

Reorganising NI

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**Performance networks
awards 2015**

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Saving Meals on Wheels

Neal Radia, NACC
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Three weekly bins

Glenn Stuart, Bury Council
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Moving forward in 2016



Upcoming events

Date:

21 January

27 January

28 January

28/29 January

29 January

4 February

23 February

3-4 March

08 March

09 March

17 March

10 March

10 March

13 April

15 April

15 April

19 April

21 April

22 April

Event:

Policy Seminar

Renewables advisory group

Highways advisory group

Facilities Management Seminar 2015

Housing and building maintenance advisory group

Commercialisation, income generation, charging and trading network

Street Cleansing Seminar

Roads and Highways Seminar

Vehicle Maintenance and Transport

Sports and Leisure

Parks Seminar

Sports and Leisure Seminar

Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance

Transport and Vehicle Maintenance Group

Housing and building maintenance advisory group

Catering Advisory Group

Sports and Leisure Group

Building Cleaning Group

Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar

Location:

Etihad Stadium

Manchester

Manchester

York Marriott

Manchester

Manchester

Aston Villa

Newcastle

Oxford

Oxford

Tatton Park

Manchester

Oxford

Manchester

Manchester

Manchester

Manchester

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Editorial

A New Year Message from APSE's National Chair

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you all had an enjoyable festive break and are suitably rested and refreshed to meet the challenges of local government in 2016.

In my own area of Northern Ireland, local government reorganisation has fundamentally changed the face of local councils. Moving from 26 local authorities into just 11 during 2015 has brought new powers and responsibilities. 2016 will be a challenging year as reorganisation is further embedded within the new authorities, however with this time of turbulence we can equally embrace a time of opportunity, reinvigorating local democracy and ensuring councils are responsive to the needs of local communities, whilst providing efficient, effective local services.

It is also a time of change for me personally. In Northern Ireland, based on our electoral processes, when a vacancy arises in the Northern Ireland Assembly the party from where the vacancy arises is able to co-opt a new Assembly member. I am very privileged to have been selected by the SDLP to be co-opted as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to the Northern Ireland Assembly, which means I will become an Assembly member in advance of our Assembly elections in May 2016. As we don't have a 'double mandate' in Northern Ireland, this means that I have now stepped down as a Councillor for Derry City and Strabane District Council.

Whilst I am delighted to be joining the Northern Ireland Assembly, which is still a relatively young democratic institution, I am tinged by sadness in having to give up my role with APSE. I have always found the APSE family to be a warm and welcoming body within local government and, perhaps most importantly, APSE are able to provide the depth and breadth of technical, operational and performance knowledge needed to support local government in these challenging times.

I know that local government is in safe hands with our committed APSE member councils, who will fight for local people and our local services. I wish you all the very best for 2016 and I hope that, albeit with me wearing a very different hat to that of APSE National Chair, you will join me in Derry on the 7th and 8th September 2016 at the APSE Annual Seminar and Service Awards. I promise you that a very warm Northern Ireland welcome awaits you!

Best wishes

Gerry Diver, MLA, Northern Ireland Assembly



Nearly one year on: Northern Ireland's "Super council" reform programme

NILGA's Chief Executive Derek McCallan talks to APSE about Northern Ireland's recent council reorganisation and what we should expect to see in the future.

In April 2015, Northern Ireland underwent a complete restructure of its local councils. Not only were they reduced in number from 26 to 11, with the ambition that this would make them ultimately more efficient, innovative and cost-effective, they also negotiated extra responsibilities with central government; now, Northern Ireland's "super councils" are equipped to deal with services such as planning, local economic development, off-street car parking and community investment. Previously, the Northern Ireland Assembly had dealt with these services.

There are definite advantages to this newly implemented system, such as enabling local councils and communities to have a greater say in how public services are managed, removing duplication across the complex public service delivery map in Northern Ireland, as well as enabling councils to raise extra funds by realising capital assets, buildings and equipment that are now deemed unnecessary, and exercising new financial powers to borrow in order to develop local

economies. However, the new system is still experiencing some teething problems; as the 11 new councils restructure their teams and introduce new roles to accommodate their expanded services, there is a clear need for a collective approach to improvement and development, considerable councillor training, new corporate and staff ideologies, and the implementation of performance frameworks. This is where NILGA (the Northern Ireland Local Government Association) plays a key role.

NILGA's been particularly busy assisting local authorities before and during the implementation of these changes, ensuring that local councils are fully supported during the transition and in the important years to come. To this end, NILGA gained £47 million for councils, which will help to offset the huge investment required to make the changes. This will go some way to ensure that local councils get the best deal possible and that they're fully supported to implement the new legislation now in place.

Also on the financial side, NILGA have helped councils to benefit from partnerships and investments from either the UK government or the EU to help with some of the expensive transitional costs which are weighing heavily on ratepayers. They've also campaigned to alleviate the impact this change has had on current funding, for example advocating the preservation of the £18 million Rates Support Grant, which materially assists 7 councils in areas of deprivation. The key objective is to ensure that councils continue to offer and maintain high quality, productive frontline services at affordable costs, consistently across NI.

Though these actions are helping to support the transition, Derek suggests that this reform will be further supported through access to strong, effective partnerships with central government. To help cultivate this, the Political Partnership Panel was formed, as lobbied for by NILGA. This group works to open policy co-operation, and the communication channels between local authorities, central government and NILGA. The partnership allows local councils to anticipate things like civil service reform and cuts before they occur, so that local councils can prepare and even feed into the changes.

Almost 50% of the councillors in Northern Ireland are brand new to the role and though this has revitalised local government, there is a lot of work required to get everybody up-to-speed. Because of this, NILGA have been working to ensure that these new local councils are equipped with the right skills to meet the challenges that come with their new responsibilities. Some of the services they have been offering include courses in community planning, and service training in areas that are new to the councils, Also, for the first time, many councils are now bringing in APSE performance networks to monitor each local council's performance in terms of cost, quality of service and productivity.

It's expected that NILGA's services will help local councils to plan appropriately, control their funding effectively and allow them to remain independent from the decisions of Northern Ireland's central government. In terms of the future, NILGA wants to ensure that the 11 super councils play a sizeable part in the next Programme for Government, and will fight for their right to do so. These councils are now the drivers of frontline economy, planning and public service needs and as such, they need to be protected and sustained appropriately.

What's happening in Northern Ireland?

- In April 2015, the previous 26 councils were reduced to 11.
- They were given more powers from central government, including control over services such as planning, local economic development, off-street car parking and community investment.
- This is the biggest change to Northern Ireland's local government since 1973.

It's a big ideological change for Northern Ireland's local and central government, as well as for NILGA, and it is definitely testing the councils' resilience. It doesn't help that these changes have also come at a time of austerity and more budget cuts. Overall, however, this restructure is a positive step and signals a new beginning for Northern Ireland. In fact, Derek sees the reform as strengthening democracy, not just the powers of local government, and creating the opportunity to develop a more cohesive government, driven by local people. This is a more contemporary, exciting, democratic approach for Northern Ireland, which places local councils at centre stage – right where NILGA wants them to be.

To find out more, contact Derek McCallan, NILGA Chief Executive Email: derek.mccallan@nilga.org

APSE in Northern Ireland:

- **Performance Improvement Forum for Leisure Services.**
Where and when: 22nd January, Ballymena.
- **Local Council Income Generation, Trading and Investment.**
Where and when: 11th March, Venue to be confirmed.

To book a place on an upcoming seminar or course, email enquiries@apse.org.uk or call 0161 772 1810

The prospects for municipal energy in the U.K.

Director of APSE Energy Mark Bramah considers how local authorities can still commit to a move towards renewable energy, despite financial challenges.



On the surface it looks like a bleak time to attempt the move towards a decarbonised energy system. Central Government has radically changed its policies on green energy. Recent announcements have ended their zero carbon homes commitment whilst sweeping changes to subsidies has severely cut the financial incentives for wind and solar power. Whilst Government argues its case for reducing tax-payer funded subsidy regimes the changes have nevertheless dealt a hammer blow to those in the public, private and community sectors who are endeavouring to move towards cleaner energy. The recent resetting of national energy policy, which is based on decommissioning coal fired power stations by 2025 whilst supporting a new 'dash for gas', shows a seismic policy shift. However APSE has long argued that we should appreciate the role of renewable technologies in the energy transition and in meeting the long-term energy

needs of the UK, including the huge opportunities for economic development and growth that a low carbon energy systems can potentially provide.

This all seems challenging for local renewable energy projects, however local authorities are more resilient than that; many have embraced the challenges that come with the transition to a low carbon economy and have simply redoubled their efforts to get there, despite the actions of the Government. Before the Climate Change Summit in Paris in December 2015, 50 of the largest local authorities, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester, Liverpool, Nottingham and Leeds, committed themselves to eradicating carbon emissions in their areas and running their cities on completely clean energy by 2050, despite the fact that most local councils are currently facing a £12.5bn funding shortfall by 2020. The scale of the ambition in the face of such odds is as bold as it is impressive.

So how can local authorities, who are trying to manage massive cuts to their funding and services, set such ambitious goals and do so with confidence and commitment? Well, there are really two answers to this question.

Firstly, in order for local government to survive such severe austerity it has to recognise that it needs to do things differently. The devolution agenda in England, Scotland and Wales presents a significant opportunity alongside its challenges. Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Communities and local Government, speaking at the Local Government Association Conference in July 2015, stated that "Those who are prepared

to organise to be more effective and more efficient should be able to reap substantially the rewards of that boldness, whether in costs saved, additional revenues generated, or powers that can be vested." Councils have taken him at his word and many of the bids for Combined Authority status in England include as one of the key 'asks' a commitment to investing in the local energy infrastructure.

Secondly, many local authorities have been inspired by the German 'Stadtwerke' movement, which uses municipally-owned generation, distribution and supply networks. After the Second World War, councils generated up to 50% of their revenues locally with a major contribution from the ownership and control of public utilities like gas, electric and water, and councils seem to be moving in that direction once again. Further, they have understood that there is a great opportunity to take advantage of the transition from a centralised energy system based on burning fossil fuels, to a decentralised, clean energy system in which the municipality plays the important leading role.

Last year saw the launch of Robin Hood Energy Ltd, the first municipal energy supply company in the UK since 1948. Robin Hood is owned by Nottingham City Council and where Nottingham has led the way, many other local authorities are likely to follow. Other councils like Peterborough and Cheshire East have launched their own local tariffs with the aim of tackling the blight of fuel poverty, but it is the wider ambition of these councils that stands out. In fact, local supply is just a means to an end; linking supply with local generation and distribution is the key to the future.

Local authorities are ideally placed to exploit the opportunities that arise because of their community leadership role, but also because councils still have many assets (such as land and buildings) which can be utilised in developing heat networks, improving the energy efficiency of their estate, and for local renewable energy projects which can also reduce the dependency on central government funding.

There are many reasons to be optimistic for the future. As Lord Nicholas Stern points out in his book, *Why Are We Waiting?* (2015), "With good policy and strong commitment the low carbon transformation can be the real, dynamic growth story of the future. It could have still greater potential than previous technological revolutions to improve (world) living standards and quality of life."

Well, local government isn't waiting. There are many hurdles to overcome, not least because of the short-termism in much of current Government policy thinking,

and also due to a problematic regulatory environment. Yet councils are seizing their opportunities and the medium-term prospects for municipal energy are very bright indeed. 'Necessity' as they say 'is the mother of invention' and it is now acting as a catalyst for change in local authorities across the UK. Financial pressures, historically low costs of borrowing, devolution, social, economic and community needs, rapid technological change, and peer networks such as APSE Energy are all combining to push forward a radical reengineering of our current energy system. It will not happen overnight, as experts have pointed out it will be at least a three-decade transition, but we have already begun that journey. It is an exciting, amazingly optimistic journey that just might also make a huge contribution to tackling global warming and the perils of climate change.

Mark Bramah is Director of APSE Energy, email energy@apse.org.uk



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A productive seminar: The highlights of this year's performance networks

The annual APSE Performance Networks Seminar took place on December 3rd and 4th, giving local councils an opportunity to gather together and share their secrets on keeping costs low, but quality and productivity high.

This year's theme centred on evaluating frontline productivity in local government and began with plenary talks from speakers Debbie Johns (APSE's Head of Performance Networks), Mike Bennett (Director of Public Intelligence), and special guest speaker Katharine Peacock (Managing Director of ComRes).

Productivity vs. Quality

Debbie Johns' talk zoned in on analysing the performance networks data from recent years and reflecting on the interesting correlations, that the data reveals, about local government's productivity in relation to the quality of service provided. She also discussed the

ongoing developments in performance networks at APSE and how these changes will help local councils by enabling them to extend their existing resources to further enhance their productivity.

Debbie began by emphasising that the quality of service in some areas hasn't been entirely affected by recent budget cuts. For example, quality of education catering and building cleaning seem to be rising, even though their budgets have been victim to cuts. However, for those who have struggled, Debbie explains that innovative changes need to be made, although this will mean something different depending on the service.

Over the next five years, as more government cuts come into effect, local councils should expect decreases in budgets and funding to continue. Fortunately, effective responses can be formed by using performance networks advantageously. By knowing the figures that constitute their frontline services, local councils can plan to enhance

their budgets through ideas like income generation schemes, improving procedures and regularly reviewing their struggling services.

APSE performance networks has had a busy 2015, creating new reports and developing vital research. In 2016, Debbie reported, there is no intention to slow down, and there will be a continuation of new reports and analysis designed to help performance networks to grow. Recent developments have included the creation of new service areas like Environmental Health, and new modules in Northern Ireland. APSE performance networks will continue to review its knowledge base on subjects like income generation and managing demand, viewing these as critical elements that show how frontline services are performing within the changing dynamics of local government finance. Debbie explained that though local government may face multiple challenges over the next few years, APSE intends to work alongside them to meet these challenges with effective, sustainable solutions.

Are Local Councils Performing Productively?

Mike Bennett of Public Intelligence discussed new APSE-commissioned research, which relies heavily on APSE performance networks data. The research looks at frontline services in local government and how they have managed to increase their productivity in recent years. The idea is to identify the contributing factors that has led to this increase in productivity so that other local councils can replicate similar results.

Using the data from APSE's performance networks, Mike highlighted the trends in productivity over recent years. His findings showed that, even though service inputs were down nationally, service outputs – which he classed as satisfaction rates and service improvements – have risen. It seems that despite government cuts and a higher demand from the public, councils are managing to maintain productivity.

Mike was more than happy to share his wisdom on the reason behind this trend; it comes down to the importance of useful, pragmatic systems. Acts such as merging services, organising teams carefully and forming better channels of communication can vastly improve the productivity of a local council service, despite the budget cuts. Perhaps slightly more complex, Mike's case studies explained that having a management team who fully understand their service area and are able to earn their workers' respect will drive more productivity. Also, hiring new staff members from external candidates and apprentices can bring a fresh, productive perspective to the team by creating a new dynamic.

Mike concluded by warning that, even though productivity has increased in recent years, continuous improvement is vital to keep local councils afloat. It seems he thinks the next innovation for frontline services will be from the realm of mobile digital technology – so get your smartphones ready.

Considering It from the Public's Viewpoint

In her speech, Katharine Peacock, Managing Director of ComRes, one of the UK's leading research consultancies specialising in corporate reputation, public policy and communications, discussed the current political landscape and how it has changed since last year. She explained how, with four different parties in charge of four nations, the UK is currently quite fragmented. Interestingly, voting habits seem to be changing; age is now overtaking social status as the main factor in judging who the public will vote for. Also, young people seem to feel more engaged with their local government rather than being disengaged with politics, as has previously been the case.

Yet, despite these observances and public perceptions, Katharine said there is no move towards a new politics. Public priorities have changed very little from last year, with the key issues remaining immigration, the NHS and the economy's progress (though many believe that the economy has not yet been fixed and recovery should be faster).

So what does ComRes' research say about public perceptions on local government? The research showed that they're entirely divided on issues like whether local or central government should control spending on public services, revenue raising and service delivery. In terms of the service themselves, currently the public seem to believe that local government should be responsible for roads, public transport, schools and business rates; on the other hand, they believe that central government should control lifestyle regulations, hospitals, welfare benefits and VAT rates.

Katharine's speech highlighted the concerns of councillors who feel that they are struggling to meet what they see as an increasing public demand for frontline services. Overall, Katharine's team aren't expecting things to get easier any time soon; she suggests that a different approach, which embraces new innovations, communications and engagement, is vital for local councils to keep on top of growing expectations and demand.

To view the presentations from the APSE Performance Networks Seminar 2015, go to www.apse.org.uk then click on 'Events' and then 'Past Presentations'.



Around the Forums and Workshops

Unique to the APSE Performance Networks Seminar, delegates were given the opportunity to attend a series of strategic forums and working groups in their performance networks service areas. Led by network members, the working groups are key to agreeing the direction for data collection for the forthcoming year and for reviewing the findings of the data and emerging trends. They cover all of APSE's performance networks service areas and can be found on the APSE website.

Forum 1 on Measuring Value for Money saw facilitators Claire Cutforth, Operational Manager of Neighbourhood Services at Cardiff Council and Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions exploring the best way to approach assessing value for money for frontline services and using that data to involve employees and stakeholders in the decision.

Forum 2, which explored Communicating Performance to Stakeholders with Simon Dale, Street Services Assistant Director from Plymouth City Council and APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien discussed the best ways to communicate performance. They looked at understanding core audiences, core stakeholders and mechanisms as well as reporting street scene issues and gaining feedback.

Forum 3 showcased APSE's latest research on Using Demand Management and Behaviour Change with Mo Baines, Head of Communication and Coordination at APSE, presenting on the research findings of *'Park Life; Street Life'*, which explores how behaviour change sciences can be applied in the public sector to help dampen demand and improve service performance.

Forum 4 challenged how we use data by posing the question, Data: A Competitive Edge, or Does It Define What Fence We Sit On? with facilitators Ken Campbell, FM Manager at North Ayrshire Council, and Jan Kennedy, Head of training at APSE. Key to discussions was the idea of creating a culture of performance improvement, not complicity.

Forum 5 focused on Developing Knowledge and Cultural Change in Performance Management, with Northumberland County Council's Isobel Nicholson, Business Improvement Team Leader and Nicola Wardle, Business and Customer Support Team Leader, as well as Debbie Johns, APSE's Head of Performance Networks. The expert trio looked at using data to understand the cost base of services, and considered the potential for further development and innovation.



Tips and Tricks from Oxford City Council

Day two of the seminar involved some high-level plenary discussions, starting with a special presentation by Peter Sloman, Chief Executive of Oxford City Council, who were the winners of APSE's Overall Council of the Year 2015 award. Peter explored Oxford's improvement journey, highlighting their smart use of evidence-based choices, which came from developing a performance culture, and innovation to inform any decision making. Part of the key to their success is the development of an income generation strategy, which uses new sources of revenue to support the continuation and improvement of local services.

Moving Forward

An expert panel, which included David Bentley, Head of Asset Management at CIPFA, Ronnie Dempster, Head of Technical Services at Dumfries and Galloway Council and Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions, further developed the theme of commercial innovation set by Oxford City Council.

The panel debated with delegates about opportunities for income generation, specifically looking at using simple charging powers, and they agreed that having solid performance information is important to commercial success. Andy Mudd, responding to a delegate question, explained that 'performance data gives you the critical understanding of where your service is at, so you can realistically plan areas for growth and income generation'. The panel also explored the differences between trading through a company and bringing in charges using existing local authority powers. Ultimately, a cultural shift may be needed to form a trading company, and the panel suggested that utilising charging powers can be a highly effective and simple strategy in comparison – and without the delays that new structural models often involve.

Performance networks awards 2015



Building cleaning Best performer

Caerphilly County Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Enfield London Borough Council, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council, Midlothian Council, North Lincolnshire Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, South Lanarkshire Council

Winner: Midlothian Council



Building cleaning Most improved performer

Bradford Metropolitan District Council, East Renfrewshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, Preston City Council, Stirling Council, West Dunbartonshire Council

Winner: North Ayrshire Council



Building maintenance Best performer

A1 Housing Ltd, Bassetlaw District Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Falkirk Council, Nottingham City Council - Nottingham City Homes, Oxford City Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Swansea City & County, Waveney District Council, West Lothian Council

Winner: Falkirk Council



Building maintenance Most improved performer

A1 Housing Ltd, Bassetlaw District Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Kirklees Council, North Ayrshire Council, Renfrewshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, Waveney District Council

Winner: A1 Housing Ltd, Bassetlaw District Council



Cemetery and crematorium services Best performer

City of York Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Darlington Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Halton Borough Council, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Oxford City Council, Stafford Borough Council, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Winner: Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council



Education catering

Best performer

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Derbyshire County Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Manchester City Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Sunderland City Council

Winner: Manchester City Council



Education catering

Most improved performer

Conwy County Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council, Inverclyde Council, North Ayrshire Council, Renfrewshire Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Tayside Contracts

Winner: Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council



Environmental health

Best performer

Bedford Borough Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, South Derbyshire District Council, West Dunbartonshire Council

Winner: North Lanarkshire Council



Parks, open spaces and horticultural services

Best performer

Conwy County Borough Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Fife Council, Halton Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, West Dunbartonshire Council

Winner: Conwy Borough Council



Parks, open spaces and horticultural services

Most improved performer

Aberdeenshire Council, Broxtowe Borough Council, Glasgow City Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, Renfrewshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council

Winner: Broxtowe Borough Council



Refuse collection

Best performer

Cardiff Council, East Renfrewshire Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Kettering Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Oxford City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, West Lindsey District Council, Wyre Borough Council

Winner: Kettering Borough Council



Refuse collection Most improved performer

Darlington Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council, Knowsley MBC, Oxford City Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Wyre Borough Council

Winner: Oxford City Council



Roads, highways and winter maintenance Best performer

Angus Council, Dundee City Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Midlothian Council, North Ayrshire Council, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, Shetland Islands Council, Slough Borough Council, South Gloucestershire Council

Winner: Slough Borough Council



Roads, highways and winter maintenance Most improved performer

Aberdeen City Council, East Ayrshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, Falkirk Council, Inverclyde Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Wrexham County Borough Council

Winner: Inverclyde Council



Sports and leisure facility management Best performer

Dorchester Sports Centre - 1610 Limited, Lammas Leisure Centre - Ashfield District Council, Rugeley Leisure Centre - Cannock Chase Council, Riverside Ice and Leisure - Chelmsford City Council, Goole Leisure Centre - East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Clissold Leisure Centre - Hackney London Borough, Hermitage Leisure Centre - North West Leicestershire District Council, Loddon Valley Leisure Centre - Wokingham Borough Council

Winner: East Riding of Yorkshire – Goole Leisure Centre



Sports and leisure facility management Most improved performer

Edgewood Drive Leisure Centre - Ashfield District Council, Kimberley Leisure Centre - Broxtowe Borough Council, Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre - Chelmsford City Council, Francis Scaife Sports Centre - East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Queensbridge Sports and Community Centre - Hackney London Borough, Evington Pool - Leicester City Council, The Parks Sports Centre - North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, Victoria Leisure Centre - Nottingham City Council

Winner: Nottingham City Council – Victoria Leisure Centre



Street cleansing

Best performer

Belfast City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Oxford City Council, Stafford Borough Council, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Wyre Borough Council

Winner: Eastleigh Borough Council



Street cleansing

Most improved performer

Darlington Borough Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, Renfrewshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council

Winner: Darlington Borough Council



Street lighting

Best performer

Ceredigion County Council, Denbighshire County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, East Lothian Council, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Midlothian Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Winner: Denbighshire County Council



Street lighting

Most improved performer

Angus Council, East Ayrshire Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Falkirk Council, Fife Council, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, West Lothian Council

Winner: East Riding of Yorkshire



Transport operations and vehicle maintenance

Best performer

East Dunbartonshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Sheffield City Council, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Winner: North East Lincolnshire Council



Transport operations and vehicle maintenance

Most improved performer

Aberdeenshire Council, Bolsover District Council, Clackmannanshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, Fife Council, Midlothian Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Winner: Fife Council

Catering for the future of our most vulnerable people



Neel Radia, National Chair of the National Association for Care Caterers (NACC), argues against recent cuts to vital Meals on Wheels services.

The NACC is a member organisation that represents individuals and organisations responsible for, and associated with, catering provision within care environments and services. You may know us best for our recent ongoing campaign to protect the essential UK Meals on Wheels service, although we also provide comprehensive advice, best practice guidance, training and resources for a wide variety of topics and issues relevant to care catering.

The Meals on Wheels service, which caters for the old and vulnerable, in their own homes and at day centres, offers a valuable service that strives to make life easier and happier for those living independently in our communities.

We believe that Meals on Wheels is crucial. However, this non-statutory service is currently struggling to be effective as a result of recent budget cuts; potentially, this could have serious mental and physical consequences for the most vulnerable in our society. In response, we're asking local authorities to view this service as vital and to save it from the cuts. We also want the government to intervene and make Meals on Wheels a statutory responsibility across the country.

"Maintaining good nutrition and the human contact that comes with this is key to ensuring that our elderly are able to live independently in good health for as long as possible. Cutting this service puts vulnerable, elderly members of the community at risk and will also end up costing the country far more money. The service needs protecting in law."

Meals on Wheels is so much more than a simple meal; for many, it's a social lifeline that eases the devastating isolation and loneliness that, sadly, many of the elderly in our society endure. Delivering daily meals brings regular human contact, which may be the only interaction these people experience in their day-to-day

lives. Not only interaction, the Meals on Wheels driver can provide essential help when they encounter someone who is weak, sick, cold or distressed, with no-one else to turn to. The drivers are sometimes the only person to visit the older person's home and so they perform health and well-being checks, notifying health workers if any problems arise. Many times, a driver has found an elderly person has fallen at home, unable to get back up. They are able to call an ambulance for the person and therefore prevent them from potentially lying on the ground for days.

The service enables those who are elderly and vulnerable to live independently in their own homes for longer. It helps to keep them nourished and hydrated with a nutritious daily meal which, in many cases, is the only one they will have that day. This service provides an essential preventative service that vastly reduces malnutrition-related admissions to hospital, easing the financial strain on the NHS.

Around half of the local councils that once provided Meals on Wheels have now withdrawn the service; at this rate of decline, soon there won't be any Meals on Wheels provision left. This seems like a terrible false economy as the Meals on Wheels service helps to prevent malnutrition, which makes older people more vulnerable to illness and disease. Malnutrition costs the UK an overwhelming £20 billion a year, according to research conducted by BAPEN (British Association of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition). The average cost of one NHS bed, not including treatment, is £255 per night. After their treatment is complete, if the person is unable to live independently, they then go into care at the expense of the local council, costing on average £700 per week. This is considerably more than it costs to continue offering the Meals on Wheels service.

Currently, Meals on Wheels is a non-statutory service, and it is an easy target to cut when local councils are re-evaluating their services and budget. However, it is important to consider the full picture here; cutting Meals on Wheels can have huge social and

financial implications. Meals on Wheels is a preventative action that is designed to be easily accessible to those who would otherwise struggle to care for themselves independently. As the figures above show, it could ultimately save local councils from more costs later down the line.

We would ask local councils to carefully consider the long-term implications before shutting down this service. With the current joint health and social care budgets, this is the ideal time for local councils to find the money that can help them reinstate or reinforce an ill-health prevention service in the form of Meals on Wheels. Think creatively when considering your budget and find innovative ways to maintain this highly valuable service, such as integrating it with another service that you currently run. Another way in which the service can be maintained is by working alongside local charities. That way, some of the financial pressure can be alleviated, yet local councils can keep some control over the service.

Most importantly, if you think cutting this service today will save money in the future, think again. In the long term, this 'cut' will cost you more money due to increased admissions into council-run care homes and the high-cost impact on the NHS.

To sign the petition calling for Meals on Wheels services to be a statutory, follow this link:
<http://www.thenacc.co.uk/events/Governmentpetition>

To learn more about the NACC, visit:
<http://www.thenacc.co.uk/>

To contact Neel Radia, email:
chair@thenacc.co.uk



Advertorial

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Quarterly review meetings ensure the contract is on track, and Glasgow City Council finds it helpful that Johnston follows the Council's procedures in respect of order numbers and reporting of accidents and damage, streamlining and minimising admin.

"One year on, the Full Maintenance Contract with Johnston is going well, with the sweeper fleet performing as we expected," says Emil Laiolo, Glasgow City Council's Transport Manager. "The contract has been tailor-made for us to meet our exact requirements, and we are pleased with Johnston's proactive approach in respect of having the two dedicated technicians on hand and the provision of regular service reviews".

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Growing roots: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council on their latest Heritage Lottery Fund award

Sandwell's West Smethwick Park has recently been awarded nearly £5 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund for improvements.

Sandwell Council sits just outside of Birmingham and is one of the four Black Country Boroughs. Around 24% of it is made up of green space and as such, it costs the council a lot of money each year to maintain to a high standard. With potentially more budget cuts to come, the council recognised that it was necessary to revitalise their parks now so that they would be able to utilise them for income generation in the coming years, however they would first require money for renovation works.

This is where the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) comes in; the council has been awarded 5 grants to date for use in redeveloping Sandwell's parks. The most recent of these parks is West Smethwick, which is currently going through the first round of the award. For this project, the council has been given £337,300 for round one, which they must use to create detailed plans for the park's regeneration work, with a further £4.5 million of HLF money earmarked for round two, the actual improvement works, which can begin once the plans have been finalised and approved.

As recipients of a Heritage Lottery Award, Sandwell Council are required to offer match funding for each lottery award they receive. They've produced this money for round one from a number of different sources, including the use of volunteer work and section 106 planning gain. For round two, they are selling an old redundant depot next to the park that was once used as a nursery. This land will be sold for housing development and the capital receipt will be used as match funding.

The plans for West Smethwick Park are well underway, overseen by Sandwell's

Development Manager of Green Spaces, David Brown. Many of the ideas the development team are using revolve around restoring the park to its former glory, rather than redesigning it entirely. The park was originally created by James Chance in 1895, who owned a large glassworks nearby. These glassworks provided the large windows for the Crystal Palace in London, as well as glass for the tubes and screen of the first television. Due to these historical roots, Sandwell Council want to restore the historical features, as well as restoring the park's infrastructure and its large lake. Alongside these works, there are plans to construct a new central pavilion and interpretation centre for public use. Ultimately, the idea is to reinforce the park as a central hub of activity for the local community.

The extra money from the HLF has already helped to achieve this aim in some ways; not only has the money had obvious financial benefits, it has also helped to excite and motivate the local community to get involved with the project. As a result, the development team have been able to make a great start on the historical research and restoration planning that will significantly aid the project.

David has a few tips for developing a successful bid; always begin with the final outcome in mind – which, here, is getting the Heritage Lottery Funding. Prepare for this by finding out exactly where your match funding will come from, as well as being able to explain how the park will continue to be sustained after the restoration is complete. Further to this, think about exactly how the money will be spent and ensure that some is retained for special commissions, such as consultation work and historical research, as these will strengthen an application in the eyes of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

David says that gathering together a group of supporters in favour of the project really helps to improve the bid's chances. These supporters should comprise of political and residential support, and the support of the local Friends of the Park group. This backing will emphasise the community support and the heritage value of the submitted application. Also, ensure there is a dedicated team ready to work on the application and develop high-quality ideas, and that the site is prepared for a visit from Heritage Lottery Fund officers. David also advises that those councils with development teams or units should keep in mind that once the project has been awarded and tenders let, the team should be moved on to the next project.

The system seems to work for Sandwell Council and the awards they've collected have gone a long way to transforming their parks. It's all part of a bigger plan for the borough; in 2011, the council published a 10-year Green Space Strategy that would revitalise and regenerate vast amounts of Sandwell. The strategy focuses on 4 key strands, namely audience development, people and partnerships, spaces and places, and resources and services. By bringing together the community and restoring historical monuments, the improvements made possible by the Heritage Lottery Fund meet the requirements of the Green Space Strategy well.

What's next for Sandwell Council's parks? David tells us that this isn't the last HLF award that they'll be vying for; he expects to have another one started and onto the design stage by the time West Smethwick Park is nearing completion. Looking at their record so far, it doesn't seem like an unlikely ambition.

For more information on this project, contact: David Brown, Sandwell Council Development Manager (Green Spaces).
Email: david_brown@sandwell.gov.uk





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Looking after the personal assistants:

Torfaen Council launch a new personal assistant guide

Adrian Thole of Torfaen Council, explains a new collaboration newly launched to provide a new online learning resource designed to support direct payment personal assistants.

For some people, everyday tasks can be difficult to achieve without assistance. It becomes necessary for them to find some extra support, and an increasing number of these people turn to personal assistants (PAs). These PAs are used through Local Authority Direct Payments, which is an alternative way of receiving care. Different to the more traditional agency care, this gives the person requiring assistance the opportunity to employ a PA of their choice; offering flexibility, choice and control. This is a great option for those who want to continue living independently, yet require a little bit of extra support to do so.

The role of a PA differs depending on the person they support and work for, but many of them do similar work to agency staff. However, access to training has typically been limited and, as such, is often inefficient to individuals with the demands of supporting people with a disability. In Torfaen, a number of people recognised how under-supported PAs were in our community. To combat this, we formed a collaboration that included a number of employees from Torfaen Council, Dr Neil Thompson, Connecting Learners, Unison, and Services for Independent Living to create a readily-available, accessible and useful resource that would help PAs feel secure and supported when coping with the difficult demands of their role.

Our self-imposed brief outlined that it needed to be accessible to as many people as possible and it was evident that the guide shouldn't be classroom-based. In response, we produced an online training and awareness guide. Our objectives have definitely been achieved by this guide; it is available online around the clock, and it's free for anybody who requires it to use.

The guide itself comprises of 5 different chapters, which focus on key areas that we believe are necessary for PA's to know in order to do their job effectively:

- What's it all about?
- Making sense of disability
- Protection from abuse
- Better safe than sorry: health and safety
- What next?

After each chapter, there is a conclusion, a 'pause for thought' section which asks the viewer to reflect, a number of links to extra information on specific topics, and a short quiz that tests what they have just learned. As well as these chapters, which cover everything from explaining what a PA does, to covering the legal requirements, the website also offers help on their rights as a worker and further help working with people who have specific disabilities. With all this useful information in one easy-to-navigate website, this guide is an excellent resource that equips PA's with the training they require to perform well in their job. Even better, its accessibility means that it's also a great reference point for PAs to use in order to refresh their knowledge, so it's an ongoing learning tool.

However, it wasn't easy to make this comprehensive, informative guide. With the team spread across Wales, communication and planning was difficult at times, yet we found we could manage the geographical issue by using

Loomio, an online platform that makes it easier for groups of people to come together and make proactive decisions. Here, we were able to suggest ideas, discuss them, and then vote on each topic that was proposed, which made the process of creating this programme democratic and well thought out. We also had to accommodate for the visions of our key stakeholders, ensuring that they had a large amount of input into what the final product would be.

The team tested an early version of the guide with some PAs in the Torfaen area. We gathered feedback, which was constructive and overwhelmingly positive, that was used to make some small changes before we launched the programme in September 2015. It's still early days but we expect that the quality of care offered by these PAs will vastly improve, to the satisfaction of both the PA and the person receiving the care, and any safeguarding issues in regard to the level of care being offered are highly likely to reduce.

The online training and awareness guide has already been extremely useful for the Torfaen community, as it gives PAs the proper support that they require for the first time. As a result, we expect that more disabled people in the community will be able to live independently for longer, both reducing their concerns and fears, as well as reducing the cost of care for the council.

To learn more about the project, visit
<http://pasonlineguidebook.blogspot.co.uk/>

There is also a Welsh version:
<http://llawlyfrarleinargyfercp.blogspot.co.uk/>

To learn more about the guide, contact: Adrian Thole,
Torfaen Council Social Worker

Email: Adrian.Thole@torfaen.gov.uk



Report back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events on behalf of our members

The end of 2015 proved busy for APSE with a range of conferences, meetings and advocacy activity on behalf of our members.

England

Welcome aboard APSE south and south west!

Within the last 3 months we have gained some new members in APSE's south and south west region; Crawley Borough Council, Southend-on Sea Borough Council, Bournemouth Borough Council and Watford Borough Council have all become APSE members – welcome aboard!

APSE south and south waste region recently hosted advisory groups on Waste, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing, Vehicle Maintenance and Transport, Renewables and Climate Change, Highways and Street Lighting Advisory Group and Soft Facilities Management. There are plenty more coming up so to get involved contact Lorna Box on lbox@apse.org.uk

Moving towards a self-sustaining future

The M Shed Bristol will host a major policy seminar on Wednesday 16 March 2016 looking at governance, finance and devolution, featuring speakers including Simon Ridley, Director General for Decentralisation and Growth, DCLG, Jacqui McKinlay, Executive Director, Centre for Public Scrutiny and Michael Lockwood, Chief Executive, London Borough of Harrow. For the full details about this event visit www.apse.org.uk or email Lorna Box on lbox@apse.org.uk

An event full of waste

December saw APSE central region host an event on better waste management looking at managing growing demand despite budget cuts. Speakers included Andy Statham, Director of Communities from Newark & Sherwood Council, talking about the Nottinghamshire Waste Partnership. Steve Brunt, Joint Assistant Director of Streetscene from Bolsover and North East Derbyshire Councils, on ideas surrounding joint working, and APSE's Paddy Knowles talked to attendees about Demand Management. Gedling Council's Environmental portfolio holder Peter Barnes kindly chaired the event.

Going swimmingly

On 1 February APSE central will hold an Advisory Group on the Management of Swimming Pools as part of the SPATEX 2016 exhibition. Speakers are confirmed from Corby Council, Peterborough Council and CIMPSA. Email Rob Bailey on rbailey@apse.org.uk for details.

A clean sweep

APSE's street cleansing seminar will be held at Aston Villa Football Club on the 23 February looking at managing demand, meeting need and municipal entrepreneurialism. For details visit www.apse.org.uk or email Wayne Priestley on wpriestley@apse.org.uk

The Associates

APSE's Full Association meeting will take place on Friday 22 January 2016 in Edinburgh. As well as APSE association business we will hear from guest speakers exploring the future of council finances, municipal energy, and issues of governance and democracy. Full details are on the APSE Website. To attend this free event email Vicky Starmer on vstarmer@apse.org.uk. This is a members only event as this is an APSE governance meeting which traditionally takes place between our AGMs.

Coming up: APSE at the CCA

APSE will be hosting workshops and speaking on a main plenary session at the Conservative Councillors Annual Conference on the 4 and 5 March 2016. For details about the event see the CCA website.

National Association of Waste Disposal Officers

Mo Baines of APSE addressed the annual meeting of the National Association of Waste Disposals Officers (NAWDO) on the 2 December at Smith House, London, on the topic of insourcing waste services.

Nights at the roundtable

Early November saw APSE host two high level roundtables, with New Policy Institute, on our research into the future of local government finance. The first of these was held in Manchester with the second in London.

Resistance, resilience, renaissance

APSE's National Chair Cllr Gerrard Diver and Chief Executive Paul O'Brien participated in an international conference on the impact of austerity on communities at De Montfort University in Leicester in November.

London Councils Summit 2015

APSE ran a workshop on commercialisation and exhibited at the London Councils conference at City Hall in November.

The Northern Powerhouse

Paul O'Brien attended the MJ Futures Forum in Leeds in late November. This event was aimed at local authority Chief Executives and was focused around the impact of the Chancellors spending review and its implications for local government.

News, interviews and debate

APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien appeared on the BBC Sunday Politics show as part of a discussion and debate with two MP's on insourcing council services.

Scotland

Labouring in Scotland

APSE Scotland held a fringe event at the Scottish Labour Party conference, with Paul O'Brien of APSE and Professor Steve Griggs of De Montfort University speaking alongside Deputy Leader Alex Rowley MSP and Anne McTaggart MSP to a full house in Perth. The fringe discussed the findings of APSE Scotland's latest research report on the contribution to communities made by local councillors. The full report will be published shortly and distributed to all elected members in Scotland.

Soft FM

All presentations from the APSE Scotland annual Soft FM seminar held on the 5 November at the Westerwood Hotel can now be downloaded from the APSE website; go to the APSE Scotland area and look under Scottish Events. The event included presentations Scotland Food and Drink, and Alan Mawson, of Dumfries & Galloway Council.

The sun shines on Scotland's buildings

APSE Energy has been commissioned by APSE Scotland's local authorities to produce a Solar PV toolkit helping them to successfully deliver solar PV projects. The toolkit will be launched at the upcoming Building, Housing and Renewables seminar, which is taking place on the 18 and 19 February 2016 in Dunblane. For more information on this event and to book your place, please contact the APSE Scotland office on 01698 459 051.

Wales

APSE held its Catering and Cleaning Advisory Group in November, with presentations from Powys and Monmouthshire Councils; looking at the opportunities that local authorities have to work on informal joint ventures and how to generate efficiencies the presentations are now available on the APSE website. APSE Wales holds Advisory Groups across a range of service areas. For details of future free advisory groups in Wales, contact Wayne Priestley on wpriestley@apse.org.uk

Northern Ireland

Economic development

APSE Northern Ireland hosted a high level event on Economic Development In December with speakers including Greg Swift, Head of Enterprise at Dublin City Council, Andrew Webb, University of Ulster, and Adrian Nolan from CLES. The presentations are now on the APSE website. Contact Phil Brennan for details. pbrennan@apse.org.uk

Ballymena for Leisure

The special performance improvement forums continue with the next one planned the 22 January which will focus on Leisure Services. The forum will be hosted in Ballymena. For details contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk

Audit developments

APSE responded to consultation on the Draft Code of Audit Practice for Local Government Bodies in Northern Ireland 2016 from the Local Government Auditor. This highlighted that local government needed to develop a more supportive working relationship with the audit body and, in return identified a need for local government to share examples of good and poor practice. It is essential APSE argued to develop a constructive rather than taking a negative approach.



Above: Delegates debating APSE's latest research at the Scottish Labour Party Conference

A prospect not to be wasted: Bury Council's three-weekly residual waste collections

Glenn Stuart, Director of Environment at Bury Council, explains the opportunities presented by their ground-breaking move to a three-weekly collection cycle.

The UK may well miss its 2020 recycling targets unless changes are made now. In England, the recycling, reuse and composting rate reached 44.8% in 2014, yet there are concerns that waste is starting to increase again as the economy recovers. We've reached the point where national action needs to be taken. This action not only needs to emphasise the importance of recycling to everyone in the country but is also required to create jobs in the reprocessing sector, reduce the reliance on virgin materials, protect the environment, and help us to avoid substantial EU fines.

Increasingly, many councils believe that the only way to improve their recycling, reuse and composting rate is to force residents to separate their recyclable materials more effectively, rather than simply putting them all in residual waste bins. Many local authorities were already promoting this approach by collecting residual waste less frequently when at Bury Council, we started our own review into the future of our residual waste collection service.

Faced with increasing financial budget cuts, the council was forced to review the cost of its service and our ability to meet recycling targets. We found that we were paying £28,000 a day to dispose of waste, amounting to £10.2 million each year. A huge amount of the waste was, in fact, recyclable and by increasing the recycling rate by 10%, our review found that the council could potentially make savings of almost £1 million per year.

Before turning to three-weekly collections, the council considered the available options carefully, and deliberated over the idea of introducing 140 litre residual waste bins, to be emptied fortnightly. However, the cost of buying the new bins (around £1.1 million) was unreasonable. We also believed that these new bins would have a similar impact on recycling performance as three-weekly collections, whilst keeping our existing bins, so we opted to try the new collection service.

Before the service was introduced, we launched a comprehensive

communications campaign, raising public awareness about the forthcoming changes. New rounds were formed that had minimum disruption to residents. Collection crews underwent training and customer engagement courses, and 'Frequently Asked Questions' were published for both staff and customers. Additional staff resources were placed in the council's contact centre to help cope with initial queries from the public. In addition, officers carried out visits to any concerned residents. The council also offered a 240 litre bin to those residents who were using the smaller 140 litre bins to compensate for the reduced amount of collections. Residents could also request additional recycling bins.

Once the scheme began, an effort was made to ensure a smooth running service; special dispensations were allowed, such as returning to collect any missed bins for the first four months. Also, Waste Regulatory Officers were assigned to collection crews to help with any queries, and extra promotional activities were used in areas where participation rates were low.

The scheme has now been operating for over twelve months and has seen considerable success. Less than 5% of residual bins have been presented with lids up and very little side waste has been encountered. Street cleansing tonnages have reduced, which was an added benefit, as there was a worry that fly-tipping of domestic waste could have been a consequence of the new system. Most importantly, recycling rates have increased by almost 10% across green waste, paper and dry recyclables, and residual waste collected has fallen by almost 17%. Putting this in context, in July 2015 Bury Council achieved a recycling rate of 59.69% of our domestic waste collection. We expect to hit the 60% recycling rate by the beginning of 2016 whilst making savings of around £860,000 per annum.

To mirror Bury's success, councils need to have extensive recycling services in place, yet it can seem like a financial gamble to

invest in recycling right now. Local authorities' budgets are already stretched but it is possible that by providing efficient, cost-effective recycling services, the improved recycling capture rates will soon offset the costs for the developments needed. Bury's new waste collection service has proved that this is a possibility.

So could this work for any council? Well, as with any scheme, there are a number of things to consider before moving to a three weekly residual bin collection service. For example, it may be more effective – and cheaper – to increase education and communication campaigns, or to reduce the size of the bins to 140 litres. If three-weekly collections are the most viable option financially, ensure that the residents have been consulted and concerns, such as hygiene fears and increased fly-tipping, are satisfactorily addressed. It is vital to implement a good communications strategy in order to minimise disturbance and distress for local residence.

Whilst Bury was the first English Council to move to the three weekly services there are other examples across the UK where three weekly collections appear to be working well and, with increasing pressure to meet recycling targets, it seems to be an excellent way forward. However, it requires careful planning and consideration.

Contact: Glenn Stuart, Bury Council Director of Environment. Email: g.stuart@bury.gov.uk

Did you know...

APSE performance networks will be introducing new data lines to monitor changes to residual waste collection across the UK in order to gain a better, clearer picture of the success of schemes like the one implemented by Bury Councils. Visit the APSE Performance Networks pages on our website (www.apse.org.uk) for details about how your council can collect refuse and street cleansing data and compare your performance with your peer councils.

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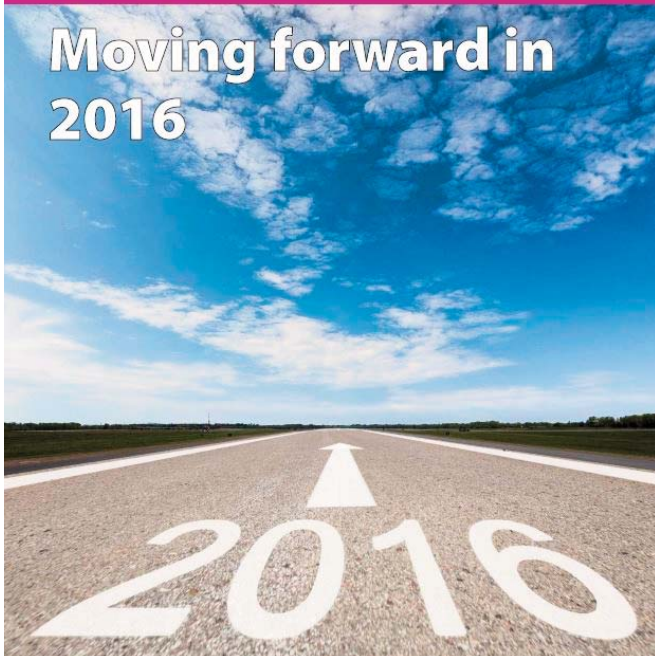
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