 2 has expanded to include nearly 100 buildings, many of which were added at the request of the building manager after seeing the positive impact the process had in reducing energy consumption in other buildings. The data is now presented as a league table based on carbon reduction performance and within three distinct building types; operational, school and sheltered housing. These changes were at the request of carbon budget managers and demonstrate the competitiveness in the reduction of consumption that the carbon budget process has developed.

Overall, since the introduction of the carbon budget process, electricity in buildings has reduced by 13% and gas by 9% and this has contributed to the Council's overall reduction in carbon consumption by 13%. As the Council embarks on a number of major investment programmes to further reduce its carbon footprint, including installing LED lighting in public buildings, investment in 'trimming and dimming' equipment for its street lighting columns and the refurbishment / new build of 26 sheltered accommodation units, it is on track to meet its 34% carbon reduction target.

Contact: Paul Nelson, Environmental Sustainability Manager,  
North Tyneside Council: paul.nelson@northtyneside.gov.uk

## APSE briefings, events and training courses

### The latest briefings available to download on the APSE website

**14-08** Guidance on weekly rubbish collections

**14-09** HSE working at height

**14-10** Highways funding

**14-11** Street cleansing state of the market survey

**14-12** APSE consultation response to Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill

**14-13** Local Government Bill - Part 12 Performance Improvement

**14-14** Scottish House Conditions Survey

**14-15** Consultation Elphicke Review of the local authority role in housing supply

**14-16** The new TUPE regulations 2014

### Upcoming events

#### APSE Scotland fleet, waste & grounds seminar 2014

Hilton Coylumbridge, Aviemore,  
Tuesday 6 to Friday 9 May 2014

email Laura McNab for details on  
lmcnab@apse.org.uk

#### APSE Annual Seminar and Service Awards 2014

Nottingham Ice Arena  
9 -11 September 2014

email Vicki Starmer for details on  
vstarmer@apse.org.uk

### Training courses

#### Sharps Awareness for frontline staff

London 08/04/2014

#### Handling difficult conversations with frontline staff

London 11/04/2014

#### ICCM Customer Care In Cemeteries & Crematoria Services

Glasgow 14/04/2014

#### Supervisory skills for team leaders in frontline services

London 25/04/2014

#### Sharps Awareness for frontline staff

Glasgow 29/04/2014

#### Supervisory skills for team leaders in frontline services - NI

Craigavon 02/05/2014

#### Street Scene and Street Cleansing Supervisory Skills

Manchester 07/05/2014

#### ICCM Customer Care in Cemeteries & Crematoria Services

Leeds 08/05/2014

#### Event management

Doncaster 8/05/2014

For all training enquiries or to organise a bespoke APSE training course for your authority please contact Jan Kennedy on jkennedy@apse.org.uk

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Photo: Metro

# The Flood Water Management Act 2010

*Kelvin Packer, Service Manager - highways, Bath and North East Somerset*

The recent widespread media coverage of a number of prolonged, severe flooding incidents has focussed the public's attention on the flood risk facing some communities. However, once time passes, new crisis come along and communities move into the 'recovery' phase, who and how will we mitigate the risk of a repeated flooding?

Flooding is nothing new, it has happened down the centuries, but now engineers, planners and the relevant agencies face a greater challenge than ever before. In addition to whatever nature throws at communities, authorities have to contend with developments and building in flood plains. Also, many homeowners surface over gardens to provide off street parking increasing the run off rates

in drainage catchments. Changes to land management practices such as filling in ditches also contribute to an increased risk of flooding.

It is debatable how much of an impact these issues have, but there are two factors that probably contribute to the risk of flooding more than any other:

**1. The reducing resources in local government.** There is less capital money available to invest in upgrading and improving drainage infrastructure to mitigate risk. This is probably exacerbated by the fact that much of the infrastructure is hidden underground and not noticeable to the public.

Also, as the public sector reduces staffing there are less people to investigate, identify and proactively work

with communities, ensuring preventative actions are taken.

**2. The impact of climate change.** The country has just experienced the wettest winter since records began. There is a noticeable increase in the amount of weather related incidents local authorities are dealing with. As well as flooding there is also an increase in land slips, sink holes and ground water problems.

Most worrying is the fact that there could be a long delay between cause and impact. Even if the world was able to stop any further climate change today, it could take at least another 20 years before we see the full impact of today's actions!

Following a number of significant flooding incidents the Government commissioned Sir Michael Pitt to

review the causes and lessons learnt. This work resulted in the 'Pitt Review', a piece of work culminating in over 90 recommendations for improvements. Although the recommendations are numerous, Pitt's work identified some key themes to improve the way we deal with flood risk.

For local authority engineers and planners, these themes are: Improve our record keeping and collection of information to help understand flood risk. Better planning for developments in land with a flood risk. Agencies working together to ensure effective mitigation and response. Promoting awareness and community resilience.

The Flood Water Management Act was introduced in 2010 and aims to make the responsibility for managing flood risk much clearer and ensure partnership working. It certainly helps clarify the relation between the local authority who fulfils the role of Lead Local Flood Authority with responsibility for leading on ordinary water-courses, surface

water and ground water run-off. The Environment Agency continue to be responsible for the 'warn and inform role' along with leading on main rivers, reservoirs and the coastal matters.

Some of the new duties are welcomed by the LLFA, such as greater powers to undertake works. However, the Act has also introduced new duties that require staff to develop new skills and work with a wide range of people, other professionals and across sectors.

Without doubt, flooding stories attract media interest and there are already examples of journalists attending public meetings and technical staff being asked to address the media or speak on local radio.

With a statutory duty to investigate flooding incidents staff may be dealing directly with vulnerable, dis-

tressed or angry property owners. In such cases staff will need to exercise considerable inter-personal skills to deal with the situation as well as establishing the cause of the flooding.

In addition to strengthening partnering skills, the Lead Local Flood Authority will need to enhance its technical capacity as it now has a duty to map flood risk, undertake flood risk assessments and produce surface water management plans.

In Bath and North East Somerset over 400 weather related incidents have occurred in the period between January and March 2014, including four significant land slips. The Council



is responding to the weather related incidents by employing specialist consultants and restructuring the team creating a single drainage team to deal with all aspects of drainage, providing residents with a single point of contact. Regular meetings with the Environment Agency and the Planning Authority are helping to establish a collaborative approach to tackling flood risk.

## Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

After some delay Statutory Instruments are due to pass through Parliament in April 2014 enabling the SuDS provision of the FWMA to become effective from October 2014.

Sustainable drainage is a key tool in mitigating the impact of new development and helping to regulate the discharge of surface water in sensitive catchments.

As part of the planning process developers will bring forward applications for approval the SuDS Approval body, another responsibility falling upon the LLFA. SuDS broadly fall into two categories;

**1. Open systems** such as swales, ditches and attenuation ponds which are constructed adjacent to roads and footways.

**2. A closed system.** Most likely, constructed underground water storage areas and oversize pipe systems where surface water is drained through permeable paving materials and porous surfacing.

Both categories will bring operational and financial challenges for local authorities. In the case of open systems how will attenuation ponds be fenced off for public safety, what inspection regimes will operate and how will operatives be able to cut the grass and litter pick from swales and ditches?

With closed systems, will Contractors and utility companies have the awareness of standards and gangs have the skills to excavate and reinstate in these alternative constructions? Equally important in times of austerity, will the LLFA have adequate staff to ensure compliance with the standards and oversee works?

With the ever increasing impact of flooding and climate change, all local authorities need to adapt services. However, those authorities that will deliver the best service to residents are the organisations that pro-actively develop the staff skills and create the capacity to deliver the duties of the Flood Water Management Act.

Contact: [Kelvin\\_Packer@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:Kelvin_Packer@bathnes.gov.uk)



## APSE Apprentice Awards 2014

**A**t FAUN ZOELLER we are dedicated to encouraging the skill sets of young people coming into our industry, which will not only enrich our own business, but also those of our clients – we have a number of apprentices within our business itself but we realise the importance of the next generation!

Over the last 7 years, FAUN ZOELLER has shown great commitment to this promise, in being the proud sponsor of an APSE Apprentice Award. This initiative is an opportunity to recognise and reward the next generation of young professional's across all disciplines. The apprentice and trainee awards are specific to front line service areas and support excellence in training standards within local authorities and their partner organisations throughout the UK including members and non-members.

'We rely heavily on the next generation', said Simon Hyde, Chief Executive Officer of FAUN Zoeller, 'these awards demonstrate our commitment to the HGV and specialist mechanics of tomorrow, we have over 600

vehicles on the road in the UK today and by 2020 we expect that figure to have exceeded 1000'

The awards are open to all local authorities throughout the UK. FAUN Zoeller sponsor the category for Transport & Vehicle Maintenance. Clearly an integral part of our business is the repair and maintenance of the vehicles. Once an application is made, the Apprentice must submit a portfolio of their qualifications and achievements, which are then scored on their merits, along with a face to face interview with the APSE judging panel.

This year's competition was as strong as ever, and after much deliberation the four finalists were chosen to attend the APSE Awards Ceremony in Daventry. Steven Larkin of the London Borough of Redbridge was ultimately declared the winner of this year's competition.

Josh Timms of Oxford City Council, James Penny of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and Lucas Benson of Lancaster City Council were the runners up, and were also presented with Certificates to highlight this achievement.

Josh Timms commented, 'Oxford City Council and my mentors in the Motor Transport department have trained me to this degree of excellence, for which I am very proud.' He also added how delighted he was to receive the award and that it was great to be recognised by the industry.

As further reward for their success, the finalists along with APSE Representative Paul Peters, were invited by Ben Lord, FAUN ZOELLER Regional Account Manager, to visit the main production facility in Osterholz-Scharmbeck, Germany. This was an opportunity not only for the winner and finalists to see the wide variety of products manufactured at the facility, but also to understand the advanced production processes employed which FAUN ZOELLER say have enabled them to retain their position as Europe's number one Refuse Specialist Equipment manufacturer.

During the visit, particular areas of interest were our state of the art Robotic Welding equipment, a £10m investment, technology which has been utilised in other areas of the group but which has now adopted for the Refuse Collection arm of the business, also 'Herbert'... Europe's largest sand blasting machine! The apprentices were all extremely impressed by the high quality of production, technical advances, together with the attention to detail in the facility as a whole.

This visit was also enriched by a full company and product presentation, given by two of the companies own FAUN Apprentices, Pascal Puckhaber and Colin Vajen. Following their introduction and insight into our business, the apprentices were encouraged to ask questions and discuss the information provided in order to gain a thorough understanding of the groups processes and

group products as a whole.

Commenting on the trip Ben Lord said 'It's always great to have the opportunity to demonstrate the scale of our business and the quality manufacturing processes we employ at our factories to produce best sellers like the ROTOPRESS & VARIOPRESS which are just two of the products that have become the mainstay of our UK Business and Operations. It was especially good to demonstrate this to a group of up and coming, enthusiastic young professionals. I am confident they will all have gained a great deal of knowledge, which will further aid their development into the next stage in their careers.'

Paul Peters, APSE's South and South West regional secretary, who represented APSE on the visit, said 'It is really exciting opportunity for apprentices to see the work in the development of new fleet and equipment and enhances their understanding of the industry in which they are working. I am really grateful that FAUN ZOELLER have provided this opportunity and I hope that it encourages even more apprentices to come forward for next year's apprenticeship awards.'

Following the visit to the factory the finalists were able to spend the afternoon taking in the local culture, by visiting the nearby city of Bremen, which included the famous Bremer Stadt Musikanten, Roland and the beautiful Market Square. The visit was completed when colleagues from the FAUN ZOELLER factory joined the group for dinner at a local restaurant where they sampled traditional German fare.

It was a whistle stop tour but one that was enjoyed by all.

Let's hope we can do the same thing next year!

## New Health & Safety web site

*HSE launches a new website to help councils get their health and safety priorities right and deal with myths and misunderstandings*

It is rare that a day goes by without some news story popping up which blames some bizarre or unpopular decision on 'elf and safety' and councils are often on the receiving end of the adverse publicity this generates. However in an increasingly litigious society it can be tempting to be risk

averse. HSE has now launched new web-based guidance for councils to help bust health and safety myths and promote a sensible and proportionate approach to risk and risk management. As well as tackling the myths and misunderstandings the new web resource will help local

councils get their health and safety priorities right.

*You can view the new sensible risk guidance at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/local-government/sensible-risk/index.htm>*

# Report back

## A round up of APSE events on behalf of our members

### England

#### Party conferences

APSE hosted two fringe events on municipal energy at the 2014 Conservative Councillors Conference held in London on the 28 February and the 1 March at the Hotel Russell. Prime Minister David Cameron opened the event joined by London Mayor Boris Johnson. Across the Thames at the London Excel Arena APSE promoted its latest research programme to delegates at the Association of Labour Councillors conference on the 1 and 2 March 2014.

#### Highways

The APSE Roads, Highways and Street Lighting seminar took place in early March in Newcastle Upon Tyne with delegates from across the UK. The keynote opening address was provided by Haydn Davies from the Department of Transport with a look at the future of the Highways assets and long term funding. To view presentations from the seminar visit the member resources pages of the APSE website at [www.apse.org.uk](http://www.apse.org.uk) or contact Phil Brennan, APSE Principal Advisor. [pbrennan@apse.org.uk](mailto:pbrennan@apse.org.uk)

#### Parked up

APSE delegates at the recent Parks seminar held at Manchester United football club were addressed by Rachel Edwards of the Big Society and Community Rights Division from the Department for Communities and Local Government. Ms Edwards explained the new allotments guidance issued by DCLG. Tony Sinclair grounds manager for the club provided an insight into the techniques and tools in maintaining a premiership standard pitch at one of the UK's most famous sporting venues.

#### Clean sweep

Speakers explored the current issues for Street scene services at the APSE street cleansing seminar 2014, at Aston Villa. Dr Rachel Lee, a keynote speaker, overviews the value of the pedestrian pound on pages 18-19. Presentations from the seminar can be downloaded on the APSE website.

#### Sent to Coventry

APSE's central region hosted a parks seminar on income generation and efficiencies at Coombe Park Coventry which included Bill Buckley an APSE associate who looked at performance and efficiency measures and Joe Taylor Country Parks manager. The event was jointly hosted with the west midlands parks forum.

#### Shakespeare's Leaders

APSE chief executive Paul O'Brien attended The MJ Future Forum hosted in Stratford-upon-Avon exploring the future options for local government with leaders from across the UK.

### Scotland

#### Cosla

APSE principal advisor Louise McMillan and APSE chief executive Paul O'Brien attended the COSLA conference held on the 13-14 March held at St Andrews which explored transformation and service improvement within a Scottish context.

#### Scottish parties

The Scottish Labour Conference 2014 took place on the 21-23 March in Perth with APSE in attendance promoting its research programme to local councillors. APSE will also be attending the SNP conference in Aberdeen on the 11 and 12th April.

#### Food glorious food

APSE and ASSIST will jointly host a conference on 'Better Eating: Better Learning' on the 22 May in Edinburgh. For further details about this high profile event contact Louise McMillan on [lmcmillan@apse.org.uk](mailto:lmcmillan@apse.org.uk)

#### Evidence is the key

**APSE Provided oral evidence to the 'Strengthening Local Democracy Commission which heard evidence at COSLA's headquarters in Edinburgh. For details contact Paul O'Brien on [po'brien@apse.org.uk](mailto:po'brien@apse.org.uk)**

### Northern Ireland

#### LGRJF

APSE continues to chair the Local Government Reform Joint Forum which last met on the 19 March. It is a critical time for local authorities in Northern Ireland as reorganisation moves forward.

#### Leisurely pace

March saw APSE host an event on the reform of local government and the future of leisure service at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre in Craigavon. With a keynote address by Andrew Uprichard, an APSE Solutions Associate, discussing the benefits and disadvantages of Trust models in leisure service delivery. For details contact Phil Brennan on [pbrennan@apse.org.uk](mailto:pbrennan@apse.org.uk)

### Wales

#### Strategic manoeuvres

APSE Wales hosted two strategic forum events on Service Transformation: on the 2 April at Plas Hafod Hotel in Flintshire chaired by Cllr Alex Aldridge; and on the 7 April at the Thistle Hotel Cardiff.

#### Environment & Highways

The Wales Environment and Highways advisory groups took place on 10 April at the media resource centre Llandrindod Wells including discussions on the Environment Bill for Wales, increasing recycling rates and APSE's waste research. The Highways group focussed on highways repairs, use of social media and an update on the APSE CSS Wales report. For details contact [djohns@apse.org.uk](mailto:djohns@apse.org.uk)

#### Yes Minister

The 3 July will see Llandrindod Wells host the APSE Wales Seminar and AGM which will hear a key note address from the Minister for Local Government and Government Business, Lesley Griffiths, AM. To register your interest in this event please email [djohns@apse.org.uk](mailto:djohns@apse.org.uk)



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