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Association for Public Service Excellence

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Integrating climate action into local recovery plans

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Editorial



Paul O'Brien
Chief Executive,
APSE

COVID and out?

A cursory glance at Twitter on New Year's Eve 2019 revealed the usual Twittersphere promises of '2020 will be my year' or 'Glad to see the back of 2019 roll on 2020'. If only those tweeters knew then what we know now! As we approach autumn it is fair to say 2020 has so far failed to deliver the New Year and the New Decade we all anticipated. However, I am loath to just accept that this is somehow the 'new normal'.

I don't mind admitting I miss the face to face contact with our APSE members through our networking meetings and events. Although technology has served us well throughout the lockdown it is easy to miss the nuances of body language, the sideways glance showing disagreement in a debate, or the convivial banter over a tepid cup of coffee and a Danish pastry (who doesn't love a Danish?).

Like so many of our member councils who have had to adapt their services to meet the needs of their communities, we too in APSE have had to adapt our own services to meet the needs of those councils who we in turn endeavour to serve. However, the immediacy of the pandemic response now needs to give way to a much more nuanced debate about how we successfully emerge from this at a global, national and local level. There are big questions to be asked, that needs to be informed by data and genuine evidence rather than a discourse which is often permeated by vested interests, with a narrative to suit individual or organisational interests instead of society as a whole.

Local councils have a role which goes well beyond frontline service delivery, as essential as they are. They are stewards of place and it is they who will be looking to protect and support local people and economies. Businesses will be looking to them to support high streets and town centres.

The home workers who endured bad backs from working off the kitchen table, may question their councils on the quality and space in housing. Those reliant on creaking public transport may now question why previous national investments in roads effectively ignored buses and local rail connections. And of course, the value of our parks and public realm as space to exercise or simply enjoy some fresh air remains in the public psyche. Why was it ever acceptable to chop parks budgets ignoring their value to community well-being?

There is a whole plethora of issues that councils must now tackle. But just like those New Year's Eve tweets we need to avoid assumptions, guess work and wish lists. We need to work with the emerging evidence and find ways in which we evolve from this pandemic with a stronger, greener and fairer economy. That may mean some of the early assumptions, such as a vision that we could transition overnight to be the cycling cities of the Netherlands, may currently be unrealistic. However, I am confident that the tenacity, resilience and sheer inventiveness of the local government sector is capable of capturing the 'wins' from this pandemic so that we do indeed build back better.

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All Change?



As reorganisation raises its head, APSE's Mo Baines explores the issues that are once again back on the agenda.

It is widely anticipated that alongside a promised Comprehensive Spending Review the Autumn season may bring about a much talked-about White Paper on devolution. The two matters are intrinsically linked with the perilous state of local government finance driving the move for reform. Most would agree that if we had a blank piece of paper the current structures of local government in England would not make it past first draft.

Seismic reform of local government structures has already taken shape across the UK, with the development of unitary local government in Scotland and Wales in 1996, and Northern Ireland in 2014. England has a much messier landscape with existing unitaries, counties and districts, coupled with piece-meal new unitaries coming from locally driven proposals, alongside new combined authorities with elected mayors.

With a Government elected on a promise of 'levelling up' against significant gaps in local government finance, it is hard to see how this can be achieved without a genuine debate on the most effective resources, structures and powers available to local councils.

A recent report by PWC on behalf of the County Councils Network highlighted a further dynamic – that of scale. When reorganisation proposals have the potential to split an existing county into two or three new unitary authorities, PWC's report argued that the resulting duplication of services such as children's and adult's services across multiple new organisations would be expensive as well as exacerbating existing issues of staff recruitment and retention in hard-to-fill posts. The PWC report suggested that a single unitary option, likely to involve drawing up districts into an existing county, would be the most financial effective model producing savings of around £3 billion. Government Ministers have also stated that they would expect unitary population sizes to be above 300,000 – 400,000.

But is it all about finance and does the economies of scale argument really add up? It is easy to make assumptions that bigger

is better for some services, but knowledge of local areas and optimum efficiency is not necessarily synonymous with operating at a larger scale. For example, in services like refuse collection the achievement of route optimisation is dictated by the area size and distance to waste sites. In a reorganised boundary this can work against service efficiencies if the collection area is too large, meaning operationally it would need to be broken down into manageable service units.

There are also implications for local knowledge and loss of organisational intelligence and memory. Similar arguments can also be found with the delivery of other services, such as care services, street-scene and public realm, not to mention unpicking some of the big contractual complexities of PFI contracts in areas like street-lighting and waste disposal.

From APSE's perspective it is clear that reorganisation alone will not necessarily improve local outcomes. Whilst local authorities have a key role to play in acting as stewards of local places - including a coordinating role between the different actors and partners - such relationships will not necessarily align to new unitary structures. In any event, without accompanying new powers and duties it is hard to envisage how this stewardship role would be enhanced, for example holding to account bodies which may impact on local health or educational outcomes.

Whilst local authorities have a key role to play in acting as stewards of local places - including a coordinating role between the different actors and partners - such relationships will not necessarily align to new unitary structures.

Cognisance must also be taken of the relationship between electoral democracy and the accountability of larger institutions. Compared to most of Europe, England already has relatively larger municipal councils so why pick the figure of 300,000 to 400,000? Especially when existing larger unitary authorities are often criticised for being too remote and cumbersome. In any event the issues of reorganisation should not be divorced from the role of councillors; not only are they often the bedrock of local political organisation, councillors are also the closest democratic link with their local constituents, with functions and responsibilities in terms of both how local services operate, and accountability for those service successes and failures.

Moreover, as the recent health pandemic has highlighted, the fluidity and reactivity of local services and the ability of councils to quickly change direction to meet local needs and emerging issues is not a matter that can be understated. A core question would be could a much bigger local institution make those same responsive decisions as a smaller body or indeed would a bigger institution have more capacity to take more immediate responsive actions? Coupled with the identification of place in terms of the nuances of locality, whether a market town or a coastal area, alongside the debate as to the shape of local governance and accountability, then it is clear that reorganisation should not be viewed as an easy option.

There is also a huge question over workforce matters. Whilst cost assumptions can be made based on new structures, numbers of employees and against assumed service costs, for many local councils having completed job evaluation schemes, these assumptions are made against their existing workforce costs. Whilst it may be justifiable to transition staff to new structures and maintain the 'rate for the job' upon transfer, there will be a longer term need to potentially re-run evaluations to equal pay-proof new structures and organisations. This of itself will create added costs and complexities, potentially raising issues of pay protection and testing the tolerance of pay and grading structures in a new organisation, particularly once faced with issues of full workforce harmonisation.

Finally, APSE would also urge consideration of so-called alternative models of delivery which has in effect led to cost inflation and inefficient use of public funds regardless of structures. For example, in adult care the exposure of the service to market forces in areas like residential care homes has led to concerns, following the health pandemic, about the viability of private markets delivering care services. Reorganisation may present opportunities to look again at the viability of genuine public sector models that could be delivered on a sub-regional basis, enabling more efficient models between public authorities to be developed. Whilst the structure of the organisation is important so too is the delivery model of public services. Simply changing structures alone will not necessarily address some of the inherently difficult issues in people focused services, which have, over the last few decades, been delivered through outsourcing models that look increasingly precarious and most especially following exposure of these services to the impact of the pandemic. •

This article is based on APSE Briefing 20-77 'Evaluating the importance of scale in proposals for local government reorganisation'. You can download the full briefing from the APSE website for free.



AceOn leads way in helping the public sector tackle climate change

The pioneering AceOn Group – a newly-approved official partner of APSE Energy – is to showcase cutting-edge energy technology which could play a major role in helping local authorities and housing associations to meet their climate change targets.

AceOn will work in partnership with The Wrekin Housing Group and BEW Electrical Wholesalers on a £1 million project backed by Government money to install green energy systems into nearly 70 existing homes and a further 11 new builds.

The scheme – awarded funding through the Getting Building Fund – will see 68 homes retrofitted with battery storage and solar panels and 11 brand new energy-efficient homes built from scratch.

The Telford-based AceOn Group is the full energy storage provider for the showcase scheme, supplying state-of-the-art solar panels, inverters and 7kWh batteries to allow the homes to capture solar energy and then store it in the most efficient and environmentally-friendly way for later use.

AceOn Energy managing director Richard Partington – a former managing director of Telford & Wrekin Council with a 30-year working knowledge of the public sector – said the scheme would be a beacon for authorities across the country.

“We have developed a truly-innovative Virtual Power Plant which provides an energy storage system which can be both retro-fitted to existing homes and installed in new developments and is small enough to fit in a cupboard under stairs.

“It has huge potential to help housing associations, local authorities and developers across the country meet new climate change and carbon emission targets, reduce their tenants’ electricity bills and provide a new income stream for these organisations to support their investment in Renewables.

“As well as the benefits to the climate and tenants, the VPP also enables us to sell any spare energy back to the National Grid in such a way that we can maximise income for councils and housing associations from their investment.”

Richard is no stranger to working on commercial schemes within the public sector, having enjoyed eight years in charge of Telford & Wrekin Council at the culmination of more than three decades of public service.

“I would like to think that a lot of the things I have done in the public sector had a commercial head allied to a public sector heart, generating income which could be invested back into public services. My background certainly means that AceOn is uniquely-placed to be the perfect partner for public sector organisations facing up to the climate change challenge.”

He was responsible at Telford & Wrekin for introducing a new commercial strategy which brought in income to offset Government cuts and helped lead the Southwater town centre development and the establishment of the council’s NuPlace housing company.

During his time in charge, Telford & Wrekin also became just the second local authority in the country to develop a commercial solar farm – which produces enough energy to power 800 homes and delivers £200,000 a year back to the council.

AceOn itself is regarded as the battery specialist, with over 30 years experience in the design and manufacture of custom-built battery packs and the distribution of industrial and consumer batteries to the worldwide market.

The energy division provides a training, service and distribution centre to offer a full turnkey solution for residential and commercial battery energy storage systems.

For more information about the AceOn group visit <https://www.aceongroup.com/> or contact Richard at r.partington@aceongroup.com or call 01952 293388.

AceOn is a pioneering energy storage and battery company with over 30 years’ experience in the battery industry.

The company is based in Telford, Shropshire, and works across the UK and internationally with partners across the globe.

AceOn, which employs 23 members of staff, has built a reputation as being specialists in solar and battery technology, particularly the development of bespoke, custom-built battery packs.

AceOn Energy is an approved partner of APSE Energy, part of the Association for Public Service Excellence, and works with local authorities, housing associations and local, national and international businesses and organisations.

For more information about this pioneering company visit <https://www.aceongroup.com/>



Luton Council to launch new recruitment venture for temporary agency staff with Kent Commercial Services



Steve Wilson, Director of Collaboration and Development at Commercial Services Group (wholly-owned by Kent County Council) looks at the emergence of the in-house model for Interim and Temporary staffing.

September 1st, 2020 was a day for celebration at Commercial Services Group (CSG). It marked the official launch of our latest Joint Venture partnership with our colleagues at Luton Borough Council.

The joint venture, a Teckal company called Luton and Kent Commercial Services LLP or to use its trading name Connect2Luton, has been set up to manage the Interim and Temporary staffing requirements for the Council. This will be achieved through a direct sourcing model with the support of a number of specialist supporting agencies engaged through a Dynamic Purchasing System.

Luton Borough Council, through Connect2Luton became the latest in a growing number of Local Authorities to look at an alternative to the traditional outsourcing approach and followed Hampshire County Council and Kent County Council in engaging CSG to help them achieve this.

The question is why?

The Interim and Temporary staffing market is a mature market, with over £3b spent by Local Government each year and over 14,000 employment agencies to choose from.

To reduce the time and resource required to manage such a broad supplier base, the market evolved into a managed service market where suppliers are managed through either a Master Vendor, Neutral Vendor or Hybrid Vendor.

Over the years these models have provided Local Government with widespread savings, through either a direct reduction in fees or indirect savings through the management of the suppliers and associated procurement and compliance.

Feedback from over 60 Local Authorities CSG engaged with, identified a trend that potential direct savings had begun to dry up as the market reached its sustainable low point and in some cases quality had followed price and off contract spend had increased as Local Authorities looked to widen their nets to capture quality resource.

When engaging with these Authorities there was also a general appetite to look at in-sourcing the provision, to gain more control and flexibility, to drive quality and manage costs. This however was often dismissed within an options appraisal, due to the levels of investment and risk associated with establishing an end-to-end technology platform to enable a direct sourcing team to compete for hard to find skills in a highly competitive market.

By leveraging the experience and technology utilised in the successful delivery of services to Kent County Council, the team at CSG began to identify areas of savings, through a sharing of technology, processes and infrastructure, while reducing risk through the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

This approach can then be accommodated to set a baseline that supports each individual Authorities priorities, which are always unique and often varied.

A drive to reduce costs can be achieved through the direct sourcing of workers, through an in-house sourcing team, which reduces external expenditure and focusses on the retention and redeployment of quality workers which leads to significant indirect savings.

A drive to reduce costs can be achieved through the direct sourcing of workers, through an in-house sourcing team, which reduces external expenditure and focusses on the retention and redeployment of quality workers which leads to significant indirect savings.

Spend reduction can also be achieved through a reduction of reliance on Interim and Temporary workers, through the conversion to permanent posts, something the in-house teams are focussed on. With savings, through the retention of spend within the self-sourced model, comes Social Value, through the ability to reinvest savings into front line services and development programmes.

The flexibility realised through a Council owned service can also lead to additional Social Value programmes, with the ability to branch out into other areas of community engagement such as career advice and return to work programmes. While this activity may also be available to some extent through an outsourced model, it can be limited in scope if not included in the original procurement specification and subsequent outsourcer pricing submission.

The in-house models will certainly not be for everyone but with more and more Local Authorities realising there is now an alternative to outsourcing, that are already delivering significant returns, both directly and indirectly, they have moved from viable to demonstrable.

To find out more, please contact Steve at Stephen.wilson@cs ltd.org.uk or visit www.commercialservices.org.uk



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Building foundations for healthy communities

A new report published by APSE, researched and written by the TCPA, is calling on the Government to put public health at the heart of housing delivery; empowering local decision-makers to create healthy and high-quality places. APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien provides an overview of the report's findings.

Most APSE member councils experienced a surge in the number of people flocking to public spaces like parks during the pandemic, glad to soak up some sun and fresh air. Sadly however, for some communities, access to good quality public space is limited by where they live; with a messy and deregulatory planning system that fails to support quality homes and decent places to live. These shortcomings have come into even sharper focus with home working. Overcrowded housing, and a lack of space in which to work or to home-school children, coupled with no access to an outdoor space let alone a garden, lockdown has exposed the divisions in the UK housing market. Whilst those lucky enough to have a spare room or study may have welcomed home working this has been less than a happy experience for many, particularly many younger workers in shared housing or cramped and overpriced flats. The impact on both mental and physical health has been well documented. But what can we do about this?

APSE's latest research with the TCPA is timely and hopefully starts to answer the 'what can be done' question. A key consideration in our research was if we are all aware of what makes places healthier why are we not doing those things? The answers are of course complex but it is clear that there is a stark divergence across the UK with England being somewhat left behind, with much stronger coordination powers in Wales and Scotland. It is also clear that current planning regulations leave too much power in the hands of developers, often governed by land values; local authorities are far too often left to take on the role of the proverbial 'dog without teeth' when it comes to effective measures to impose spatial standards for new homes, and the wider measures to ensure good developments, including transport links, walking and cycling routes, parks and public realm. A decade of deregulatory planning reforms has arguably helped to create a 'developer's charter'.

The impact of the Housing Standards Review, the core intention of which was to make building cheaper not better, and the introduction of permitted development rights, are two particularly damaging policy changes, contributing to a proliferation of different local approaches, and which are sadly not addressed by the latest round of planning reforms. The consequence of these differences is uncertainty for local councils and developers. Councils are left with having to justify the viability of their local standards, but equally developers themselves complain of the complexity created by different standards in each new development. Indeed, one developer remarked during an interview, "Tell us what you want, put it into building regs and we'll all do it, don't give us a choice." So, what can be done to change things?

One developer remarked during an interview, "Tell us what you want, put it into building regs and we'll all do it, don't give us a choice."



tcpa

[To celebrate the launch of the report, APSE held a free online discussion group on 20 August. Click here to download the report and view the highlights from this discussion.](#)



Our research makes a series of recommendations, guided by the findings from our surveys and interviews with experts working in the field. These are as follows: -

- 1.** Local authorities must be given a central role in reforming the planning system. They know what works on the ground, what resources will be required and what local needs are. Indeed, they will be at the sharp end of delivering these changes.
- 2.** We have to address the chronic shortage of housing which is leading to some of the poorest decisions. This means local authorities being given the powers to directly invest in social housing once again. This will significantly address the shortage of decent affordable homes to rent and have a direct impact on the health of local communities.
- 3.** Perhaps the most obvious, we need to resource local planning authorities effectively. This should be seen as a preventative measure in public health terms. If we are serious about healthy place-making we have to strengthen and enhance local expertise and the coordination role that must run alongside this with health professionals, bringing up the standards of place-making across public and private spheres.
- 4.** Our final and perhaps overarching call in all of this is to support the TCPA's Healthy Homes Act. This would put into law a series of principles that together define what constitutes a healthy home and neighbourhood. This would underpin healthy place-making by requiring all government departments and public authorities to have regard to the principles when making policy relating to the planning and delivery of housing. This Act would include a new duty on the Secretary of State to secure the health, safety and wellbeing of people in relation to buildings, and on local authorities to plan for affordable housing in a way that protects the long-term health, safety and wellbeing of residents. Its implementation would benefit communities through enforceable legal standards, and it would effectively outlaw homes which fail to support the health and wellbeing of residents.

With the pandemic increasing awareness of societal inequalities, particularly when it comes to in the current contradictions in the so called 'levelling up' agenda, and the realities of the most vulnerable suffering the most from both austerity and the health pandemic, what better way could there be to start addressing these issues through some practical place-making powers? Securing high quality and affordable places to call home would be a start in that levelling up agenda. Places that make a positive contribution to the health and well-being of citizens, supporting an end to fuel poverty, ways to be healthy and active in high quality open spaces, homes that are good places to learn or indeed work if needed, would be a great starting point. If we really want to create healthy communities then we need to properly empower the locally-based democratically accountable institutions to fulfil their role as stewards of place to drive change for a better tomorrow. Those accountable institutions are our local councils and the time for action on creating health communities is now.

- *Paul O'Brien will be exploring the report's findings at the upcoming APSE online housing seminar. For programme and booking information [click here](#).*

Are you an APSE member? If so you can sign up for free to our Housing Construction and Building Maintenance Advisory Groups. For information on how to sign up [click here](#).



The Grand old City of York, It has a ten year plan...

York City's Ten Year City Plan is a long-term strategy to improve the lives of everyone who lives, works and studies in the city. Cllr Keith Aspden, Leader of City of York Council, discusses placing health, well-being and climate action at the heart of the Council's COVID recovery plans.



The impact of the Coronavirus has truly been unprecedented and since the pandemic was declared, local government has been at the forefront of responding to the challenges posed by the outbreak; from supporting local residents and communities during the lockdown, to working with local businesses to drive recovery.

For York, like many other local authorities across the country, we are continuing to prioritise support to our communities across the city during this difficult time, whilst at the same time, adapting to new challenges, including the financial challenges seen across Local Government. Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, we've seen demand for services increase, whilst at the same time, income has considerably fallen. Early indications suggest that we're facing a £23 million shortfall in our budget.

In our initial response to the pandemic, we developed a One-Year Recovery and Renewal Strategy to tackle the immediate challenges posed by Covid-19, including supporting vulnerable residents through the establishment of community hubs, providing over £2 million in additional local emergency funding to support micro-businesses who fell outside of Government support businesses and residents facing financial hardship. We also extended our pedestrianised footstreets across the city centre, in order to facilitate social distancing and encourage the creation of pavement cafes.

Since the new administration was formed in May 2019, we have launched the UK's first voluntary Clean Air Zone, committed to redeveloping our local transport plan, invested £1.5 million in Hyper Hub technology to provide rapid electric vehicle charging, introduced a further 21 electric double decker buses to give York one of the largest electric bus fleets in the UK, and approved plans to plant 50,000 trees and create a new woodland in the city. But as part of our effort to tackle to climate emergency, we cannot rest on our laurels, and we are determined to continue to make real progress on this target.



Since May 2019, we have launched the UK's first voluntary Clean Air Zone, committed to redeveloping our local transport plan, and invested £1.5 million in Hyper Hub technology to provide rapid electric vehicle charging.



We recognise that to build back better, the Council could not achieve this alone and instead, we quickly identified the need to develop a strategy that the Council and its partners could collectively own in order to improve the lives of everyone who lives, works, studies or in the city, for the long term, our 10 Year City Plan.

To develop this strategy and ensure its success, we know that we must build on the strengths that are unique to York. From our city's history and culture, to utilising the expertise in our innovative biotech industry, and seizing the once in a lifetime regeneration opportunity in York Central, a large brownfield site to the west of the city's railway station with the potential to deliver up to 2,500 homes and up to 12,000 square metres of space for office, leisure and retail uses; there are opportunities in York that many other cities and towns would envy.

The plan will represent the distinctive qualities of York and focus on a number of key challenges that can best be addressed at a city level. These are likely to include the linking of our education, skills and innovation sectors to support employment, further develop the city's response to climate change and ensuring a 'people focused' city, utilising York's unique culture and heritage, and promoting a public health approach.

To support this work, we have also stepped up our regional and national lobbying efforts to urge the Government to 'Back York' by seizing these opportunities and making the city an exemplar of recovery. Our new lobbying campaign will support and link up with the work of other organisations and Councils who are lobbying for further funding for local authorities, including the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, IPPR North, APSE and others.

To support this work, we have also stepped up our regional and national lobbying efforts to urge the Government to 'Back York' by seizing these opportunities and making the city an exemplar of recovery.

For those who are interested in our work and want to learn more, I would encourage you to visit www.york.gov.uk/BackYork to find out more.

In the meantime, we have also launched 'Our Big Conversation' (<https://www.york.gov.uk/OurBigConversation>), in order to ensure the views of our residents, businesses and communities can feed into our work to build back better. The themes and activities of our developing 10-Year Strategy will be discussed as part of the consultation, leading to its creation by March 2021. •

Cllr. Aspden delivered a presentation on this topic at the APSE Climate and Ecological Emergency Seminar 'Building Back Better: Building Back Greener' The presentation is available for download from the APSE website [here](#).

Keeping the plates spinning



Katie Woods,
Catering
Development
Officer at
Derbyshire County

Council, explains how her team has maintained its high standards in service delivery throughout the pandemic.

Contingency plans have been created for instances such as a local lock down. We have worked closely with our local suppliers ensuring there will be food provision available for pupils entitled to a “Free School Meal” in the form of food.

Safety for Teams



Only one team member should be in the WC/Changing Room at any one time.



Keep personal items in a locker or separate from your colleagues' belongings.



Wash your uniform daily.



If you demonstrate symptoms for COVID-19:

High temperature, continuous cough, loss of taste, loss of smell



DO NOT come into work but report it to your line manager.

REMEMBER! You must NOT wear your uniform to work.

If you have a cough or cold:



CATCH IT



BIN IT



KILL IT

Always wash your hands immediately for **20 seconds.**



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2020 so far, has been a year that no-one will forget in a hurry. The fears and anxieties that the Coronavirus pandemic has brought to our communities will forever be imprinted on our minds as a crisis unlike any other witnessed and will be a story told to our children and grandchildren for many years to come.

23 March 2020 was a truly historic day - the day when as a nation we were told that we must lockdown our country to stop the spread of the virus will become a day in history remembered by all. Businesses across the UK locked their doors, holidays were cancelled, and schools closed to all but a few.

Probably the hardest burden to bear was the loneliness and social isolation experienced from not being able to meet with our families and friends. No one knew what the days ahead would bring, with each day being taken one step at a time in order to protect the ones we love.

Derbyshire has stood together throughout these dark days and embraced the challenges this pandemic has thrown at us and, if anything, it has shown us that community spirit is very much alive and well.

During the lockdown period Derbyshire County Council didn't close any schools, few closed voluntarily, and in fact 98% were open. Knowing how important it was to feed as many pupils as possible, a hot meals service was provided in all schools which were open regardless of the number of pupils on school site.

Pupils entitled to a Free School Meal but not attending school were not forgotten, they too received sustenance. It is with this group of potentially vulnerable pupils that our idea of food hampers was born.

Prior to the Easter holidays the voucher system was still being developed, we were greatly troubled that vulnerable pupils would go hungry, so we

Safe Kitchen Practices

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CLEAN and DISINFECT all surfaces more frequently using Magic Quickclean.

Wash hot gloves, oven cloths and cleaning cloths daily.

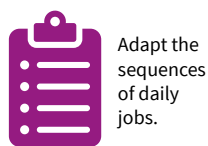
Focus on high contact points and light equipment.



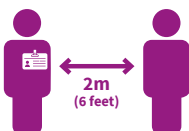
Wash your hands more frequently with soap and water for **20 seconds** when preparing and serving food.



Always maintain a distance of 2m between you and others wherever possible.



Adapt the sequences of daily jobs.



Serve food maintaining a 2m distance between team members and customers.

Image Sources: Noun Project - Nithinan Tatah, Inn Style, Vectors Market, Alvaro Cabrera, IcoLabs, Hea Poh Lin, pejyt, Victoruler, Francielli Constantin Senra, Markus and Jae Designer.



Visitors and Deliveries



Only authorised persons are allowed in the kitchens.



Visitors must be kept to a minimum.

Visitors and staff must maintain a distance of 2m.



Imagine two shopping trolley lengths

Delivery drivers, always keep 2m between you and our team member.



Drop deliveries inside the kitchen observing the 2m rule.



Or leave deliveries outside in an agreed place if space is limited.

Image Sources: Noun Project - Aneeqe Ahmed, Jae Designer, Francielli Constantin Senra, Nawicon, Laymiki, Maxim David and Adrian Coquet.



created a two week food hamper to bridge the food gap for pupils eligible for Free School Meals. This didn't come without its challenges as at the time some food items were scarce and our suppliers had difficulty locating some items. Nevertheless, these food hampers provided a much needed source of nutrition. The scheme was such a great success that it continued throughout the rest of the term and during the summer holidays.

Of course, meals cannot be provided without a team of staff. To ensure their safety risk assessments were developed and, with no other way to deliver training than by telephone, a pop up training team was created and tasked with delivering this to our 1,500 workforce. To support this new way of working a suite of three working safely posters were produced for all kitchens. Reward stickers were given to pupils to reinforce good behaviour in a fun engaging way with messages such as "I'm following the 2-metre rule!" and "Expert hand washer".

The menu was adapted to meet the dynamic requirements of each school on an individual basis. As more pupils of key workers were gradually accepted back into school we developed and introduced a set of "to go menus", to be eaten in alternating dining environments such as classrooms, all of which were supported by the development of bespoke medical diet menus for pupils registered.

In answer to a plea for help, we gladly embraced new business from two schools which were let down by their current catering provider, with a consultancy based service.

Our catering service is very unique in that we have our own Free School Meal Eligibility Checking department. They were overwhelmed with parents needing to register their children; eligible pupils increased by 8.6% from April to June alone which equates to 1,756 pupils. We are so proud to have been able to support these parents and carers

ensuring that these additional pupils gained a meal but also pupil premium funding for the school to further support their education.

Autumn Planning

The dynamic situation which has occurred due to COVID-19 is still at the fore and it is our duty to protect pupils where we can. As we start a new term, we are looking forward to welcoming more pupils into school and to delivering a service which meets schools ever changing requirements.

In order to support our 327 primary schools, they have all been individually contacted to discuss how they would like their meal service to be delivered and offered a choice of the following menus:

- Traditional school meals multi choice menu
- Hot packed lunch
- Chilled packed lunch

The first option is our very popular school meals menu made up of traditional meals and children's favourites. The second two options were developed specifically for COVID-19 and are designed to be transported to different dining situations and environments. Being mindful of our environmental impact on the use of disposables we try to discourage schools from going down this route, but we fully understand that this is sometimes the preferred method.

Both menus are a temporary option for schools whilst allowing flexibility to adapt to school life post September. They all meet the School Food Standards and the Food for Life Served Here criteria which all our menus strictly conform to.

To reflect seasonality for after October half term, our traditional school meals menu will change as it usually does, we have prepared this menu and will provide schools the choice to take this up if they wish.

All of our 19 secondary schools have a different cafeteria style menu which suits their pupil's tastes. Each headteacher has been consulted with and a new adapted COVID-19 service has been agreed and created. Changes made include additional service points and bespoke menu options for breakfast, break and the lunch service.

We take our child welfare very seriously in Derbyshire. 1,400 medical diets have been created for all the new menu types. It has been a challenge trying to gather all the relevant medical diet forms from parents for the new September starters, to ensure that all pupils will receive a meal which meets their requirements on their first day back to school.

A newly introduced measure for September, is for all staff serving meals to wear a visor. With the increased flow of traffic through the dining room, it will ensure staff feel safe but also pupils can still see their faces ensuring communication and good relationships are kept.

Our driving force is to keep on providing and serving tasty, nutritious food to pupils. For all our family of schools, the style of service has changed which means adapting the way our school kitchen teams work including new rotas and systems of working safely. To further increase staff safety our Risk Assessments have been extended to include vulnerable and BAME staff. To build on this, each member of staff identified as vulnerable or BAME have been contacted to see if they are comfortable to return to work and if they have any additional requirements to assist them back into work. We have found this a necessary step to ensure our staff are well looked after during these difficult circumstances.

Contingency plans have been created for instances such as a local lock down. We have worked closely with our local suppliers ensuring there will be food provision available for pupils entitled to a "Free School Meal" in the form of food boxes. It is very important to us, to ensure

that these potentially vulnerable children are not disadvantaged in any way and will receive food and nutrition they require if their school is closed. This decision was taken prior to the latest Government advice released on 28 August, specifying that food boxes would need to be provided for Free School Meal pupils.

We are guaranteed to deliver on all our new menus as the procurement team have worked very closely with suppliers and distributors to ensure that we have sufficient stocks of food to maintain the current menus without having issues such as low supply or generating surplus.

Future

We are incredibly proud to be part of Derbyshire County Council and in awe of all the work that has been achieved by our catering teams over the past couple of months. It has been an extremely challenging time for all involved.

The future will not be a smooth ride, but as resourceful as ever, we will buckle down and ride out the storm, meeting each new challenge as it arises.

Katie Woods, (Nutritionist) recently spoke about the her catering service's response to COVID-19 in the APSE Soft Facilities Management "Resilience in school catering, cleaning and janitorial services" seminar on 28 July. Katie provided an overview of the trials and tribulations faced by the service from March to the present day. [The presentation can be downloaded here.](#)



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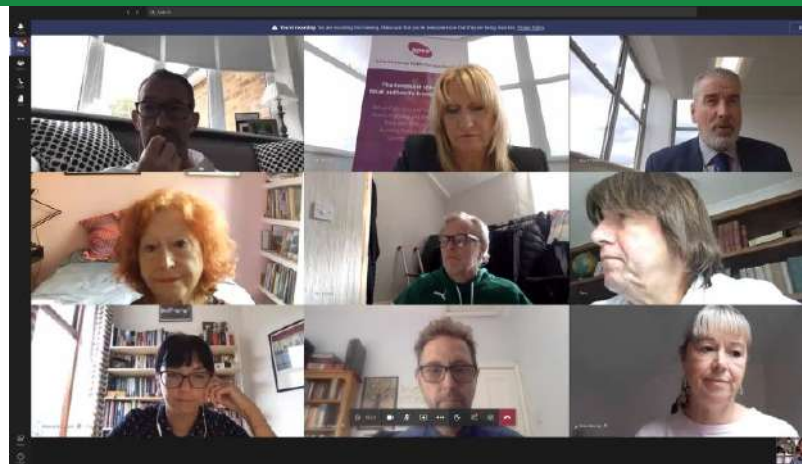
 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION 2030**

On Friday 11 September, APSE was delighted once again to be joined by our APSE Local Government Commissioners and Executive for a thorough review of the Commission's progress so far; a virtual opportunity to identify gaps, build the collective narrative and determine future strategies.

Some of the many topics up for discussion included:

- Roles and powers of local government
- Local government finance
- Democracy and accountability
- Organisational structures and cultures
- Addressing inequalities and engaging communities
- The local government workforce
- Centre-local relations

In terms of next steps, the Commission looked ahead to another round of evidence gathering sessions; with a possible focus on the climate emergency, the pandemic and social care. The party conferences were identified as excellent opportunities to inform the project further. There was also an understanding that the Commission would develop an outreach to young people so that their voices may be heard.



APSE, in collaboration with De Montfort University, has set up the Commission as an independent inquiry into the future role of local government across the UK. It will identify and assess the capabilities and capacities of local government; capturing good practice and investigating the powers and responsibilities required for local councils to advance a new municipalism and vision over the next ten years.

Help shape the debate

Make sure your organisation - be it a local authority, professional or industry trade body - has its say on the future of local government. [Visit the APSE website for information on how to get involved.](#)



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Responding to Public Health Act Funerals



Rebecca Morgan,
Bereavement &
Business Support
Officer at South
Staffordshire Council,

outlines her team's approach to the thorny issue of public health funerals in the early stages of the pandemic.



**South
Staffordshire
Council**

We are now better prepared, with steps in place ready for a possible second wave of the virus and therefore another increase in Public Health funeral cases that it would no doubt bring.

For local authorities around the country, COVID-19 has meant looking at how to do radically different things across all frontline services. For Bereavement Services and dealing with Public Health Act funeral cases it was no different.

What is a Public Health Act Funeral?

For those that may not already know, here's a brief overview of a local authorities' responsibilities under Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

We have a statutory duty to make funeral arrangements for those who die within our local authority area where no other arrangements have been or are being made. There is also a moral responsibility to treat all cases with dignity and respect and to make sure that you cannot tell the funeral apart from any other.

It is assumed, sometimes incorrectly, that people needing a Public Health funeral have no money, family or friends, when in actual fact, some people that need this type of funeral may have a lot of assets but have no one to make the arrangements for their funeral. Sometimes the deceased may have family or friends who could arrange the funeral but they may not be willing or able to do so.

Each case is very different but they are almost always complex and can be extremely time consuming.

Numbers of Cases

Our Bereavement Service was set up in 2009 when we opened the first of our two cemeteries and Public Health Act funerals were passed to us in 2011. Before this they were dealt with by our Environmental Health Team.

South Staffordshire is a rural district with a population of approximately 112,000. The district is considered to be fairly affluent and levels of unemployment and homelessness are lower than the national average, which generally means that we tend to have lower numbers of cases than a large inner-city council for example.

The number of cases we have dealt with has steadily increased from 2011 where we had just one case, to 2019 where we had seven. In 2020 so far, we have had five cases and three of them came in during the first few weeks of the pandemic.

What usually happens?

Referrals for cases can come from a variety of sources including the police, coroner, care homes, family members or friends of the deceased. At this stage it is important to find out as much information as possible about the deceased and the details surrounding the case.

A search of the deceased's place of residence can be vitally important in helping to find out more about the deceased, their funeral wishes, who their family and friends are, whether there is a will and their financial situation.

In terms of safety during the search it is crucial to get as much detail as possible about the condition of the inside of the property. Experience has shown that in a lot of cases the property can be in a very poor state of cleanliness which can of course pose health risks before you even start to consider Covid-19.

What issues did COVID-19 present?

The two main issues that came up when thinking about COVID-19 and Public Health funerals were:

1. The various 'paperwork' that has to be obtained and/or completed and the registration of deaths.
2. Could we ensure the safety of staff if property searches took place?

If we did do searches, what additional risks would we be facing and what additional PPE would we need (and would we be able to get hold of it whilst there was a global shortage)?

If we suspended searches, would we be doing enough to locate relatives and friends and potentially be denying them the chance to take over the arrangements or attend the funeral? Would we be doing enough to try to find out the funeral wishes of the deceased?

There was also a possible financial implication if we did not carry out searches as we would be reducing our chances of finding out if funds are available to claim our costs back.

Finding Solutions

Talking to Staffordshire Registration Services, I was told I would be able to register deaths with them by phone and after other phone conversations I found that all other paperwork and documents were going to be dealt with electronically via registrar's and funeral directors.

At the start of the lockdown we thought it best not to carry out searches as the risks were still unknown but as the number of referrals I was getting was increasing it was decided that we should seek further advice from our Health and Safety Team.

I also made contact with the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM), used the APSE WhatsApp group and contacted other local authorities to ask for advice.

Conclusions

Taking into account the advice we received it was decided that we would continue to carry out searches and would assess the situation on a case by case basis.

We concluded that the following reasons outweighed what was considered to be a risk very similar to that of a property search prior to the pandemic:

- Trying to find family and friends who may take over the arrangements or want to attend the funeral.
- Obtaining the deceased's funeral wishes so that we could give them dignity and the respectful funeral they deserve.
- Potentially locating a will and other important documents.
- Finding out whether we would be able to recover our costs.

We would ensure that before entering the residence a minimum of 72 hours had passed since the deceased had been removed from the property or anyone else had been inside.

In terms of PPE, our usual search kit contains disposable gloves, hand sanitiser, shoe covers, white paper suits, face masks, eye protection and anti-bac wipes so based on the advice we had it was clear that we already had all of the necessary items.

If the deceased was coronavirus positive, waste such as used PPE is double bagged and stored securely (separate from other waste) for a period of 72 hours before disposal.

Final Thoughts

Although in the end the potential issues presented by the virus didn't cause us too much difficulty, they certainly made us think about the way we do things, all the time weighing up possible safety risks against being able to provide the most respectful outcome for the deceased and considering the council's potential financial implications.

We are now better prepared, with steps in place ready for a possible second wave of the virus and therefore another increase in Public Health funeral cases that it would no doubt bring.

Finally, for me, one of the good things to come out of Covid-19 across Bereavement Services is working together. I've had more contact with other local authority bereavement teams than ever before and I hope that it continues, leading to further sharing of resources and ideas in the future.

Knowing that others are there to call on for advice and support during these unprecedented times really has proven to be invaluable!

- *Rebecca delivered a presentation on this topic at the seminar 'Continuing to provide an empathetic service whilst managing the demands of a pandemic' on 29 July. The presentation is available for download from the APSE website [here](#).*

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Allotments Seminar

'Lockdowns and leeks' – the growing importance of allotments



7 October 2020

Online Seminar

Biodiversity and Allotments: Gardening in harmony with Nature



Gardening and growing our own food, has increased in popularity as the restrictions of lockdown have taken their toll. Sandy Paterson, Natural Environment Officer at Glasgow City Council, explains

how his team have helped raise awareness of how allotments can support wildlife in the city.



Biodiversity is the variety of living things on earth, from the smallest insect to the largest mammal and tree. It encompasses the variation within a species and the complex ecosystems or habitats where they are found. It is not just restricted to rare species or threatened wildlife sites, but includes the whole of the natural world.

Glasgow City Biodiversity Action Plan

In May 2019 Glasgow City Council declared a climate emergency which led to the development of a working group consisting of elected members, citizen activist groups, key policy leaders and the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

As part of the wider recognition of the climate emergency, the council also declared an ecological emergency in May 2019 in the knowledge that up to one million species across the world face extinction because of human actions.

According to the report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the loss of pollinating insects and other ecological disasters are no lesser a threat than climate change

The 2019 State of Nature report; highlights that of the 8431 species assessed 133 have already become extinct from Great Britain and an alarming 11% of species in Scotland are threatened with extinction from Great Britain: <https://nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019/>

Since 1970 we have also seen a third of wildlife being recorded in fewer places and around 48% of species populations decreasing in the last 10 years. Some of the threatened species are garden visitors, for example song thrushes, bullfinches, tree sparrows and some types of bumble bees and butterflies. (Science vol. 303. p1879)

Allotments, especially those in cities are important habitats for wildlife as they provide food, shelter and breeding sites. We do not really know the full consequences of the threatened extinction of so many species except that it is likely to diminish the quality of life for all of us. By gardening in harmony with nature, people benefit as much as the other species belonging to the planet.

15 years ago officers from Glasgow City Council's Biodiversity and Conservation Team worked in conjunction with Glasgow Allotments Forum(GAF) to develop the "Allotments and Biodiversity – Gardening in harmony with nature" booklet. Several Scottish local authorities requested permission to replicate the booklet for their own areas and we were only too happy to support this request.

The objectives around the development of the booklet were to raise awareness of how allotments could support wildlife in the City, influence the behaviour and practices of allotment plottolders and share this knowledge through existing networks.

The aim in designing the booklet was to ensure it was user friendly, was simple to put into practice and would stand up to the test of time. As it's now 15 years old we are intending to review the booklet as there are some gaps around pollinator decline, limited recognition of the benefit of moths as pollinators and the need to provide habitat for pollinators.

If the booklet was to be of value, it had to be accessible and so it sought to include simple effective interventions for both the individual plot holder and the wider association as both have a role to play, as do we all.

Some of the simple interventions highlighted were, to mention a few, an understanding of the importance of soils, composting, crop rotation, companion planting, growing a wider range of fruit, vegetables, flowers and herbs, the benefits of ponds, leaf and logs piles, nesting boxes, encouraging native species for planting hedgerows and the importance of providing shelter through the late autumn and winter months to mention a few.

In the sense of the wider site, associations were encouraged to allow perimeter edges and common areas to become naturalised or increase wildflower planting in these areas, using fences and hedgerows in a



[L-R] Image 1: Croftburn Allotments Pond supported by Froglife.

Image 2: Living Roof Merrylee Allotments

Image 3: SACRO plot Tollcross Park Allotments with foraging hedgerow at rear

more biodiversity friendly manner by encouraging climbers such as ivy (which provides an early pollen source and provides shelter), and reviewing materials used on sites for building structures.

The booklet has proven influential in encouraging conversation in associations and amongst individual plotholders around organic approaches to allotment gardening. Though some plotholders were receptive, others found it difficult to initially accept or to change their habits. Some were perhaps sceptical that increasing companion planting could be as effective as chemical control regimes. Old habits die hard and if you're coming from a lifetime of growing experience using chemical controls it can be difficult to switch to a way of growing that might require more labour from you, no matter how much more beneficial it would be to the environment.

At the time it would be fair to say that organic gardening techniques were not as well understood by plotholders as they are these days, and perhaps the image of organic gardening being for the "prickly jumper brigade", as they were affectionately referred to by one plotholder, was off-putting to many who were keen to adopt more environmentally-friendly approaches to their plot but were unsure where to start.

However since the introduction of the booklet, many more conversations were initiated amongst plotholders, associations and the wider forum. Some associations made the choice to move to organic practices only, the number of ponds on individual plots increased as did ponds in common areas, with Croftburn Allotments (image 1) being an excellent example providing pond dipping opportunities for local schools and community groups.

More common areas were allowed to run a bit more wild than might be acceptable in traditional horticultural, and a few sites now have sheds with living roofs. (see image 2)

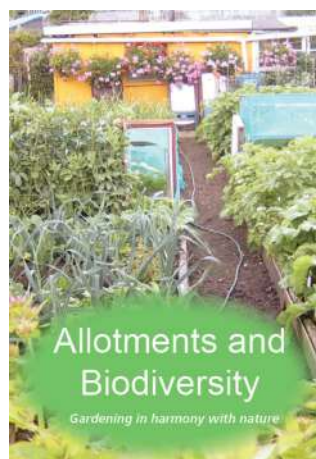
Our site in Tollcross Park (see image 3) drew admiration as recently as August for the innovative edible hedgerow which not only contributes to biodiversity within the park but also provides a foraging opportunity for park users, plotholders and local wildlife alike, whilst also bolstering site security.

The booklet also opened up wider conversations around sustainable practices and, supported by funding from the National Lottery, led to GAF introducing the Sustainable Allotment Awards, which provided awards to peer assessed allotments sites who could demonstrate exemplars of sustainable practices being utilised by plotholders.

Future plans include reviewing the booklet and bring it up to speed for our current time. Promotion of practices that improve biodiversity via allotments and growing spaces in the City will continue to be supported across the City. Very early discussions have commenced between GCC officers and the Scottish Allotments and Garden Society looking at design models for sites based on Permaculture practices but this is still in its infancy.

We are also developing cross departmental collaborative working models involving community groups, third sector organisations, commercial operators, Police Scotland, local GP's surgeries and academics that allow us to record monitor and provide data on biodiversity (among many other metrics), proving the effectiveness or otherwise of these approaches and allow us to adopt nature based solutions to site development now and for the future. •

[You can download the booklet here](#)



Sandy will be speaking on this topic at the APSE Allotments Seminar on 7 October. [Click here for programme and booking information.](#)

Glasgow City Council currently supports the city's ecology through implementation of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Pollinator Plan and its land management; and through related policies and strategies including the City Development Plan, the Glasgow Open Space Strategy and the Parks Vision.



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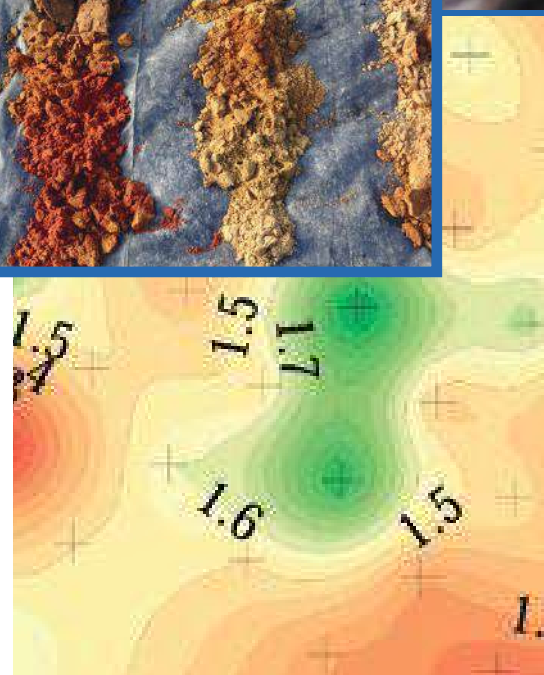
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For more information on how The CDS Group can help, please phone us on +44 (0)1525 864387 or visit our website.



Spronging into action to deliver net zero

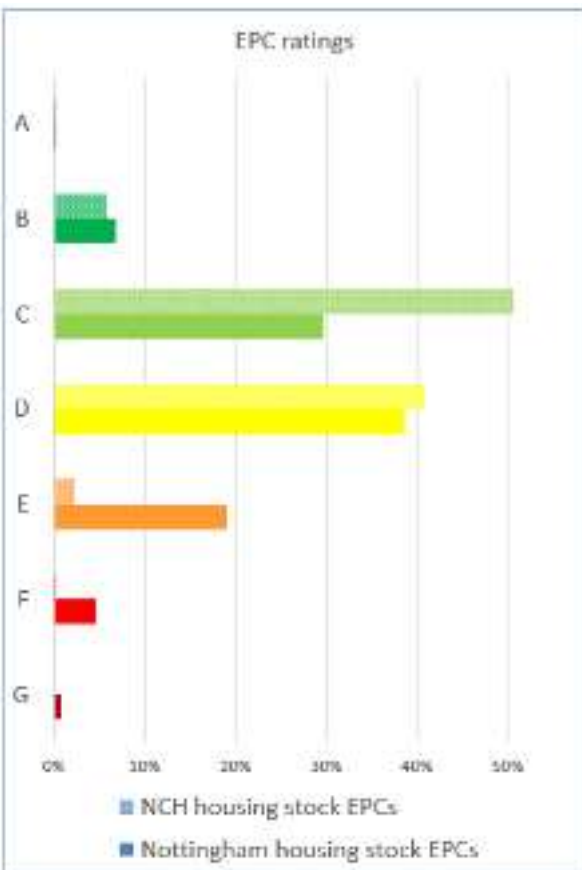
The “Energiesprong” model is being trialled as a way to reach net zero carbon standards; the Energiesprong pilot in Nottingham was the first in the country. Katie Greenhalgh, Energy Projects Manager at Nottingham City Council, takes us through the pilot’s impressive results.



[R-L]
The Energiesprong Promise (Image courtesy of Energiesprong UK)

10 homes improved using the Energiesprong model, with one private rented household who didn't wish to participate demonstrating the improvement which can be made

EPC ratings across Nottingham City Council's housing stock have increased, but there is more to do.



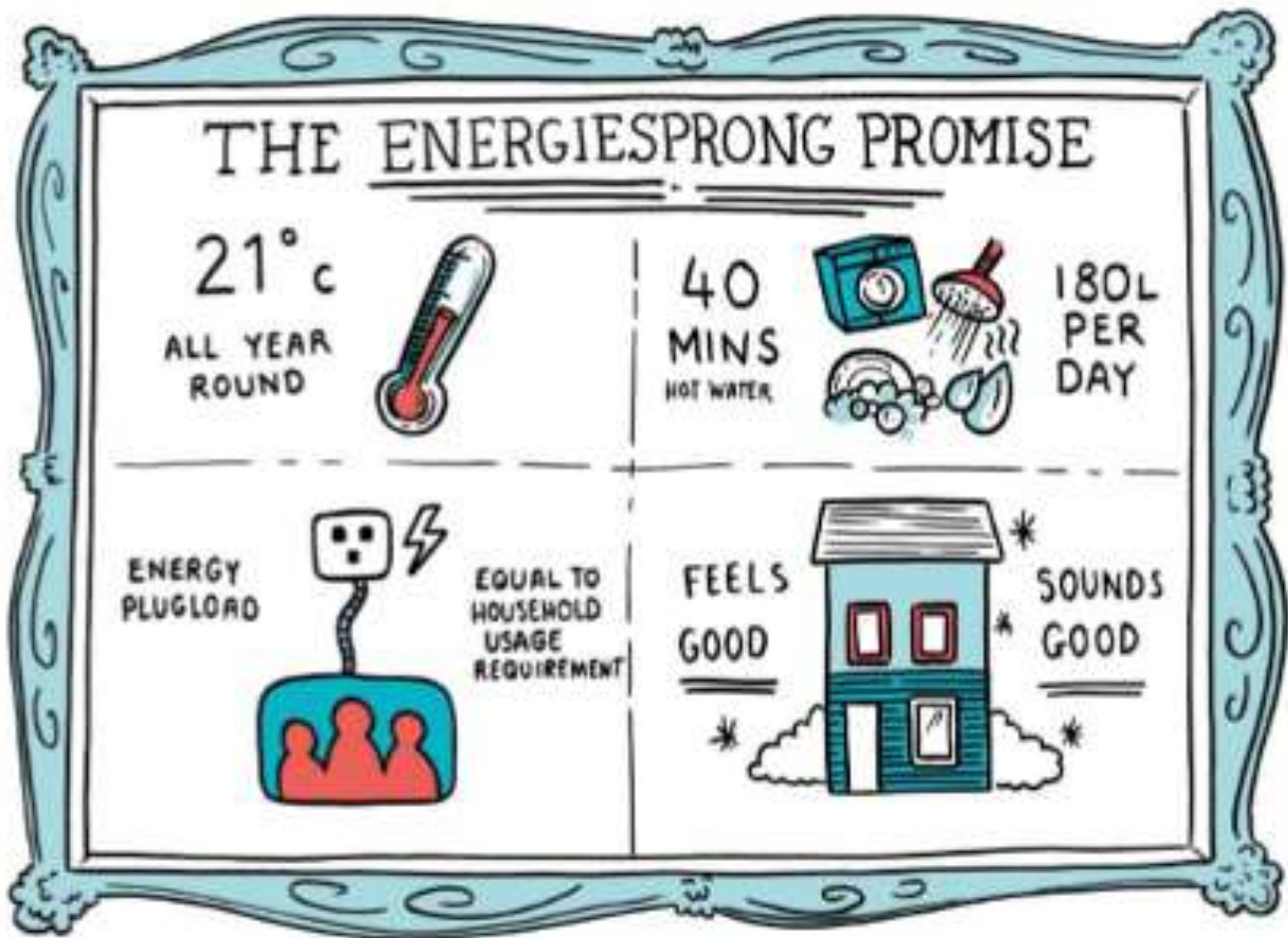
Nottingham City Council is leading on an ambitious plan for Nottingham to become the UK’s first Carbon Neutral city by 2028 in order to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. To meet this objective, innovative solutions are required which can be scaled up across the city. With housing comprising 35% of the city’s Carbon emissions, this is a key sector to tackle when aiming for Carbon Neutrality and a step change in the way that we build and retrofit homes is required.

Nottingham City Council owns around 26,000 homes which are managed by Nottingham City Homes. Much progress has been made in improving the performance of these homes, including 40,000 energy efficiency measures and 4,000 Solar PV systems, with 51% now having an EPC C rating and 41% a D, far outperforming the average for housing across the City. But in order to reach a Carbon Neutral Nottingham by 2028, there is still a lot of work to do.

The “Energiesprong” model is being trialled as a way to reach net zero Carbon standards. Energiesprong is a Dutch whole house refurbishment standard and funding approach which creates high energy performance and desirable homes. It uses money that would be paid on energy bills and maintenance to fund the improvement works which are targeted to take place in just 10 days through advanced off-site manufacture. Importantly, tenants benefit from reduced and fixed energy bills, as well as a guaranteed comfort standard which provides a minimum temperature, volume of hot water and electrical appliance load, driving households out of Fuel Poverty.

The Energiesprong pilot in Nottingham was the first in the country and delivered through the Horizon 2020 Remourban project, which funded the gap between the “funding envelope” (comprised of energy plan payments from tenants, maintenance budget, and other funding streams such as FITs, RHI and ECO) and the current cost of the solution which remains high due to its innovative nature and immature supply chain. Through this pilot, improved performance, rather than improvement measures, for 10 homes was procured which the contractor is required to guarantee over 30 years through monitoring, not modelling. The solution included prefabricated, insulated wall and roof panels, low temperature communal heating provided by a Ground Source Heat Pump, private wire electricity fed by Solar PV and thermal and electrical storage.

It was calculated that the homes should have been paying £1,800 per year for their energy but it was found that only £600 was paid on average, resulting in under-heated, cold and draughty homes that put vulnerable tenants at risk of poor health. After the pilot was completed, the tenants paid £500 per year for all their energy needs, with a guaranteed comfort plan meaning that they can enjoy warm homes



without worrying about the cost of energy. Through the design process and consultation with residents, significant improvements were also made to the design of the homes and public realm, resulting in homes that the tenants love to live in.

After the pilot was completed, the tenants paid £500 per year for all their energy needs, with a guaranteed comfort plan meaning that they can enjoy warm homes without worrying about the cost of energy.

Nottingham City Council is now embarking on a second phase of deep retrofits, with funding secured through Interreg NWE for the E=0 project, ERDF for the DREeM project and BEIS for the Whole House Retrofit project. These projects will enable a further 325 homes to be improved and over 975 tonnes of Carbon to be saved per year. It is hoped that increasing the volume of homes retrofitted to this standard and developing the supply chain sufficiently will ensure that the model becomes viable without subsidy and can be rolled out to many more homes. The authority also continues to innovate, such as exploring the potential to use flooded mines as a low carbon source of heat on later stages of our retrofit projects through the Interreg NWE funded D2Grids projects.

To find out more about Nottingham's Carbon Neutral 2028 plans [click here](#). To find out more about the domestic retrofit projects [visit here](#) or contact Katie Greenhalgh, Energy Projects Manager at Katie.Greenhalgh@nottinghamcity.gov.uk.

APSE is supported in its work climate action by APSE Energy; a UK first in bringing together those councils that have developed municipal energy schemes to green and localise energy supply. For more information on how APSE Energy can help your council contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk.



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Advice Hub

Go Plant Fleet Services Wins Key Maintenance Contract



Following a recent tender evaluation process Go Plant Fleet Services was delighted to be awarded the prestigious contract to provide maintenance provision to the London Borough of Ealing via their Local Authority trading company – Greener Ealing Limited.

The five-year contract, worth in the region of £5M provides a comprehensive repair and maintenance facility for the Borough's significant fleet of 370 assets that includes refuse collection vehicles, sweepers and electric vans as well as their extensive grounds maintenance fleet.

The annual maintenance plan will ensure scheduled maintenance and inspections are carried out as well as ongoing repairs. GPFS will maximise vehicle uptime by providing flexible working hours, an important factor for the customer, illustrated by their specification for 95% refuse collection fleet availability A 98 per cent MOT-test pass rate has been agreed for all HGV and class IV/ VII vehicles.

Go Plant Fleet Services has committed to increasing staff provision by working with local recruitment channels for additional workshop staff along with providing an apprenticeship scheme for an individual to work alongside the team based at the authority's Greenford depot.

They will also support two student work placements in collaboration with local schools and colleges to deliver knowledge and skills outcomes for students.

They will also support two student work placements in collaboration with local schools and colleges to deliver knowledge and skills outcomes for students.

The mobilisation of this contract was realised during challenging times brought about by changes to working practices due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the midst of the nationwide lockdown, Go Plant Fleet Services worked tirelessly to ensure mobilisation was completed within the 10-week timescale originally agreed. Keeping GPFS staff and those working for Greener Ealing safe at all times was of paramount importance and the original deadline for the start of the contract was met without delay or disruption.

Phil Quelch, Chief Operating Officer for Go Plant Fleet Services, recognises the significance of this award. •

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Build back greener

APSE's latest online Policy Seminar explored both the strategic environmental issues emerging from Government administrations across the UK, as well as the factors that will influence climate action at a frontline service level. APSE's Communications Officer Matt Ellis reports back from the event.

Build Back Better. Seemingly ubiquitous the last few months, these three words are etched into the minds of anyone familiar with or connected to public policy. But what do the words actually mean? The snappy slogan – first used by the UN and now adopted by both the UK Government and the candidacy of Joseph Biden in the US Presidential election - is said to represent a commitment to job creation and inclusive economic growth that boosts rather than diminishes public health and the environment.

One can see why the slogan has been so readily embraced by 10 Downing Street. It can be said to reaffirm the Government's commitment to the 'levelling-up agenda' so rigorously promoted by the Prime Minister during the course of the 2019 General Election. It can also be said to reaffirm the Government's ambition - 'moral responsibility in the words of Cabinet Minister Michael Gove - to lead a 'global Green Industrial Revolution'. With the UK economy, and indeed the world economy, having been ravaged by the COVID crisis, now would seem the opportune time for the Government to pair an ambitious economic strategy with climate action.

Build Back Better was therefore a natural theme to centre APSE's latest Climate Seminar around. The online event - sponsored by APSE Energy Approved Partner Beond Group - explored the practical actions councils can take (and have taken) to decarbonise our economy and forge a sustainable future for their local areas. We were delighted to be joined by elected councillors, leaders, local government managers, chief officers and heads of service from all across the UK for what was a lively discussion and excellent shared learning opportunity.

Big policy issues

Day One of the seminar opened with a session exploring the big policy issues. Kindly Chaired by APSE Strategic Forum Chair Cllr. Jacqui Burnett, the session's first speaker was APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien. Paul reminded delegates that responding to the climate emergency is not just a single issue but is part of the much wider public policy jigsaw. As the steward of the local economy and leader of place, councils are critical to bringing these various pieces together. Citing examples from APSE's report 'So you've declared a climate emergency: what next?', Paul looked at how local authorities have shown civic leadership and responded effectively to the crisis; from energy efficient buildings to more cycle routes and a big rise in electric vehicles.

Up next we were delighted to be joined by Nick Jackson of DEFRA's Climate Change Adaptation Team who, like Paul, highlighted the range of activities being adapted by UK councils to mitigate their exposure to climate change. These include Kent County Council's development of an adaptation catalyst tool to help with planning and Cornwall Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

Responding to the climate emergency is not just a single issue but is part of the much wider public policy jigsaw.

Our final speaker of the session was Louise Marix Evans, Advisor for the Committee on Climate Change. Louise explored areas where local level policy has a key role to play in delivering net zero. Louise also looked at what is needed from government including consistent net zero compliant policy co-ordination between all government departments and a stronger focus on carbon reduction in business cases and financial appraisal.

Public sector as an agent of change

With session two, delegates were informed of the ways the public sector can act as an agent of change. Leader of City of York Council, Cllr. Keith Aspden, outlined how the 'Capital of the North' aims to create – via its Ten Year City Plan - an inclusive and green economy, with a people focused city centre. You can learn more about this ambitious strategy on page 10.

How can councils access the renewable supply contract market? Mike Chan of sponsor Beond Group was up next to discuss energy tendering and risk management. An APSE energy Approved Partner, Beond are a multi award-winning zero carbon energy software consultancy who specialise in energy procurement. You can learn more about how they can help your authority [here](#).

Our final speaker of Day One - APSE's Charlotte Banks - talked delegates through the work of APSE Energy in bringing UK councils together to work on the green energy agenda. Charlotte also gave special mention to APSE Training's Carbon Literacy for the Frontline; a course designed to deepen understanding of the long-term threat of climate change. You can learn more about this course on page 33.

Environment and place

Chaired by APSE National Chair Cllr. Mark Pengelly, day two opened with a keynote address from Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy, Department for Business Enterprise and Industrial Strategy. According to Patrick, what he finds missing in a lot of local action plans is a failure to embed net zero across all frontline services. Patrick also highlighted the support available to councils from BEIS such as ERIS and Ongen.

Up next we had Veronica Formosa-Hamilton, Waste Disposal Team Leader at Stirling Council, to discuss the progress of the zero waste Scotland approach and how Stirling Council has adopted and adapted waste disposal and climate change initiatives.

Echoing the City of York's Ten Year Plan, Graham Grant, Head of Transport at Newcastle City Council, talked embedding air quality improvements in a post-COVID city centre. By planning for pedestrians and cyclists, the Council wants to create a greener, cleaner and more prosperous Newcastle.

Blue Green Infrastructure

Blue Green Infrastructure was the topic of final session of the seminar. Tim Ferrero, Senior Specialist in Marine Conservation at the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, discussed the role of the Wildlife Trust marine conservation team and how councils can help the Trust protect our precious marine environment.

What can we expect in climate change terms for water and flood management? Our penultimate speaker, Jenny Barlow, Flood Risk Management Advisor at the Environment Agency Yorkshire and North East, outlined flood prevention strategies in place across the region. Such strategies include Leeds' Flood Alleviation Scheme catchment-based programme and Calderdale's 'Slow the Flow'.

Our final speaker - Tony Da Silva, Landscape Restoration Officer at the Lancashire Wildlife Trust - discussed how the Trust is encouraging public action and participation on green infrastructure, and helping communities develop a greater understanding of nature and rewilding.

Put councils at the heart of building back better

This seminar offered a stark reminder to the Government that rolling back environmental protections is not an option when it comes to the post-COVID recovery. The shock of the pandemic as well as more frequent extreme weather events has meant a diminishingly small number of policy-makers now see sustainability as a zero-sum game: more jobs and higher economic growth should not entail weaker environmental standards, and vice versa. Instead infrastructure led-growth that is green and involves local decision-makers can create prosperity, a healthier environment and a more resilient economy.

This seminar offered a stark reminder to the Government that rolling back environmental protections is not an option when it comes to the post-COVID recovery.

Recent months have demonstrated that, when faced with a global crisis, local government cannot afford to be sidelined; it has to play a key role in developing and co-ordinating local responses. The pandemic has brought devastation to millions. Catastrophic climate change will bring devastation to billions. It's time our decision-makers heeded the lessons of the former to prevent the chaos of the latter.

- [Presentations from the event are available to be downloaded from the APSE website.](#)



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Feeling the strain

The need to #SaveLeisure is urgent



The UK public leisure sector faces catastrophic job losses due to coronavirus. #SaveLeisure is a digital campaign - run by Community Leisure UK, ukactive, CIMSPA and supported by APSE, Swim England, Swim Wales and many other partners - urging the UK Government to commit relief funding for the sector as financial reserves plummet.

The devastating impact of the coronavirus continues to be felt across the UK's public leisure sector, with almost 7,000 jobs at risk and a further 6,000 roles confirmed for redundancy.

To date, there has been no financial support for the industry, which delivers vital public services for communities across the UK, including leisure centres, swimming pools, outdoor sports courts and pitches and parks.

In a report published in August 2020, Community Leisure UK outlines the potentially disastrous long-term impacts for the public leisure sector, which employs more than 46,000 staff and delivers a collective social value of £1.5bn.

Figures from Community Leisure UK COVID 19 Impact Report, shows that almost half of leisure facilities in England (44 per cent) have not found it economically viable to reopen since lockdown measures were eased. In Scotland, only a third of facilities plan to immediately reopen when given the green light by government and a quarter of facilities in Wales remained closed initially.

The report highlights the precarious position of leisure trusts. Current reserves across the sector have dropped to 64 per cent compared with pre-COVID levels, and with only 10 per cent of reserves expected to remain by the end of this financial year most leisure trusts will have insufficient funds to operate. It also means many trusts are unlikely to survive a second lockdown and those that do survive will have little or no financial reserves to rebuild their businesses.

Without financial support we will lose many of these precious facilities for good depriving communities across the UK of vital public services at a time when the government is urging people to get fit and lose weight to beat COVID-19.

Without financial support, the sector is facing thousands of job losses. Currently, 26 per cent of the contracted workforce (6,975 jobs) and 50 per cent of casual roles (9,218 jobs) are at risk. In addition, more than 6,000 contracted and casual staff have confirmed for redundancy, or in the case of casual workers, not been offered work.

The leisure sector is one of the biggest employers for 18-34 year olds, so these job losses will hit youngest workers the hardest, contributing to fears that the UK may be on the brink of a surge in youth unemployment.

[The full report is available here.](#)

- *Mark Tweedie delivered a presentation on this topic at the seminar 'The Future of Leisure Post Lockdown' on 6 August. The presentation is available for download from the APSE website [here](#).*

Are you an APSE member? If so you can sign up for free to our Sports and Leisure Advisory Groups. For information on how to sign up [click here](#).



Mark Tweedie
Chief Executive of Community Leisure UK

"This report highlights the perilous situation of the public leisure sector. To date, our sector has received little financial support, yet our facilities play a critical role in society improving the public's physical and mental health and helping to reduce the burden on the NHS. Without financial support we will lose many of these precious facilities for good depriving communities across the UK of vital public services at a time when the government is urging people to get fit and lose weight to beat Covid-19. Once again, we urge the government to support the sector to ensure the survival of public leisure provision."



Jane Nickerson
CEO of Swim England

"This report is incredibly concerning, but sadly not surprising. If facilities remain closed, there will be many swim schools, swimming teachers, lifeguards and facility staff worrying about when, or even if, they will have a job to go back to. We'll continue to shout loud on their behalf about the urgent need for ring-fenced funding to help prevent these vital community facilities being mothballed. We won't back down in the fight for the #SaveLeisure funding our sector needs to protect as many pools and jobs as we can."



Tara Dillon
CEO of CIMSPA

"Public leisure centres employ a large number of people and create enormous economic, health, social and community benefits. Covid-19 has created huge financial challenges for this part of the sector and we urge the Government in all parts of the UK to provide additional financial support to protect these vital public facilities. If they are allowed to close, communities up and down the country (often in socially deprived areas) will lose vital facilities and we will lose many thousands of jobs among the talented and dedicated leisure workforce."



Huw Edwards
CEO of ukactive

"If we do not find a solution for the financial plight of our community leisure facilities then the UK stands to lose one of its most powerful weapons in the fight against Covid-19 – the fitness and leisure workforce. No one is more passionate about the fitness of our nation than the staff in our gyms and leisure centres, who dedicate their careers to helping people stay happy and healthy. We continue to call on the Government to support local authorities to protect the future of public leisure provision by providing ring-fenced funding urgently, before we see any more facilities disappear."

The future's bright, the future's green

Fiona Sutton-Wilson, Head of APSE Training, reports back from a 2050 in which the existential threat of climate change was met with the necessary and decisive action by today's decision-makers.



Many councils started with their own assets first – they audited and greened their buildings and then encouraged others to do the same. They improved their vehicles and optimised routes for council business; they reconfigured traffic flow and road use to prioritise active travel and reduce congestion.

When I look back to the first Carbon Literacy training session we delivered, in the spring of 2020, who would have guessed the impact of Carbon Literacy – and back then, how many people really even knew what that meant? I remember one of the London Borough Council leads for climate change, telling me that every elected member in the land should do the training – and gradually they did. But it didn't stop there. Thirty years passes in the blink of an eye and looking back, that was the starting point of real change. Don't get me wrong – there were plenty of local authorities who were already on the path to carbon neutrality in 2020 and thankfully the networks we had built through APSE Energy brought a rich variety of experience, evidence and ideas to draw upon. Those trailblazers, led by innovative, forward thinking council leaders, gave us hope when the coronavirus stuck; offering a glimpse at what the new world might look like.

This morning as I look out across Manchester, the sky is clear, the flowers are in bloom and the birds are singing. Many commuters, living in passivhaus standard homes, cycle to work or use the electric trams powered by renewable energy. There's a cycle store every few streets and plenty of under-cover walkways and well-lit cycle ways. It took a while to get here – re-using canal paths, bridal ways and public footpaths - but we managed to create one of the greatest cycle networks in the world.

It's strange to think how thirty years ago - prior to COVID and the Build Back Better programme - carbon-based energy was the predominant source of energy. Fast forward to 2050 and 100% of our energy is now green; solar and wind based energy displacing gas and oil as comprehensively as the motorcar replaced horse-drawn vehicles in the early 20th century.

The yawning gap in health inequalities that once plagued our city and many others across the land is now an historical footnote. In the early days, the most noticeable aspect was the reduction in breathing conditions such as asthma and COPD. Fewer older people have dementia now than 30 years ago – diesel was a dirty word for a long time and fuel poverty is a thing of the past.

Many councils started with their own assets first – they audited and greened their buildings and then encouraged others to do the same. They improved their vehicles and optimised routes for council business; they reconfigured traffic flow and road use to prioritise active travel and reduce congestion (remember rush hour? If you've never heard of it, ask your parents – thankfully, it's a thing of the past). Fewer people were commuting as early as 2021. They invested in electrification using renewable energy; all urban developments started to centre around carbon neutrality – not just the homes in which people lived, but how they shopped and enjoyed life. Local supply chains, local shops and farm to fork became big issues. By the mid-2020s councils were using their immense collective influence and purchasing power to lead local and national economies, giving a heavy weighting to carbon neutrality in their supply chains.

The circular economy grew and carbon budget became common language in town halls across the UK. New industries emerged to meet the surge for green solutions. People who had worked in aviation and fossil fuels gained new employment such as electrifying the existing rail networks, planting trees and rewilding areas for carbon capture, as well as a whole host of web-based businesses. The parks industry led the social recovery – our need for open spaces, common land and safe places to relax, socialise and exercise had never been greater and our well-maintained green space provided a vital place for this, in addition to helping us towards our carbon neutral target.



Overall, our localities were transformed into sustainable, safe, healthy neighbourhoods that no longer contributed to the climate crisis. But to get there, councils needed a starting point. Many trained, supported, nurtured and rewarded staff for carbon reduction initiatives and successes. They ensured all of their key leaders, managers and supervisors achieved the Carbon Literacy Award, as a minimum standard. APSE was a big part of that, working with the Carbon Literacy Project, BEIS and others at the beginning of this step change. Councils were instrumental in changing the behaviour of the nation – starting with their own staff – at work and at home – they cascaded this across communities. Being carbon intensive started to feel very uncomfortable – many people hadn't really thought about it before - but we needed to overcome that discomfort.

2020 – the first year of APSE's Carbon Literacy training – was the year we learned how to successfully respond to the climate emergency. Even those authorities who were well on their way to carbon neutrality realised that they needed to do more. UK councils had the vision to recognise that they had to act immediately. They had the strength to make rapid and deep changes at a local level. Alongside other authorities and governments around the world, they are in our history books as being the generation of leaders who prevented unsustainable temperature rises and the devastation which would have inevitably resulted from melting ice caps and rising sea levels - the annihilation of ecosystems, including contaminated water supply, the destruction of farmland from wildfires and flooding, the spread of disease and the extinction of millions of species. We would have had a very different future had it not been for them and their efforts will be remembered for generations to come.

There's a plaque, on a statue, in the village where I was born. I remember when it was unveiled in 2021. It says, "This village will be under water by 2050". It was a warning to us all. We have faced huge challenges, over the last thirty years, but achieved great things. Here we are in 2050 and the plaque is not under water. It stands as a reminder of all we have achieved because we chose to put our minds to it and acted while there was still time to make a difference. •

Help to forge a sustainable future for your local authority and area by booking a place on our carbon literacy training course!



Carbon Literacy for the Frontline

£169+VAT (APSE members) £279+VAT (Non-members) *This course is also available as an in-house option*

Ran in conjunction with APSE Energy, this highly interactive course will help you:

- Understand and be able to explain the basic science of climate change and how climate change will affect us both globally and locally.
- Evaluate the climate change objectives in local authorities and analyse the impacts.
- Construct your own strategies to take action on climate change.

This course will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams and includes a mixture of presentations, video conferencing, group work, games, quizzes and video.

This course is run online as a full day or as two half-days. An additional two hours of individual work is required to achieve the Carbon Literacy Award. This will include a video link prior to the training and a self-assessment of learning, which is submitted to the Carbon Literacy Project. [BOOK YOUR PLACE HERE](#)

Housing Seminar

At a crossroads: Building foundations for healthy communities

Includes expert speakers:

Joanne Smithson, Local Government and Health Sector Lead, What Works Centre for Wellbeing

Tricia Hill, Development and Regeneration Manager, City of Edinburgh

Andrew Nurse, Innovation Manager, Construction Scotland – Innovation Centre, and Mark Turley, Scottish Government

Julian Higson, Director Housing and Landlord Services, Bristol City Council

Emma Lindley, Housing Strategic Lead, Ashfield District Council

Scott Masterman, New Build Manager, North Kesteven District Council

Kathryn Irvine, Senior Housing Development Officer and Karen Rae, Empty Homes Officer, West Dunbartonshire Council

Jon Bird, Healthy Home Programme Manager, Dorset Council

Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive, APSE



1 – 2 October 2020

10:00 – 12:30 each day

Those local authorities at the vanguard of the climate agenda are showing leadership within their localities on an agenda which has the interest of the nation. Climate change, energy and sustainability will be items high on the political and public radar for a long time to come and local authorities have a responsibility to address them.

APSE Energy can provide support to those councils struggling to get to grips with the agenda.

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- For further information about how your council can become more energy efficient, please visit the [APSE Energy web hub](#) - the unrivalled online resource for all things municipal energy-related.

For more information contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk

It's the size that matters!

Identify and reduce your local authority's carbon footprint



The Context

Over 270 local authorities have made a climate emergency declaration and most are accompanied by a target date for carbon neutrality. Whether there is a date or not, the current consciousness around this agenda means that it is vital for any organisation to be able to track its own performance in terms of carbon emissions. That means identifying the current carbon footprint and being able to monitor it simply on a regular basis.

Many local authorities have lost the capacity and understanding over recent years to accomplish this task. There is a need to understand the organisation's services and those elements that contribute to emission levels, to recognise the data required, to apply appropriate factors and analyse the outputs. It is also necessary put into place a relevant process to maintain access to the data, update it and populate the relevant model.

Where this is done in-house, it is a fundamental part of ensuring a successful approach to climate action. For those without the capacity and understanding, APSE Energy can offer help in the form of support via our consultancy. Outputs will be a short carbon footprint report noting the authority's emissions levels, alongside a high level review of potential reduction measures.

The Approach



- Interviews with relevant officers to gauge an understanding of data quality and availability, work done to date and aspirations;
- The Council provides a spreadsheet which shows the Scope 1 & 2 usage data and basic asset information e.g. building kWh data and vehicle data for one year. The data is a fundamental element of the work;
- APSE Energy populates its model and calculates baseline carbon emissions;
- The outputs are used to provide a brief guideline strategy for improving efficiencies and generating power to reduce emissions and cost.

Our methodology follows the principles of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and carbon conversion factors are taken from the BEIS GHG Conversion Reporting publication. This allows a consistent approach to comparing emissions and using recognised techniques for future reporting.

The work will provide a high level assessment. It is dependent upon the accuracy of the data supplied to us. If further work is required to validate the data sent, ensure its accuracy or find data on behalf of the client, a charge to cover this time will be made.



The Cost

The initial cost of this support is £950 plus VAT and expenses. The cost may vary depending upon what is required, the availability of data and historic reporting.

If you're interested in discussing this offer, please contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk or 0161 772 1810



upcoming online seminars

Housing	1-2 October
Allotments	7 October
Insourcing Policy Day Practice Forum	16 October
Woodland and Trees	21 October
Highways and Street Lighting	28 and 29 October
Sports and Leisure	5 November
Building Maintenance	6 November
Transport	11 November
Environmental (Refuse and Recycling)	12 November
Cemeteries and Crematoria	19 November
Building Social Value - Policy	20 November
Strategic Commercialisation - Policy	25 November
Performance Networks	1-4 December
Trade Union Week	8-10 December

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