



**The latest APSE research
in Finance and Housing**

APSE

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Zero Waste Scotland

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**Supporting residents
through funeral poverty**

Wigan Council

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**Transport Managers,
operating licences, and
the law**

Transport Commissioner

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Editorial

We live in interesting times

Never has that statement been truer for UK local government. As we go to press, the results of the unexpected General Election have opened up a whole series of ramifications for local government.

Just before the election the Housing White Paper led to speculation about what we might expect following a period of consultation and discussion. Since then, APSE and the TCPA launched a new report on housing during the General Election campaign, *Building homes, creating communities*, which called on the Government, of whatever political make-up, to address the role of councils in delivering new homes for both sale and rent.

We also launched our local government finance report, *Redefining neighbourhoods: Beyond austerity?* calling for a recognition of the value of frontline local government services which found that these services had seen a decrease in service expenditure amounting to a colossal £3.1 billion, compared to the £2.2 billion increase in social care. Whilst APSE recognises the need for fair funding for social care it was not, we argued, a case of 'either or' but a need to properly fund both.

With a new cabinet now in place and, at the time of writing, uncertainty as to what will make it through to the Queen's Speech I hope there will be a time for reflection on the needs of local government across the UK. More of the same will not be welcomed by UK local government that has loyally delivered all that has been asked of it. If the reported comments of the Prime Minister are to be believed in saying 'no more austerity', the starting point should be to truly recognise that local government has now reached a tipping point. We need a genuine dialogue between the sector and central administrations across the UK about what local government can be expected to deliver with the current funding constraints; more importantly an imaginative conversation about what we could achieve if local government is placed at the heart of an agenda for renewal in our communities – whether housing or economic growth, public realm or culture – we have the innovation, imagination, and the hunger to deliver on the big policy pressures. We just need the trust of government and fair funding to go with our ambitions.

Paul O'Brien, Chief executive



We need to invest in our neighbourhood services

Paul O'Brien, APSE, and economist Dr Peter Kenway, NPI, explain the findings of ground-breaking research into the impact of austerity budgets on local council 'neighbourhood' services.

There is much debate about local council spending but this is most often framed around the challenges facing adult care services. As the welcome increase in life expectancy filters through to demand on care services, councils face not only an increase in the numbers needing care, but an increase in the complexity of the demands. People are ageing but not ageing in good health. Whilst we recognised this obvious pressure on council funds we were nevertheless concerned that exploring local council finances through the prism of social care was

neither realistic nor helpful to the millions of citizens who rely upon, and value, the plethora of other services provided at a neighbourhood level.

The term 'neighbourhood services' was arrived at following consultation with both the public in an opinion poll with Survation, and with a survey of APSE member councils. In our view, it was essential to arrive at a consensus term that best describes the universal public services experienced by communities at a local level. These services are a core function of local government

at every level. So, for the purposes of our research we settled on exploring the impact of budget decisions on areas such as maintaining local roads, providing parks, leisure centres and libraries, bin collections and recycling, and services that protect consumers like trading standards and environmental health.

To provide comparative consistency, the research team used 'Total Service Expenditure' or TSE to explore the budget impact on core neighbourhood services and used four broad headings to collate the financial data; these headings consisted of 'highways and transport', 'cultural and related', 'environmental', and 'regulatory and planning and development'. With a robust methodology in place we identified the budget trends in neighbourhood services. The findings provided a stark insight into local government spending and the impact on neighbourhood services.

Since 2010/11, neighbourhood services have been the hardest hit of all local government services, taking a shrinking share of a shrinking budget.

Over this period, the worst hit neighbourhood services in England have had spending in cash terms cut by a half, with many seeing cuts of at least a quarter. Spending on neighbourhood services in England fell £3.1bn, or 13 per cent, between 2010/11 and 2015/16, while spending on social care rose £2.2bn. On top of the overall cut, there is also an issue of fairness, with spending on neighbourhood services down 22 per cent amongst the most deprived fifth of local councils but down only five per cent in better off areas.

Some may argue that all areas of the public sector have seen budget pressures but the parlous state of local government funding is quite distinct. As a share of total spending in the economy, local government spending is falling steadily from 8.4 per cent of the economy in 2010/11 to 6.7 per cent in 2015/16. By 2021/22 it will be down to 5.7 per cent. So, a key question we asked was 'is this fair?'

Local government spending has suffered far greater losses of spending by Central Government. For example, for every £100 central government spent in 2010/11, local government spent £67. By 2018/19, local government will be spending £50 for every £100 by central government. Far from austerity being a process of equal misery, local councils have carried the brunt of the cuts.

The services most harshly impacted include; support for bus services down by two thirds; spending on

crime reduction, safety and CCTV down by a half; road safety and school crossings down by a third; food and water safety down by a quarter. This is changing the very nature of local government. Further, the worst hit neighbourhood services have seen spending fall by 50 per cent, and most services have seen falls of at least 20 per cent. Across all English local councils, spending fell by 41 to 50 per cent in three of the 40 individual neighbourhood services, including community development; by 31 to 40 per cent in four, including crime, safety and CCTV; and by 21 to 30 per cent in seven, including sport and recreation and road and bridge maintenance. Ironically, these are the very core services that the public most value. In a recent survey by APSE and Survation, the public clearly stated that they wanted more money allocated to these services at a local level.

So, what can we conclude? To give a sense of scale, just to allow local government to maintain its share of GDP, we would need £15bn more than projected spending by 2021/22. This presents a fundamental risk to the future of local government neighbourhood services. Not only do neighbourhood services not get a fair share of the funding pie, the pie simply isn't big enough. However, too often neighbourhood services are viewed as a 'safe' or non-controversial cut. We need to bust that myth. We also conclude that this is not a choice between funding social care or funding neighbourhood services; both must be properly funded.

Neighbourhood services are a vital component of UK public services. With the right funding, our neighbourhood services are capable of being integral to boost local economies by creating the right local environment to attract and retain businesses, jobs, and skills in local areas. This is ever the more critical with changes to local council funding, which may still see far greater reliance on business rates and housing growth to bolster locally raised sources of income. Neighbourhood services also add value to community wellbeing. The provision of high quality local neighbourhood services has a positive impact on the perceptions of an area, and are complementary to social care, physical and mental wellbeing and other public services including police, fire, education, and housing. Neighbourhood services need to be viewed as part of the solution in our public policy debates, not a budget burden.

A full copy of the report, *Redefining neighbourhoods: A future beyond austerity?* is now available to download on the APSE website. Alternatively, email Wai Lee on wlee@apse.org.uk to order a print copy.

Paul O'Brien is Chief Executive of APSE and Peter Kenway is a leading economist and director of the New Policy Institute (NPI).

Building homes, creating communities

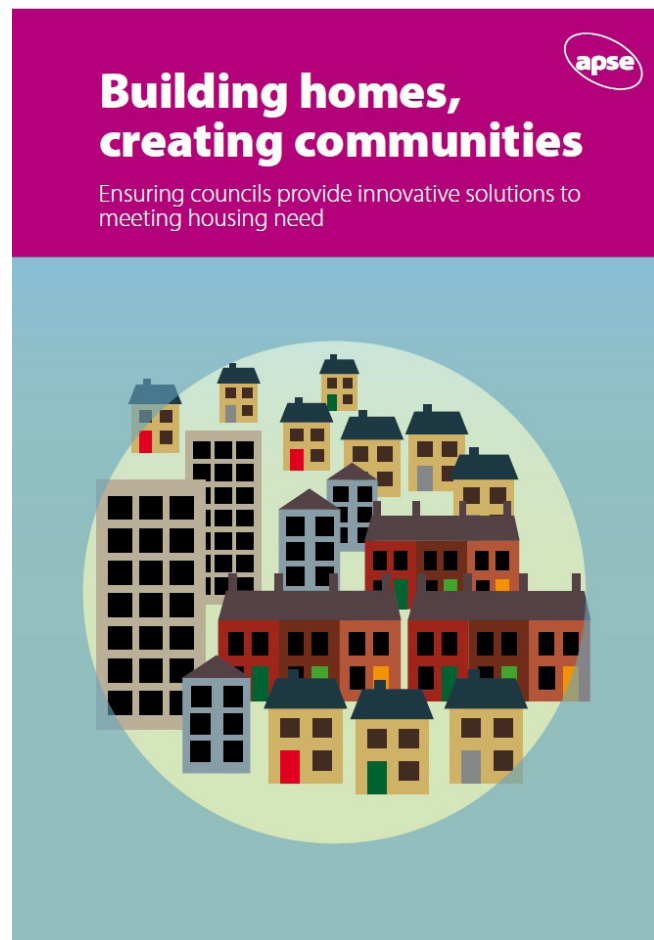
A new collaborative report by APSE and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) looks at how local authorities can help to meet housing need

The latest collaborative research by APSE and the TCPA shows that a lack of investment in genuinely affordable housing, alongside deregulation of planning, is reducing the ability for local authorities to secure the homes that the nation needs.

The research report, *Building homes, creating communities: Ensuring councils provide innovative solutions to meeting housing need*, is based on a survey of 166 local authorities in Britain and highlights the pressure on councils to meet the growing demand for affordable housing. There is a stark lack of new homes, with many of those that are being built remaining unaffordable to those in need. As a result, 62.5% of councils claim that they now have a severe need for affordable homes – and only 1% claim that their need is not substantial.

We are truly in a housing crisis, as addressed in the Government's Housing White Paper published earlier this year. Yet the lack of funding and support that local authorities are receiving remains largely overlooked. There is arguably little public awareness about the funding issues faced by councils, which only exacerbates the issues that we face in local government housing. The research shows this by highlighting how the cumulative impact of existing housing and planning policies in England have reduced the ability of councils to secure genuinely affordable homes available for social rent.

Well placed to understand the community's housing need, local councils are able to identify the diverse types of housing required to serve their residents well. This also includes ensuring that enough affordable housing is available and managing social cohesion, maintaining or nurturing that important sense of community that helps neighbourhoods to thrive. In its very first recommendation, the report strives to recognise



this contribution and calls on the new Government to increase housing numbers, with a commitment to specific measures to ensure quality outcomes including social mixed communities, good design and space standards.

Another recommendation states that local government innovation should be supported, resulting in more homes of all tenures, and the new Government should make clear that Right to Buy rules do not apply to local authority housing companies. To support this, the research explores how local authorities are already taking

a more active role in housing delivery through entrepreneurial approaches, and how this attitude has made great differences to communities. A series of five case studies highlight the work of councils from across the UK who have used innovation and entrepreneurial spirit to tackle the housing shortage that they face, with some having set up local housing companies and developed innovative approaches to partnership working. This seems to be a popular option, as the report shows that over two thirds (69%) of councils surveyed already had or were thinking about setting up a local authority housing company, either on their own or in partnership.

The current political narrative cannot ignore the housing crisis that we face across the UK. A new wave of council homes would help support local economic growth, jobs and skills in our economy; housing could be an effective driver for a renewed industrial strategy but to achieve this we need to place local councils at the heart of delivery on

housing need. That means the future Government of whatever political make-up must provide the financial freedoms and flexibility for councils to deliver solutions to our chronic housing shortage.

Building homes, creating communities: Ensuring councils provide innovative solutions to meeting housing need makes 16 recommendations to the incoming government. These are specifically tailored to a number of key themes; leadership, vision and confidence, funding social and affordable housing, new models of housing delivery, planning, housing quality and standards, boosting local authority capacity and capability to deliver, and Brexit and construction skills.

You can view a digital copy of the research on the APSE website at www.apse.org.uk. Print copies are also available and priced at £20.00 for members and £40.00 for non-members. To order, please use the form on the website or email Wai Lee on wlee@apse.org.uk.



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For more information, visit www.apse.org.uk or email Mike Egerton on megerton@apse.org.uk

Transport managers, operating licences, and the law

Nick Denton, Transport Commissioner for the West Midlands, discusses the vital importance of the Transport Manager's role in the smooth running of local authority neighbourhood services.

It's embarrassing at best if a public authority is caught breaking the law, and the reputational damage if an authority is found to be endangering life can go much deeper. How many local authorities which operate HGVs and/or PSVs are aware of the possible consequences of failing to ensure compliance with the law? Are they aware that they could lose their operator's licence and, worse, face corporate manslaughter charges, and do they know what to do to ensure this does not happen?

There is a (possibly apocryphal) story that, at a public inquiry she was holding into an HGV operator's licence held by a local authority, senior traffic commissioner Beverley Bell got the council's Chief Executive and his lowly transport manager both to write down their salary on a piece of paper. The former's was a huge multiple of the latter's. Mrs Bell forcefully suggested to the Chief Executive that he double the transport manager's salary immediately and have him report directly to him in future rather than through several layers of management. It was clear that the Chief Executive had little appreciation of the transport manager's key role in ensuring compliance and keeping the council from reputational disaster.

If, tomorrow, I was taking up a Chief Executive post at an authority which held a goods or passenger vehicle operator's licence, the questions I would be asking in my first few days would be as follows:

Who is the transport manager? Do they have a transport manager certificate of professional competence? To whom do they report? Does that person understand the importance of the TM role? Does the TM have the support and resources necessary to run a compliant fleet?

How effective is the TM? Are they making sure that drivers do a thorough walk-round check of the



vehicle before driving each day? Or are drivers just ticking a few boxes and jumping into their nice warm cab without really looking at the condition of their vehicle? Some 75% of roadworthiness prohibitions issued by DVSA are for defects (e.g. with mirrors, lights and tyres) which should have been spotted by drivers on their walkround check. Too many prohibitions will bring you to a public inquiry, facing regulatory action against your licence.

Is the TM ensuring that vehicles are being regular given safety inspections at the intervals the authority

promised the traffic commissioner they would be? Are the safety inspection sheets being looked at and acted upon, or just filed? What do the safety inspection sheets say about the condition of the vehicles and the way the drivers treat them? What is the MOT pass rate? What kind of items are vehicles failing on?

Does the TM check driver entitlement (both driving licence and certificate of professional competence) and how frequently do they check it? Once every six months is not enough: a driver could have been suspended by court or traffic commissioner in the meantime but not have told you.

Are drivers' hours being properly monitored? How often is the TM downloading driver cards and vehicle units? Are they running a comparison of the vehicle data with the driver data to make sure that drivers are not driving without their tachograph cards in the tacho unit? Are drivers' hours infringements brought to drivers' attention and is there an education and disciplinary system in place to make sure that infringements reduce over time?

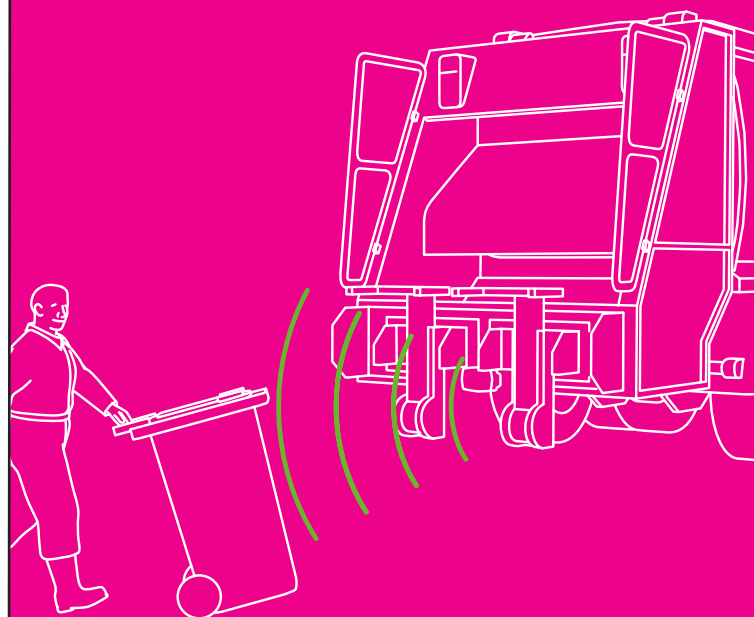
Does the TM come under any pressure from operational staff to send vehicles out even if they are not roadworthy (e.g. they have a broken brake light or one tyre just below the 1mm minimum tread depth)? Do they have sufficient authority to insist that defects are rectified before a vehicle goes out or that a driver takes sufficient daily rest before going out again?

As Chief Executive, I would make it plain that my TM had the absolute authority to stop vehicles and drivers going out. Once I was confident that the TM had the necessary compliance procedures in place I could leave them to get on with it, submitting a weekly report listing vehicle and driver prohibitions, MOT passes, drivers' hours infringement rate, the authority's compliance risk score with DVSA and other key data.

Transport might seem like a small part of a Chief Executive's empire and one that can be safely left to others. But if a local authority has an operator's licence, the chances are that they will find life very inconvenient if they are deprived of it for a time, or indefinitely, quite apart from the humiliation the process of being deprived of it will involve. So, it's worth spending a little time to make sure your organisation is doing it correctly, that the TM is capable and that they are properly regarded. After all, you don't want to be forced by Mrs Bell to double anyone's salary.

Nick recently spoke at the APSE National Transport Seminar on 14 June 2017. His presentation is available to download on the APSE website. For more information contact Nick by emailing nick.denton@otc.gov.uk.

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Supporting local residents through funeral poverty

We spoke to Andy Bond, Bereavement Services Manager for Wigan Council, about their award winning service and how they are helping to alleviate funeral poverty.

It can be argued that funeral poverty is one of the biggest issues currently facing the bereaved. Funeral poverty is the difference between the cost of a funeral and the funds a family has available to pay for it. In the last three years, Wigan Council has saved its residents more than £500,000 thanks to a new, innovative approach working with local funeral directors to offer affordable funerals.

Wigan Council has saved £115m over the last six years with its focus on providing effective quality services for residents by transforming services rather than cutting them. To do this the council developed The Deal an informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works in the borough to work together to create a better borough. Wigan Council has committed to a series of pledges and in return has asked residents and businesses to play their part too.

Staff have been encouraged to be positive, accountable and courageous when thinking about how services can be delivered differently for residents. The challenge for staff in



bereavement services was to embrace The Deal and review an existing municipal funeral service in line with the principles.

The municipal funeral service was rebranded into the 'Wigan & Leigh residents funeral service' and offers a low cost all-inclusive package that covers the cremation or burial cost, collection of the deceased (from within the borough), the use of the funeral director's chapel of rest, the funeral directors services of arranging and supervising the funeral, a hearse and one following limousine, a suitable oak (or similar) finished coffin with engraved nameplate, interior and appropriate handles, the Doctor fees and the cost for the clergy of your choice for the crematorium or grave side service.

But ultimately a service which when viewed by the average bystander is not noticeably different from that provided by other funeral directors.

The service was tendered with a challenge to any Funeral Director to maximise the opportunity for local residents to access a fixed price, value for money funeral service for those who want someone to take care of arrangements for them, in line with The Deal. The service was rebranded as the 'The Wigan & Leigh Residents Funeral Service', awarded for a three year period and promoted as a partnership between Wigan Council and a local funeral director who was committed to growing the availability for local residents. The cost of a cremation funeral through the service for 2016-17 was £1,892.83 and £1,938.83 for a burial funeral as compared against a funeral national average of £3,675.00 as reported by the 'Royal London National Funeral Cost Index Report 2016'.

Year one of the contract (2014-15), saw 38 families accessing cremations and 16 families accessing burials, a saving to residents of £82,600.00 when compared to the national average from the 'Royal London' report for that period.

Year two of the contract (2015-16) saw access more than double with 109 families choosing cremations and 16 families choosing burials, a saving to local residents of £182,795.00 against the national average.

Year three of the contract (2016-17) saw continuous growth in the access to the service with 135 families selecting cremation

funerals and 33 families choosing burial funerals representing a saving of £260,806.00, minimising the impact of funeral poverty for local residents.

The impact of the 'Residents Funeral Service' over the contract period 2014-2017 shows a massive saving of £526,202.00 against the national average and highlights Wigan Council's contribution in assisting local residents in combating funeral poverty.

In addition to these savings, the decision was also taken in March 2017 to abolish fees for cremation and burial for those under the age of 18 which will further support families as they go through a difficult period.

Since the service launched, many requests have been received from families wishing to make plans for their own funeral provision to minimise unexpected costs for their families from an unplanned death, but as the service is offered as a point of need service no support was available. Through discussion with a national independent funeral plan provider, Wigan Council were able to enhance the offer to manage funeral poverty by signposting residents to funeral plans at an affordable price for those who want to develop their own self resilience by making personal provision for their own individual funerals.

For more information contact Andy Bond by emailing a.bond@wlct.org



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Blue skies and best practice in Aviemore

We report back from this year's highly successful Scottish Fleet, Waste and Grounds seminar which was held over 3 days on 23-25 May.

The Scottish Fleet, Waste and Grounds seminar is one of the biggest events on the APSE Scotland calendar. Not only does the much-anticipated event boast a number of leading expert speakers in fleet, waste, and grounds services, it is home to one of the largest exhibitions of its kind in Scotland. For three days in May, delegates and exhibitors alike descend on Aviemore, the unofficial home of this annual event, to network and enhance their knowledge on these vital local government services.

As well as stands inside, the exhibition area outside boasted a huge array of equipment, including street sweepers, vans and trucks, bin lorries, buses, and winter maintenance equipment from many big-name brands and key industry players.

This year, delegates heard from a wide variety of speakers from both the public and private sector. Many of the speakers focused on themes such as best practice and benchmarking, alongside highlighting policy or innovation that attendees could implement themselves.

David Barnes, Zero Waste Scotland, gave delegates a first glimpse of the new Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse. This statutory guidance for fulfilling duties required under the Environmental Protection Act is currently under review, and delegates had the opportunity to learn how the proposals differ from the current Code.

Another excellent speaker was Joan Aitken, Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, who spoke about the responsibilities of fleet managers. 'I am not saying as operators do the impossible – 100% compliance is possible,'

she said. Emphasising the importance of working as a team, she offered delegates some useful advice, explaining that ‘drivers are your last line of defence; walk-round checks are vital.’

The event, which covered waste and recycling, transport, and grounds maintenance services, was geared towards developing delegates’ knowledge and understanding of the current circumstances surrounding the delivery of neighbourhood services, and speakers also gave support on how to maintain services for their communities.

Presentations from the seminar are now available to download from the APSE website. To view them, visit the APSE Scotland pages and click on Events.

Celebrating the best of local government

The event at Aviemore also hosted this year’s Striving for Excellence Awards, a staple of the APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar. At an evening ceremony on Thursday 25 May, the Gold winners of the awards were announced, and the achievements of the previously announced Silver and Bronze winners were celebrated.

These awards, designed to recognise successful local government neighbourhood services, celebrate innovation in service design and delivery. The awards are split into three categories; Waste and Recycling Services, Fleet Services, and Parks, Grounds & Streets Services.

APSE Chief Executive Paul O’Brien said, ‘I am delighted to see so many local authorities ensuring that their services benefit from innovative ideas and best practice. Although delivering Fleet, Waste and Grounds services is becoming an increasingly challenging prospect, the Striving for Excellence Awards prove that exemplary work is continuing to happen in local government. As a result of the winners and finalists’ hard work, services are continuing to improve for the public.’

Those local authorities that had achieved the Silver Award were automatically entered as finalists for the prestigious Gold Award. The Gold Award winners were announced on the night.

Congratulations to all winners and finalists!



Waste and Recycling category winner: East Lothian Council



Fleet category winner: Falkirk Council



Parks, Grounds and Streets category winner: West Lothian Council

Waste and Recycling Category

Silver Award and Gold Finalists

- East Lothian Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Stirling Council

Bronze Award

- Angus Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- Falkirk Council
- Fife Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Inverclyde Council
- North Ayrshire Council

Gold Winner: East Lothian Council

Fleet Category

Silver Award and Gold Finalists

- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Falkirk Council
- North Ayrshire Council

Bronze Award

- Fife Council

Gold Winner: Falkirk Council

Parks, Grounds and Streets Category

Silver Award and Gold Finalists

- City of Edinburgh Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- West Lothian Council

Bronze Award

- Aberdeen City Council
- South Ayrshire Council

Gold Winner: West Lothian Council



LOCAL GOVERNMENT
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Local Government Awards Northern Ireland

Now open for entries!

The Local Government Awards Northern Ireland showcase the best examples of service provision, new initiatives and personal commitment from councils, councillors and officers.

The awards show public recognition while awarding excellence in frontline local government public services. The categories are designed to acknowledge innovation, individual commitment and to highlight the best working practices, while providing opportunities for those working within local government to step forward and shine.

The deadline for completed applications is Friday 30th June 2017.

The awards cover eight categories:

- Best local authority service team
- Employee of the year
- Best Initiative by a Councillor/Councillor group
- Best local authority community planning initiative
- Best local authority digital integration project

- Best local authority elected member development initiative
- Best enterprise initiative by a council

The partners and supporting bodies contributing financially and administratively to the Awards are: Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE); William Johnston Memorial Trust (WJMT); Enterprise Northern Ireland; Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE); Oracle; Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA); National Association of Councillors (NAC); and Tourism Northern Ireland.

Nominees will be judged by an independent panel and up to three finalists in each category will get an opportunity to celebrate in style at a gala awards dinner which will follow the NILGA Annual Conference at the La Mon Hotel, Castlereagh on Thursday 12th October 2017.

The guidelines and application form can be downloaded from www.nilga.org or on the Northern Ireland pages of the APSE website, www.apse.org.uk. For more information email mbaines@apse.org.uk.

Be part of the big picture

David Barnes, Programme Manager for Litter and Flytipping, Zero Waste Scotland talks about Scotland's prevention push on litter and flytipping



Over a million pounds of public money is spent dealing with litter and flytipping every week in Scotland. When we consider that the country sees more than 60,000 incidents of flytipping a year, that's a lot of money spent on needless clean-up that could be available for local authorities to spend on other priority issues.

Not only is litter and flytipping unsightly and damaging to the environment, there are wider, indirect impacts – on things like house prices and health and wellbeing. These cost another £25 million and significantly affect quality of life. Meanwhile the percentage of Scots who say litter is a problem where they live has stagnated at around 28% in recent years, demonstrating an impetus for action that really cracks these issues and shows visible improvement in Scotland's communities.

That's why Zero Waste Scotland has taken inspiration from projects across the globe to achieve a national first – a suite of materials specifically targeted at preventing litter and flytipping that will help protect Scotland's natural resources, and make best use of public money.

Building upon the focus on prevention at the core of the Scottish Government's National Litter Strategy, the Litter Knowledge Network represents the first time such a comprehensive suite of information has been made available together. Available for free via the Zero Waste Scotland website, it comprises consistent messaging and tried and tested approaches to prevention accessible for free to anyone committed to turning the tables on litter and flytipping in Scotland for good.

As well as guides and tips on how best to halt specific littering behaviour, the Litter Knowledge Network incorporates guidance on preventing all kinds of litter – from chewing gum to largescale flytipping. It also contains factual information about the extent of the problem in Scotland that can be incorporated into campaigns – plus materials to

help plan and deliver effective litter-busting activities such as guidelines on events, social media and working with local schools.

This suite of new good practice resources is also a big step forward for Scotland in terms of its potential to deliver real, joined-up change. It's a chance for local authorities, community groups and environmental organisations across the country to help make Scotland an exemplar on litter and flytipping, making their own communities a better place in which to live and work in the process.

At community-level, groups of people across Scotland are already arming themselves in the fight against litter and flytipping where they live, work and play. Zero Waste Scotland is working with Scotland's big employers, brands, retailers and social hubs to get them creating Litter Prevention Action Plans specific to their surroundings. With each containing achievable actions to prevent litter and flytipping at local level, the Plans are intended to co-ordinate action, demonstrate commitment and amplify impacts from activities while also informing a network of Community Litter Prevention Action Plans across the country. Together with universal access to world-leading expert materials in the Litter Knowledge Network, the result will be a targeted affront on litter and flytipping that has been designed and influenced by Scotland's people.

This bottom-up action to combat the blight on our communities will be supported by top-down action at Scottish Government level. In the coming months the Scottish Government will lay new statutory litter guidance in Parliament attaching greater priority to preventing litter from arising in the first place, and aiming to reduce resources being spent on cleaning up other people's mess.

The updated guidance will broaden the measures that councils and others can take to keep land clear of litter and refuse. It will provide the necessary scope for councils to decide what's most effective for their local area, using their own knowledge and expertise to maximise effectiveness where it matters to their residents – on the ground.

There are benefits at every level; but what's really key to ensure everyone reaps the rewards is to make sure everyone has the chance to get involved. That's why we at Zero Waste Scotland are working hard behind the scenes to engage with organisations big and small to make sure Scotland's new approach to litter is comprehensive.

If you'd like to find out more about being part of the bigger picture on litter, email flytipping@zerowastescotland.org.uk



EDUcatering Forum: Make some noise!

APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking spoke to delegates at this year's EDUcatering Forum. Morag Wilson from EDUcatering magazine gives us the highlights.

The statistics around childhood obesity – that one in five come to school overweight or obese, rising to one in three by the time they leave primary school – are well known. Five years ago there were no children under 16 who had type 2 diabetes yet today there are over 500. Last year 26,000 children went to hospital for treatment to rotting teeth.

Currently, head teachers are forced to focus on the aspects that will get the attention of Ofsted, yet this could be about to change. The Healthy Schools Rating Scheme outlined in the government's Childhood Obesity Plan would be inspected by Ofsted and Jason O'Rourke, head teacher at Washingborough Academy in Lincolnshire and EDUcatering Excellence Award winner, suggested that this could finally make head teachers take action. "If you're judged on it, as a head teacher you will do it," he said.

It was the School Food Plan that achieved the landmark step to ensure that Ofsted would "consider behaviour and culture in the dining hall and the way a school promotes healthy lifestyles". But Jason – and others – admitted that

this doesn't get checked.

But it is up to the school food industry to get this action of the School Food Plan – as well as the other 16 – implemented and communicated to head teachers, governors, Ofsted and the government.

Stephanie Wood, founder of School Food Matters and a member of the School Food Plan Alliance, alongside APSE, reminded delegates at the EDUcatering Forum that governors are responsible for ensuring that food standards are adhered to. Schools shouldn't be ignoring them, even if there is no official inspection.

The Alliance is a 'guardian' of the Plan's 17 actions and has a good relationship with the Department for Education. It is here to support schools and caterers, and Stephanie reminded the audience that anyone can download the many resources it provides.

"Lots of great things have happened since the School Food Plan was published but we know that we're not done," she said. For example, not all schools are providing cookery lessons despite it being on the national curriculum,

because they don't have staff with the skills to deliver it. A report into the extent of this problem is currently being carried out by the Jamie Oliver Foundation and other organisations.

Caterers can keep up to date with the Alliance by signing up to the newsletter at schoolfoodplanalliancenenewsletter.co.uk.

Dr Rosalind Miller, nutrition scientist at the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF), provided an update on the childhood obesity situation in the UK. She called the Childhood Obesity Plan the "start of the conversation but not the final word".

Some of the points in the plan are on track, such as the sugar tax, while others like the Healthy Schools Rating Scheme might not quite make the September 2017 deadline and the BNF wants to see more training in nutrition for all teachers, as well as refresh the knowledge of Ofsted in food and nutrition before inspecting on it.

The foundation is also providing online training courses to improve the knowledge and skills of caterers, early years settings and food teachers – its professional development programme currently has 1,700 teachers on board.

Rachel Warwick, founder of the charity MakeLunch and a former teacher, used to celebrate having six weeks' holiday in the summer and it never occurred to her until she watched a documentary about holiday hunger that almost three million children in England go hungry in the holidays when they can't have their free school meal.

She went about offering holiday provision and in her first year provided 300 meals from three locations. Today, MakeLunch has a network of 80 locations and has served 50,000 meals to date. However, she said, "if we serve 50,000 meals a day that would still only reach 4% of the children who need it".

The majority of holiday clubs are run by volunteers in church halls and community centres, but Rachel urged caterers to open up dialogue with schools, local authorities and companies to open a club in their area or find out who can.

"You can offer support with finance, releasing your staff for the day, or providing food," she said. "When you put catering contracts out to tender, put holiday provision into the contract."

Rachel announced at the EDUcatering Forum a new training package tailored for schools to help them deliver holiday provision ([visit makelunch.org.uk](http://visitmakelunch.org.uk)).

Of course, providing an additional service when budgets are already being constrained is a challenge, but the industry is used to overcoming challenges. Vickie Hacking, APSE principal advisor, set out some of the impacts on catering from school budget cuts.

Local authority control of catering is diminishing as more schools seek to procure their own catering, noted Vickie. Local government and school budgets are falling in real

terms and they need to find the funding locally.

However, local authorities are becoming more efficient in their catering overheads, she said. But competition remains a challenge within the local authority sector as councils struggle under the pressures of reductions in overall budget settlements and costs rising through increased demand in adult social care.

Vickie notes that "local authorities are adapting in the face of budget cuts, because they have to. They have embraced technology to improve productivity. They are being flexible with staff roles to combine services, and councils are commercialising services and even winning new contracts. They are working with neighbouring local authorities to maximise procurement and economies of scale around small schools and accessing other funding streams."

Local authorities are having to adapt but they are succeeding, despite these uncertain times.

Alongside budget cuts comes rising food costs, which is something that Rich Watts, senior Catering Mark manager at Food for Life Served Here, talked about at the Forum. He revealed findings of research the organisation has done with some of its award holders with the biggest spend, who have already noticed a hit with the price of fruit and vegetables, as well as oil, with slightly smaller rises in dairy, meat and fish.

Encouragingly, however, there have been fewer cost rises to local produce, where many award holders source their products. Caterers offered some tips to Food for Life and noted that the ethics of the scheme are helping with costs, such as cutting plate waste and planning seasonally and with what's available at the time, being flexible with menu items to avoid inflated ingredients and manage costs.

Closing the day was a Q&A session with Sally Shadrack, chair of LACA, who addressed the challenges the industry faces in engaging with leadership. "How do we engage with academies and business managers? With our wonderful food and showing best practice," she said. "But we're up against it and there is a lack of engagement."

The Healthy Schools Rating Scheme will work to the industry's advantage, Sally believes, because head teachers want to be as good as each other and if their ratings are published then this will drive engagement.

Sally also provided an update on the research LACA has commissioned into UIFSM and confirmed that surveys are being sent out online while case studies and interviews will be carried out this summer. The research is on track to be published early next year.

Sally closed the Forum on an air of optimism. That the industry is facing huge challenges but no matter what, the school meals industry will work together to create a big noise to turn the heads of leaders locally and nationally.

To find out more about APSE's work in school catering, contact Vickie Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk or call 0161 772 1810.

Ensuring the future

We spoke to Mike Dawson, Chief Executive of Tewkesbury Borough Council, about the steps they are taking to ensure the future needs of the borough can be met.

Tewkesbury Borough Council is a district authority with a reputation for punching above its weight. A bold statement reflective of our innovative and progressive approach to the challenges faced when delivering services to our communities.

Our council plan sets out a more agile, flexible approach that prepares us to meet the unprecedented financial adversity encountered by councils today. In order to reach our goals we need to demonstrate a more commercial attitude and embrace change whilst being stalwart in our support of our communities and the shaping of our place. It is our aim to create and make the most of opportunities along the way.

We began with an internal focus and a belief that greater value could be attained through smarter use of our council office space and our public service centre (PSC). As a result of pursuing this agenda the following has been realised:

- A £1.2 million office refurbishment has seen staff move from three floors to one using hot desking, flexi and mobile working. The move breaks down silo thinking, encouraging the sharing of information, learning and innovation.
- The rationalisation freed up in excess of 10,200sqft of office space with a potential income of £75,000.
- We have welcomed the citizen's advice bureau, a full police station, DWP, fire and rescue and a number of the county council's care and social services into the building.
- The rental income from tenants secured an income of £160,000
- The cost of overall public service delivery has been reduced through our shared assets
- Residents benefit from a wide range of public sector organisations under one roof.
- The installation of solar panels on the buildings has saved £8,000 in electrical costs 2016/17.

Customers are increasingly digitally enabled and provision for this is made within our digital strategy. A key project has been the creation and launch of our new website. Having reviewed our existing site and found it not fit for purpose, we turned to a less conventional path and moved away from traditional outsourced approaches. We adopted an 'off the shelf' option that could deliver the same functionality but at much reduced cost. Expected expenditure using traditional methods predicted set up in excess of £20,000 with around £13,000 a year running costs; our chosen website costs just £140 per year and was designed and developed in-house using readily available online tools. The site has been well received, increasing usage of online services and proving as easy to navigate as it is good to look at.



Based on our principle of 'digital by design, accessible for all' we are redeveloping our online forms. The team is set to implement a standard design approach reducing maintenance and support requirements and increasing the speed of development for new online services. A new property services help-desk system, launch of cloud-based solutions (including migrating to Office 365), new tree inspection software and a new approach to handling complaints are also being implemented this year.

This drive for savings has seen us invest £3.5 million in a new waste and recycling fleet, future proofing the service and ensuring we maintain and aim to improve current recycling rates of 54%. By separating waste collection we were able to lessen the cost of the spec'd vehicles, increasing the volume taken per vehicle and lessening the number of trips to the tip. Routes were optimised and despite growth in the borough we were saved from adding additional rounds. Our garden waste system and commercial waste service are also under review focusing on ease of use, providing value for money and yet maximising income.

Creating an environment where new and existing business is supported, is welcomed and will thrive is paramount for us; so we are pleased to have secured £377,000 of funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to host a business growth hub within our PSC. The hub will be a place where business can meet, network, gain access to resources and secure grant funding; it will also have three business incubator units to support start-ups. It is hoped the hub will drive economic

success right in the heart of the borough.

The creation and launch of a borough prospectus and video, aims to highlight the appeal of the area for both corporate ventures and as a positive lifestyle choice. This major marketing push has been tailored to support our Joint Core Strategy and in particular the collaborative work we are doing with partners on the development and growth around J9 of the M5. As a result of external funding from the large sites infrastructure fund, a consultant has been appointed to develop a vision for the site which will also support the borough's wider aspirations.

Our commitment to doing things differently is clearly evident in our new commercial investment strategy. The purchase of further commercial property to the tune of £14million, promises an additional gross yield of £1 million per annum; an additional £15 million is earmarked to increase our portfolio by the end of 2017.

In 2016, we made the bold decision to dispose of our ageing leisure facility. The centre was a loss maker, costing us over £80,000 a year. The project was originally costed at £10 million, but was delivered along with the following:

- On time and significantly within budget the total final cost of the state of the art facility was £7.5 million, saving £2.5 million in predicted costs.
- Outsourced management generates an income of

£160,000 per year.

- The bottom line result has been positively impacted by c.£240,000
- Class uptake and paid membership has grown in an unprecedented manner; the children's lesson programme alone increasing by over 25%.
- The borough's health and wellbeing needs are better met with Tewkesbury recently being declared the most active borough in Gloucestershire by Sport England
- The old site was freed up for further development as part of our town centre regeneration.

The success of our approach is based on our always asking if it is 'better for customers, better for business?' Making cuts isn't something we do, as we have always found a way to reduce costs and deliver better services through innovation and original thinking. It is something of a cliché but our team ensure that we are able to achieve this, innovation can come from any level and it is our role to support and encourage a culture that embraces that ethos. We appreciate that our journey is ongoing, but with the right people in place and a clear vision of the future, we believe we are heading in the right direction.

To find out more about their work visit the Tewkesbury Council website on www.tewkesbury.gov.uk

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Is low-carbon modular housing an answer to UK housing need?

Ray Noble, Operations Director-UK for WELink Group, spoke to APSE about low-carbon and efficient solutions to the current housing crisis that the UK is facing.

The UK population has reached 65 million people; current housing solutions are ineffective to tackle the housing deficit the UK is facing. The housing sector needs fast and effective solutions to address the demand. Low-carbon modular homes offer just that; speed and efficiency in delivery, as well as energy efficiency.

However, the real game-changer is delivering housing on an industrial scale, which is what we at WELink are beginning to deliver. Founded in 2007, WELink's roots are in renewable energy with extensive experience of solar project development around the world. WELink has today evolved into a leading innovator, developer, financial aggregator, and facilities manager of modern, energy-

efficient modular construction.

Our strength comes through working in collaboration with the world's leading building materials company, China National Building Material (CNBM). Through their innovation arm, they have combined success in renewable energy to create modern building structures and community dwellings which are not only low-carbon and efficient in their construction, but also low-carbon and efficient in their application and operation.

£2.5bn innovative housing deal

The industrialisation of house building offers a real opportunity to reach a market that traditional house builders have shied away from; affordable, local

authority and housing association homes. To this end, WELink announced in December 2016 its first innovative joint venture deal in the UK with north-west housing association Your Housing Group. The £2.5bn deal is to deliver 25,000 homes over the next five years.

Our ambition is to seek further similar deals in other parts of the UK, which will source homes from potentially six strategically-based WELink factories around the country.

Steel Frame Construction

Our homes are constructed from British-produced light-gauge steel (60% of which is recycled in the UK), using a modern method of construction with an impressive strength to weight ratio and great design flexibility. The advantage of using galvanised steel is that it is 100% recyclable and can be recycled indefinitely. Steel doesn't warp, split or crack, and light gauge steel is light and easy to handle.

The frame design is developed by engineers in line with local architects' design, and the various elements are fabricated off-site in a controlled factory environment. Lengths of light steel are used to frame the house in much the same way as timber studs in timber frame houses, and light steel is also used for floor joists, and the tracks, studs and rails for internal partition construction. The frame is fabricated in large transportable sections, which include the boarding that forms the water-tight shell. We are developing our solutions towards installing the first fixed electrics and plumbing, and internal finishes before the frames leave the factory.

The completed flat-pack frame is delivered to site and assembled with ground works and sub-structure already in place; erection of the frame to a water-tight stage is completed in less than two days. Roofing and external facing can get started as soon as the frame is erected, whilst inside the second fixed electrics and the plumbing of bathrooms and kitchens is undertaken. This construction and assembly process can thus overcome the skills shortage within the housing sector.

Building Communities

We aren't just building homes though – we are building communities. However, these communities will live in low-carbon, energy-efficient homes where resilient composite material panels and solar panels are fitted as standard. Our homes are up to 75% energy independent and can save the customer money on their utilities as well as helping to tackle fuel poverty across the UK.

By manufacturing our homes off-site through a production-line process, we are able to precision assemble homes on a large scale. This industrialisation strategy improves efficiency, enables a reduction of transportation, minimises material storage on-site, and capitalises on assembly through reduced overheads and speed of occupation. Our solution can be deployed up to 10 times faster than traditional construction methods.

Innovation

The house building sector has been static in terms of technological advancement for a number of years. We are extremely conscious of the changes in peoples' lifestyles and that is why we are not just designing housing types and products for today and for the next few years; we are also investing in R&D innovation for the next few decades. We have located our Innovation House and R&D centre in Berkeley, Gloucestershire, at the newly-developed Gloucestershire Science and Technology Park, formerly the world's first commercially operated nuclear power plant.

The Park has been spearheaded by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, who are launching their University Technical College this September for students interested in Advanced Manufacturing, Digital Technologies and Cyber Security. WELink has a strong relationship with the College, both to take work experience/apprenticeships as well as our team offering seminars to students to inspire the next generation of innovators and engineers.

Barriers to delivering the homes we need

In our recent response to the Housing White Paper, WELink have urged the Government to review and consider two areas in order for companies like us to deliver the homes the UK desperately needs. The first was around local authority planning departments. We recognise the issues with capacity in local authority planning departments, with the reduction in personnel following the financial crash of 2008, when new developments began to fall. This, coupled with the significant funding squeeze from Government, led to local authorities to reduce planning departments before reductions in vital frontline services.

Therefore, we have urged the Government to consider that any changes to the planning system should take into account planning department capacity issues and perhaps offer additional funding to support local authorities in delivering local housing needs.

Secondly, we have found that rules governing local authority procurement to be a hindrance in the goal of delivering more homes. The stringent and laborious process and rules can often restrict innovative developers from engaging with local authorities. We have urged the Government to review procurement rules to ensure that they provide a route for local authorities to enter into agreements with developers more easily and quickly.

In conclusion

We believe that low-carbon modular homes are an answer to meeting the UK's housing needs. Innovation is also key to meet the needs of the population of the day. WELink is leading on both fronts and we look forward to working with local authorities across the UK in the years to come to deliver the future.

For more information, contact Mike Harrison on m.harrison@welink.eu

Beyond austerity? Ensuring a future for the local government frontline

The APSE Annual Seminar 2017 and the APSE Service Awards will take place on 6-7 September in the cultural city of Oxford. Learn more about this highly anticipated event.

Exploring excellence in frontline services, the APSE Annual Seminar 2017 is one of the biggest events on the local government calendar. This lively and informative two-day conference and networking event is an invaluable opportunity for local authorities across the UK to meet up, explore innovation, excellence, and best practice in local government neighbourhood services, and share their own experiences.

Delegates will get the opportunity to hear from keynote speakers from across UK local government covering frontline services such as refuse and recycling, highways and maintenance, housing and building, and many more neighbourhood service areas. There will also be speakers discussing the latest policy developments, and explaining what they mean for you.

This year's seminar will take place in the fantastic and welcoming city of Oxford. Our programme of events will commence with a welcome reception for exhibitors and delegates on Tuesday 5 September at 7.30pm, with an opportunity for delegates and suppliers to network and share ideas in an informal setting.

The seminar itself starts on Wednesday 6 September at 9.00am, and continues into Thursday 7 September at Oxford Town Hall, where an exciting and varied exhibition will showcase the latest in local government technologies, services, and developments.

This year's seminar theme looks beyond the austerity that has hampered many councils in the UK, and focuses on ensuring a sustainable and supportive future for our neighbourhood services. The programme includes industry-leading speakers from across UK local government and beyond, speaking on vital issues such as Brexit, the importance of neighbourhood services, housing and place, and developing a resilient future in which local authorities can thrive.

Speakers include the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), the New Policy Institute, CIPFA, and the TCPA, alongside high-profile Directors and Managers



from local authorities across the UK.

During the seminar, APSE will host our prestigious Service Awards 2017 which will celebrate the very best in local government frontline services. We will recognise all of the finalists and announce the winners.

Tying in with the overarching themes of the seminar, there will also be an opportunity for delegates to attend the premiere of *Redefining neighbourhoods: Beyond austerity*, a new documentary created by ITN Productions in partnership with APSE, which will explore how local authority frontline strategies need to evolve as funding diminishes and social care needs increase. The programme will also bring to life investment strategies that lead to a more self-sufficient and sustainable future.

Make sure that you and your organisation don't miss out – book now.

To book your place, visit the APSE website. Alternatively, call 0161 772 1810 or email Vicky Starmar on vstarmar@apse.org.uk.



APSE collaborating with ITN Productions

In a unique communications partnership, APSE and ITN Productions are producing a news and current affairs-style programme exploring what communities need to thrive in the future.

New programme, *Redefining neighbourhoods: Beyond austerity*, will look at how local authority frontline strategies need to evolve as funding diminishes and social care needs increase. The programme will also bring to life investment strategies that lead to a more self-sufficient and sustainable future.

Drawing upon ITN's 60-year heritage and expertise in storytelling, the news-style piece will be anchored by Natasha Kaplinsky to combine key interviews and reports with sponsored editorial profiles from leading organisations.

The programme will premiere at the APSE Service Awards on 7 September at Oxford Town Hall and will form part of an extensive communications campaign featuring APSE members, government partners, as well as relevant journalists, writers and bloggers.

Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive, Association for Public Service Excellence, said: "Local government has lost £3.1bn from its neighbourhood services in recent years, and these are the very doorstep public services which communities rely upon. Sadly, however, they are often drowned out of the debate in favour of other public services like the NHS, Education, and Social Care. Through this exciting initiative

with ITN Productions, we hope to explore neighbourhood public services like road maintenance, street lighting, public realm, flood defence; in other words, the public services we all experience as soon as we step out of our own front doors. Working together, we will tell our story about why neighbourhood services matter, and why they are vital to community wellbeing, local growth, and thriving local economies. We hope you can join us on our neighbourhood journey with ITN Productions."

Simon Shelley, Head of Industry News, ITN Productions, said: "ITN Productions is delighted to be partnering with the Association for Public Service Excellence, to examine how local authority frontline strategies are evolving, as funding diminishes, and social needs grow. We'll explore new technologies and solutions aimed at creating a local community that is self-sufficient and self-sustaining. We're excited to embark on this project and engage with key organisations and people dedicated to shaping the future of local government."

For more information, or to participate in the programme, please contact Dominic Slonecki, Programme Director at ITN Productions, on 0207 430 4818 or dominic.slonecki@itn.co.uk.

Report back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events

England

School meals – serving up improvements

APSE continues to provide secretariat support to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on school meals. The last meeting took place prior to the General Election on the 21 March with speakers including the School Food Plan Alliance, Food Education Landscape, and discussions on the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Promotion Report, and Good Nutrition in Early Years alongside the work of Ella’s Kitchen. The next meeting will be confirmed post the General Election.

EDUCatering

Principal Advisor for catering and FM services Vickie Hacking addressed the EDUCatering forum on the 3 May, explaining to delegates APSE’s performance information and what this is telling us about school meals. Vickie also highlighted the benefits of a healthy balanced diet, assisted by the school meals service, to child health and nutrition. You can read a full article about this event on pages 16 and 17 of this edition of direct news.

Picking up litter

APSE is representing its members on the national litter strategy in the DCLG/DEFRA groups with input continuing from Wayne Priestley, APSE’s Principal Advisor for environmental service, Paul O’Brien, APSE Chief Executive, and Debbie Johns, Head of Performance Networks.

Building homes, creating communities

APSE’s latest research with the TCPA was launched on the 23 May at TCPA’s headquarters in London. The report, which you can read about in full on pages 6 and 7 of this edition of direct news, was addressed by TCPA Chief Executive, Kate Henderson, with contributions from Paul Nichols, Divisional Director Regeneration Enterprise and Planning, London Borough of Harrow and Mary Parsons, Group Director, Placemaking & Regeneration, Places for People and Chair of the TCPA. Cllr Matthew Bennett, Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Jobs in the London Borough

of Lambeth provided an elected member perspective on the importance of providing decent affordable homes in local areas.

Neighbourhoods beyond austerity

The latest APSE finance report, written and researched by economist Peter Kenway received extensive coverage in the national press with articles featured in the Guardian, and extensively with the local government press. *Redefining neighbourhoods: A future beyond austerity?* explores the impact of austerity budgeting on local authority frontline services and calls for a re-think in how we address the vital services experienced by communities on a daily basis. You can read a full article about the research on pages 4 and 5 of this edition of direct news.

Yorkshire forward

APSE’s northern region hosted its Annual General Meeting and free forum for its members in York with an exploration of the health and wellbeing agenda including the role of leisure services and school meals. Sarah Broad, Strategic Partnership and Service Development Manager, GM Active – the Association of Greater Manchester Leisure and Cultural Trusts – provided a sub-regional context to the wellbeing agenda and the role of leisure services.

The impact of austerity

APSE Chief Executive Paul O’Brien addressed the National Federation of ALMO’s conference in Birmingham on 27 April on the wider impact of austerity on local authority neighbourhood services.

New to APSE Southern

APSE launched its Southern Region Commercialisation, Income Generation and Trading Advisory Group at the Solace in the South of England conference, on 20 April, with over 100 delegates attending to hear Portsmouth Council’s Chief Executive, David Williams, Richard Auton of Walker Morris Solicitors, and APSE Chief Executive, Paul O’Brien present on a number of aspects of commercialisation strategy and activity.

Excellent results down south

APSE's Southern Region held its Annual General Meeting on 12 June in Reading, members heard about the rapid growth of membership and activity within the area. Cllr Simon Letts was re-elected as APSE Southern Chair.

National Chair and National Secretary respectively. Cllr Les Sharp from Clackmannanshire Council was elected as Scottish Chair and John Blair from Midlothian Council as Scottish Secretary.

An Absolutely Fabulous night

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien presented The MJ Local Government Achievement Award in the category of Best Council Services Team, alongside Absolutely Fabulous star Joanna Lumley, which was won by the catering team at Birmingham City Council - congratulations!

Trading Standards pilot

APSE performance network continues to work with Scottish authorities to develop the Trading Standards pilot to facilitate benchmarking in this area, with a view to the data templates being rolled out across the UK. If you are interested in this service contact Head of APSE performance networks, Debbie Johns on djohns@apse.org.uk.

Wales

When dragons collaborate

APSE Wales will host its Annual General Meeting and a free event for members, *When Dragons Collaborate*, on the 28 June at Llandrindod Wells. Details are now on the APSE website. This event will explore the differing models for collaboration available to local government in Wales and the opportunities and challenges presented through a collaborative approach to public service delivery.

Northern Ireland

Resilient neighbourhoods

The APSE Northern Ireland Annual General Meeting and a free member event, *Transformation and efficiency: Public services delivering resilient neighbourhoods*, will take place at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey on the 28 June 2017. All members can participate in this event which is free of charge. The AGM papers can be downloaded from the APSE website.

Don't forget the network Wales...

APSE Wales hosts a series of advisory groups which are free to APSE members in Wales. To get involved and find out which groups may be of interest to you, contact Rob Bailey, APSE Wales Principal Advisor, on rbailey@apse.org.uk or 0161 772 1810.

In it to win it!

APSE is once again supporting the NILGA Local Government Awards, making a welcome return in Northern Ireland to showcase best practice. As ever you have to be in it to win it. To get involved, register your interest in the awards, and submit an application, go to either the NILGA website on www.nilga.org or the APSE website www.apse.org.uk and go to Member Resources, then Northern Ireland, where you can download key documents and information. Email Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk for more information.

Scotland

Aviemore delivers

The APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar was once again a resounding success with the delegates delighted to visit the largest trade show of fleet and grounds equipment in Scotland, enjoying some welcome sunshine. A particular highlight for delegates was an address by the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, Joan Aiken. You can read more about the Aviemore event on pages 12 and 13 of this edition of direct news.



Mary Parsons, Paul Nichols, Cllr Matthew Bennett, and Kate Henderson at the launch of APSE's new housing research with the TCPA.

New Chairs and Secretaries

APSE Scotland held their Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh on 14 June following the recent local government elections. Cllr Archie Dryburgh and Ronnie Dempster from Dumfries and Galloway Council were elected as Prospective

Transport issues and solutions for local councils

Stephen Tindall, National Accounts Manager for Arcola Energy, discusses their work on developing expert low emission vehicles

Arcola Energy is an engineering services business with particular expertise in hydrogen and fuel cell technologies and their use in transport, portable and stationary applications. We are systems engineers, advising on the optimum choice and mix of power technologies for vehicle applications, designing and engineering complete systems and supporting the deployment of fuel cell products.

Local Authorities are under a lot of pressure, and have been since 2008, to reduce expenditure. This has had a direct effect on not only the number of vehicles operated by the authority but the age profile of those fleets, which are now generally required to have longer in-service lives. This has resulted in some authorities having to keep Euro 5 - and in some cases Euro 4 vehicles, on their fleet, well short of the current Euro 6 standard.

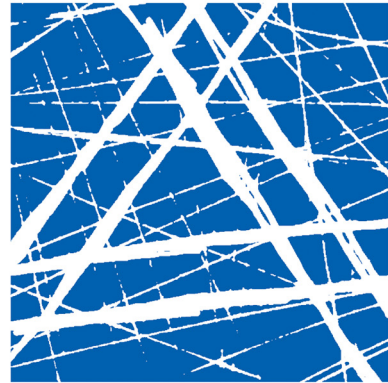
The other constraint is that some authorities have had a blanket ban on procuring diesel-powered vehicles, in light of robust scientific evidence confirming that virtually all diesel vehicles produce more toxic nitrogen oxides than regulations intend, even if they met regulatory limits, 70,000 people would die prematurely as a result of that pollution and that excess NOx emissions are rising. There are only a few alternatives to diesel at this time, and most of those come at a cost premium.

Local authorities are having to think up new ways to utilise the low emission vehicles currently available - mainly battery electric derivatives, into their operational requirements. These can fit in very well but have two major constraints, range and whether the charging infrastructure is available for large quantities of these vehicles.

However, there is a solution - Renault's Kangoo ZE-H2 electric vans - with hydrogen fuel cell range extender. These vehicles resolve both of the key constraints of battery electric vehicles and are more commercially available. With 12 vehicles already in operation in the UK and over 200 across Europe, Arcola Energy has sold or leased a further 33 of these vehicles to UK customers. This is the now the largest hydrogen vehicle fleet in the UK.

The Renault's Kangoo ZE-H2's range is up to 400km and we estimate, subject to use and final operational testing, that one charging point will service four vehicles.

These vehicles also have constraints though, namely the availability and location of H2 fuel stations, as well as the



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cost of the conversion. More refuelling is being installed all the time, with good momentum building in order to meet the government's target of 65 hydrogen refuelling stations by 2020 and over 1,000 stations by 2030. Recent regulatory changes have also now paved the way for hydrogen refuelling points to be integrated into existing vehicle refuelling stations, which will significantly reduce capital costs associated with building the UK's refuelling network, accelerating take-up of hydrogen fuel cell-equipped vehicles.

The cost of the conversion is relatively high, but can be offset with the use of government funding, saving on fuel costs and emission zone charges, maintenance of the vehicle, and predictability of the cost of the fuel as, unlike fossil fuels, it is not subject international fluctuations.

The contribution toward meeting emissions targets that the introduction of these zero emission vehicles into a local authority fleet will make is disproportionate, vehicle by vehicle, to the overall emission output of the fleet. This allows emissions targets to be met, whilst still using standard vehicles where appropriate.

*For more information, visit the arcola website:
www.arcola.com*



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