



The sound of the underground

Liverpool's waste collection revolution

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Editorial



Alderman Tommy Nicholl MBE,
APSE National Chair

Wishing You a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year

It doesn't seem five minutes since we welcomed you in 2022...and yet here we are at the end of another year and approaching Christmas.

As we reflect on 2022 it has been a challenging year for local public services across the UK. Yet local councils have once again shown great resilience in supporting our communities through difficult times. As we come out of the other end of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, alongside geo-political events like the war in Ukraine, has seriously impacted on the costs of providing services. It is inevitable that these pressures will test our resources to the maximum. However, we must remind ourselves that we have continued to deliver those frontline services so key to sustaining our neighbourhoods and local economies.

As APSE National Chair I therefore wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for all that you do. From chief executives and corporate directors, to the political leadership shown by council leaders and councillors, taking an interest across all services, and, of course, to the frontline workers who go out to deliver our services, each and every one of you is part of that great team that makes local government what it is today.

As APSE's National Chair, I am immensely proud of the services that APSE has provided over the last twelve months. You have my word that APSE will continue to place its members at the heart of its services. Only by sharing best practice in our networks can we be assured that we are all best placed to deliver excellence in public services.

As we move into 2023, it would be remiss of me not to say a huge thank you to the APSE Secretariat team but, most of all, our retiring Chief Executive Paul O'Brien. As many of you are aware, Paul has taken a decision to retire and I hope many of you will get an opportunity in the coming weeks to speak to Paul in person. However, on behalf of APSE National Council and our members across the UK, could I take this opportunity to offer our heartfelt thanks and good wishes to Paul.

In the meantime, could I wish you all a very happy Christmas and my good wishes for a peaceful and prosperous New Year. •

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3rd Floor, Trafford House, Chester Road
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Report Back

A round-up of APSE advocacy and events



The Liverpool 'super bins' feature on the ITV Evening News on 18 October 2022.

Liverpool 'super bins' on the telly!

Following the creation with APSE of a ground breaking procurement framework that has brought all the main European Underground Refuse System (URS) suppliers into the UK market, Liverpool City Council has become the first local authority in the UK to install URS as a replacement for wheeled bins. The 'super bins' have featured heavily in national broadcast and print media including The One Show, ITV News and The i Paper. You can read more about this revolutionary waste collection method on page 12.

A Day full of Hi-NRG (Newcastle Renewables Groupchat)

On 22 November 2022, APSE Energy held a special in-person event, free for members, at the Newcastle Civic Centre. The event explored how, as we emerge from the pandemic, local authorities can refocus on the climate agenda. Delegates heard from a variety of speakers, predominantly from authorities in the North East. New APSE Energy Approved Partner LASER energy was also in attendance to discuss supporting the public sector with energy procurement. You can download presentations from the event by visiting APSE's website.

'Superpowers of Free School Meals'

APSE was delighted to be invited to Westminster on 8 November to hear about the 'Superpowers of Free School Meals' as part of the #FeedtheFuture campaign. It was great to hear from such a brilliant and diverse line-up; from Michelin-starred chef, Tom Kerridge, to President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Camilla Kingdon.

Vickie Hacking, APSE Principal Advisor, with Sharon Hodgson MP, Chair of the APPG on School Food at the 'Superpowers of Free School Meals' event in London.



Welsh Liberal Democrat Leader Jane Dodds with APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey at the Welsh Liberal Democrat Autumn Conference.

Hit for six at the Oval

APSE Southern held its annual Parks and Greenspace Seminar 2022 at the Oval Cricket Ground on 24 November 2022, kindly sponsored this year by Brightly Software. The day consisted of a review of green space provision, as well as an exploration of how Parks for London are addressing the impact of climate change on London parks. We also looked in detail at the Levelling Up Fund. It was an excellent chance to network with sector experts and discuss ways we can protect and enhance our vital green infrastructure. Presentations can be downloaded from the APSE website.

Scotland

Live is Fife

On 21 October, APSE Principal Advisor Louise Melville was invited to the Fife Council Apprentice of the Year Awards. The Council celebrated the top young staff in its environment and building services department. Several APSE Apprentice Award finalists and winners were recognised at the ceremony. Service manager, Ross Grieve said: "I'm extremely proud of our apprentice scheme, developing our future tradespersons to maintain and strengthen the community of Fife is an absolute pleasure and I was honoured to congratulate this year's winners."

Wales

Welsh Liberal Democrat Autumn Conference

On 29-30 October, APSE Principal Advisor for Wales, Rob Bailey, attended the Welsh Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference at Pavilion Mid Wales in Llandrindod Wells. Rob was able to catch up with Welsh Liberal Democrat Leader, Jane Dodds, MS/AS at the Conference, sharing the findings of 'Local by Default' - APSE's vision for 2030.

Plaid Cymru Leader Adam Price with APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey at the Plaid Cymru Conference in Llandudno.





APSE National Chair Ald Tommy Nicholl MBE and Cllr Beth Adger deliver speeches at Belfast Castle on 8 December.

APSE at Plaid Cymru

On 21-22 October, APSE Principal Advisor for Wales, Rob Bailey, attended the Plaid Cymru Conference at Venue Cymru, Llandudno. The APSE stall was fortunate enough to receive a visit from Plaid Cymru leader Adam Price, who had a lengthy discussion with Rob Bailey on the need for a stronger voice for local government in Wales.

Northern Ireland

National Council in Belfast Castle

On Thursday 8 December, APSE hosted a dinner at Belfast Castle with members of NILGA's presidential team and other guests to discuss the future role of councillors. APSE delegates received a warm welcome from APSE National Chair Ald Tommy Nicholl MBE, and delegates offered their congratulations to Cllr Beth Adger on her election as President of the Association of Local Councillors.

Remembering a 'giant' of local government thinking

John Stewart, 1929-2022



John Stewart was a founder of Birmingham University's Institute for Local Government, now known as Inlogov, and ran the Institute from 1966 to the late 1990s. Throughout that time he taught many individuals who went on to become council chief executives and senior officers

Mr Stewart had been a "huge supporter" of his wife, Theresa Stewart, who was the first and so far only female leader of Birmingham City Council from 1993 to 1999. Theresa was also a former Chair of the Association.

Speaking of both Professor Stewart and Mrs Stewart as "giants of local government", Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, said, "I had the privilege of meeting both of them and hearing them speak so passionately about local government. . . I know they will both be remembered and admired long into the future."

Rest in peace John.



APSE appoints successor Chief Executive - Mo Baines

Following the announcement that long-standing APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien is to retire, APSE has announced it has appointed a successor Chief Executive - Mo Baines.

Mo Baines who is currently APSE's Deputy Chief Executive, will take over upon Paul's retirement. A transition programme will be finalised in the coming weeks. Mo has many years of experience in local government and has served APSE in a number of roles over an 18 year period, including as Head of Communications and most recently as Deputy Chief Executive. Mo has been a prominent figure within APSE and the wider local government sector with a strong background in service delivery models, local government finance and has led on insourcing research as well as participating in APSE's wider research programme, supporting its member councils across the UK.

Announcing the news APSE's National Chair, Alderman Tommy Nicholl MBE, said, "Whilst we are saddened to see Paul go as our long-serving Chief Executive we know that the transition to Mo Baines as his successor will leave APSE in a strong and confident position to deliver APSE's services to our member councils across the UK. I know this appointment will be warmly welcomed by APSE's broad membership and she will be ably ready to take APSE through the next stages of its remarkable success story".

For press enquiries please contact Matt Ellis, APSE Communications Officer, on mellis@apse.org.uk •

Despite challenges, 2022 survey shows continued trust in local councils for service delivery



Damian Lyons Lowe, Chief Executive at leading poll company, Survation, provides a breakdown of the latest poll on trust in public services.

Our latest public opinion survey for APSE finds that local councils remain the most trusted to deliver essential services in people's local areas. The annual poll, conducted online between 18 and 19 October, found that trust in local councils was slightly higher than last year, and significantly higher than trust in national government and private companies. In addition to being the most trusted to make decisions about how services are delivered in their local area, councils were also the most trusted to make decisions about local planning.

Despite challenges such as funding cuts and declining satisfaction with certain services, it was notable to me, when attending this year's Performance Networks Seminar, that councils have remained committed to providing essential services and making good (while often difficult) decisions that benefit their local areas. The continued trust in local councils that shows up in the data is a testament to the hard work and dedication of councils and their employees in serving their communities.

In addition to being the most trusted to make decisions about how services are delivered in their local area, councils were also the most trusted to make decisions about local planning. When asked who they trusted most to make these types of decisions, a majority of respondents (54%) chose local councils, compared to just 14% who chose the government. This trust was also reflected in the public's willingness to allow councils to spend their taxes, with 76% of people wanting more money for local councils, compared to just 13% who wanted more money spent at a national level.

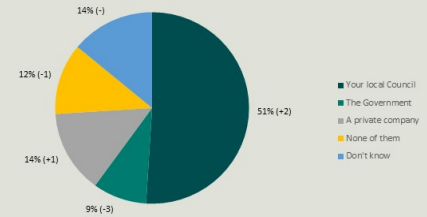
Satisfaction levels with specific council services were broadly similar to last year. Parks, waste and recycling collection, and leisure and sport facilities scored highly, with satisfaction levels of 85%, 75%, and 73% respectively. However, satisfaction with school meals and social care services saw a significant decrease, with satisfaction levels dropping to 79% (a decrease of 7%) and 51% (a decrease of 8%) respectively.

Despite this decline in satisfaction with certain services, the public still trusts councils to deliver local services over private companies and the government. When asked who they trusted most to deliver local services, 51% chose councils, compared to just 14% who chose private companies and 9% who chose the government.

When asked about the decline of local services in recent years, a significant proportion of respondents (38%) said that both local councils and the government were equally responsible for the decline, while 33% blamed local councils and 27% blamed the government. Despite this, the public still recognises the important

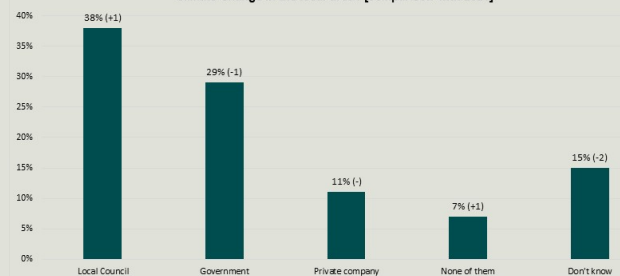
Councils trusted to deliver services 4x more than the Government or a private company

Who do you trust the most to deliver services to your local area? [comparison with 2021]



Councils and government considered to be best placed to combat effects of Climate change

Who do you think is best placed to implement practical local steps to combat the effects of climate change in the local area? [comparison with 2021]



role that councils play in providing and delivering services, with social care, road maintenance, and waste and recycling collection being the top three choices for extra funding.

When asked which services are the public's priorities for funding protection, Social Care (76%), Road Maintenance (75%) and Waste and Recycling collection (72%) are the local services the public would most like councils to prioritise if spending cuts are needed to be made. Housing (66%), Street Cleaning (64%) and School Meals (61%) followed in terms of which services to prioritise.


Climate change remained a priority for respondents, with 70% expecting local communities to have to respond to its effects in their area, and 54% supporting additional funding for councils to tackle the issue. The survey also found that the public sees councils as better equipped to respond to the challenges of climate change than the government. When asked who they thought best placed to take action on climate change, 38% of respondents chose councils, compared to 29% who chose the government. This indicates a strong desire for local action on climate change, and a recognition of the important role that councils can play in addressing this global issue.

In summary, this year's survey highlights the continued trust in local councils to provide and deliver essential services in people's local areas. Despite challenges such as funding cuts and declining satisfaction with certain services, the public still trusts councils to make decisions about how services are delivered in their local area and to spend their taxes wisely. As the most trusted governmental institutions, local councils have a crucial role to play in addressing the challenges facing their communities and tackling issues such as climate change.


• *Damian's presentation on the findings of the poll from the APSE Performance Networks Seminar 2022 is available from the APSE website.*

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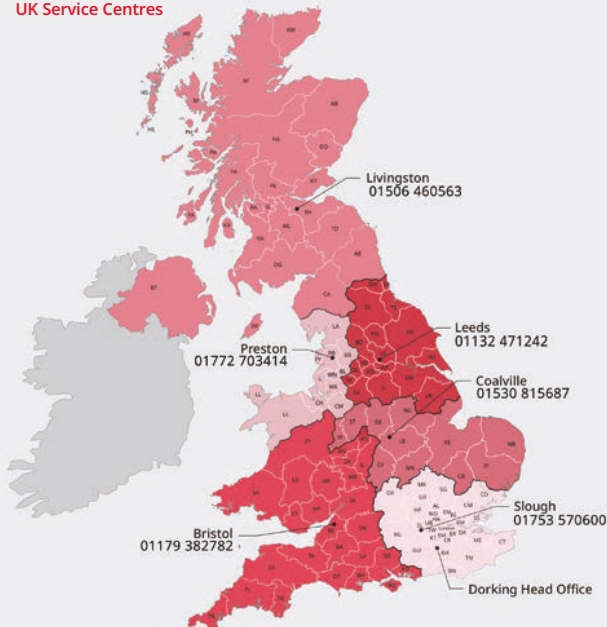


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EV made easy

A free Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure report for APSE Energy members.



APSE Energy recently conducted an EV infrastructure survey of local authorities across the UK and received 197 responses between 2021-2022. The survey gathers data and opinions about the progress that has been made by councils in installing EV infrastructure, whilst also gaining important insights into what councils know about the plans of the private sector and what barriers councils have faced whilst installing and planning to install EV chargepoints.

A running theme throughout the survey was that councils had clear plans in place for installing EV infrastructure, but a clear lack of knowledge of the plans of the private sector and the number of domestic chargepoints. Without this data and knowledge, it is much more difficult for councils to ensure that EV infrastructure is installed where it is most needed and where it will most benefit the local community.

Of the local authorities surveyed:

- In 2022, 53% of respondents selected answers below 5 in response to the question 'On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'very poor' and 10 being 'excellent'), how well do you think your local authority has performed in ensuring local demand for EV charging infrastructure is currently met?'. Reflecting that a majority of officers feel there is room for improvement in meeting demands for infrastructure.

- In response to the question 'How many chargers does the council plan to install?' replies showed that councils are increasing the numbers of chargepoints they are planning to install, with significant increases in the larger groups in 2022 compared with 2021, especially those aiming to install over 60 chargepoints.
- In 2021, responses to the question 'Is it a concern for you that current EV infrastructure is not future proofed and is this a barrier for council investment?', 60% of respondents saw this as a barrier, however there was a positive trend as the number of councils seeing this as a barrier fell by over 10% in 2022.
- When asked what would be most beneficial in installing EV chargepoints, issues surrounding funding and financial resources were by far the largest barrier to local authorities. Better communication with the DNO, engagement, keeping abreast of technological change and the need to regularly update plans for infrastructure are further issues which emerged.

• This report is FREE for APSE Energy members. For further information about APSE Energy, please contact Phil Brennan, Head of APSE Energy on 0161 772 1810 or at pbrennan@apse.org.uk or Charlotte Banks, Principal Advisor, at cbanks@apse.org.uk or James Jefferson, Energy Officer, at jjefferson@apse.org.uk.



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A multi-team approach to APSE success



Having scooped Overall Council of the Year at the APSE Service Awards 2022, Cllr Keith House, Leader of Eastleigh Borough Council, reveals the secrets to the Council's success.

Eastleigh Borough Council's frontline teams are committed to a culture of continuous improvement.

This is embodied by the Neighbourhood Services team's stated commitment "to providing local services that are consistent with the Council's corporate strategy and objectives, and which deliver a real improvement in the quality of the environment."

This approach is paying dividends in the authority's consistent success in APSE's Performance Network Awards since 2011, culminating in the accolade of Overall Council of the Year in 2022.

Winning the overall award is testament to focused, strategic working across the authority, which has now gone beyond the Neighbourhood Services and StreetScene operations to encompass multi-departmental working on a range of projects, including several that were included in the Council's submissions to this year's APSE awards. These are: a major programme of tree planting; the transition towards zero emission vehicles and machinery, and hosting almost 300 Afghan refugees, in partnership with governmental and third sector agencies, as well as the private sector.

Transforming the StreetScene operation

Eastleigh's most consistent presence in the APSE awards has been for its StreetScene operation, which secured its 11th consecutive award as best overall performer in 2021 (when the team were also voted best overall performer for parks and open spaces for the fourth year running).

The ongoing implementation of a service review of the StreetScene function has achieved three clear aims: better coordination of tasks leading to a more consistently clean environment and increased resident satisfaction; better skilled and more motivated staff who take a real pride in the area under their responsibility, and the delivery of a range of efficiencies. These have been achieved by improved coordination of services; better use of resources; more appropriate vehicles and plant with a reduction in fuel costs; upskilling of staff and more efficient and balanced scheduling, reducing overtime and vehicle costs.

A culture of empowerment was introduced with efficiency savings redirected into staff development. Team members were given responsibility for their own individual area of the Borough. Greater engagement with customers – the Borough's residents – improved relationships with street cleansing staff and frequent surveys gauged satisfaction levels, with results fed into the service improvement cycle.

Afghan refugee response

In August 2022 we passed the one-year anniversary of the arrival in Eastleigh Borough – at extremely short notice - of the first evacuees from Afghanistan. It was the beginning of a very steep learning curve for the multi-agency team as hosts of one of the first ten bridging venues in the country.

The Council and hotel team worked with the British Red Cross, the Home Office and a range of local partners to meet every need. Immediate and key priorities included: ensuring health support was provided in the hotel, helping residents apply for benefits, and sourcing school places. The Council's Communications Team produced a welcome pack which was translated into the two main languages spoken by the new arrival.

A key legacy of this project is that the connections we have built up will allow us to support our:

- Local community for years to come. Families at the hotel are being supported to secure their own
- Private rented accommodation and all school-age children now have school places.
- A year on and Eastleigh is now the principal host for Afghan evacuees in the region and Eastleigh's response has since been held up as an example of best practice.

Aiming for zero emissions vehicles

As part of its commitment to a zero carbon Council and Borough, Neighbourhood Services have been exploring a range of approaches to reducing emissions during operations.

The Transport and Fleet Maintenance team had initial trepidations about the planned move to zero emissions vehicles. This involved the purchase and introduction of six new electric-powered vehicles, changing small equipment tools to electric and reducing vehicle fleet emissions by trialling the use of HVO. Two years on from conducting trials and carrying out training for staff, there is a clear recognition of the benefits for the global environment, but also for employees whose working conditions have been improved.

The Council now have an active staff group looking at how we can use refurbished or reuse fleet parts, rather than buying brand new, saving on raw materials in the production of new parts, and delivering savings in the cost of replacement parts. Work is also under way to look at extending the life of an RCV from 10 years to 16 years with the option to refurbish the vehicles after eight years.

Plant Eastleigh

The Council's commitment to plant 160,000 new trees by 2030 is a stretching target. The Neighbourhood Services team set up a staff work group to identify not only how we could achieve this target in a sustainable way, whilst engaging residents and delivering the Council's climate and environmental commitments.

The traditional procurement route through the use of external tree nurseries was considered, but the group quickly established that an alternative and local procurement option was for the Council to establish its own tree nursery, enabling it to grow targeted species locally from seeds or cuttings, using our own staff and avoiding transportation costs and negative environmental impact. It also provided the opportunity to create new jobs and avoid the need for time-intensive procurement arrangements.

A three-hectare area of land was identified on the Council's sustainable One Horton Heath housing development, where the nursery could set up and grow all of the trees required to meet the Council's commitment over the ten-year period. Regular Plant Eastleigh sessions are arranged where residents and businesses can plant a tree they have sponsored.

This Girl Can Eastleigh

As part of its strategy to create healthy communities, the Council's SportWorks and HealthWorks teams have increased female activity levels by running a year-long physical activity campaign, This Girl Can Eastleigh.

The Covid pandemic saw activity levels for both men and women fall and, according to research, female activity levels have remained consistently lower. Currently 20% of women in the Borough do little to no physical activity.

The campaign aimed to continue to reduce this figure by empowering women to improve their wellbeing and feel confident to participate in physical activity. The message from the fun, motivating and informal approach of This Girl Can Eastleigh is "However, you jiggle, kick, lift, stretch, or sprint, it's time to get moving in a way that suits you."

We believe that what makes the real difference is the relationship between Councillors and staff; it is one of co-production, a clear strategy and commitment from Councillors to empower and support staff in delivering real change that makes a difference for our communities – and, of course, our staff without whom we wouldn't have been named Council of the Year.

- *Local authorities can now register their interest for the APSE Annual Service Awards 2023. Please visit the APSE website for more information.*



You say you want a revolution? Why Liverpool's new underground refuse scheme may signal the end of the wheelie bin

The scheme has been designed to provide a cleaner waste solution for 27,000 terraced households in the city.

Liverpool City Council, which spends £9.5m a year collecting and recycling refuse, estimates that this new approach will radically reduce the issue of ripped black bin bags spilling out on to streets and blighting neighbourhoods.

The 'super bin' scheme will also save the council a huge amount of time and resources in the years to come by drastically cutting secondary waste-related issues such as rats, flies and smell associated with black bag waste disposal.

The first underground super bins were installed at Battenberg Street in Kensington in October, and so far the Council has installed bins at 10 sites across the city as part of phase one of the installation process. The rest of the underground super bins will be rolled out over the next two years, with 90 sites in densely built-up areas identified for installation.

Some key facts about underground bins:

- The underground bins come in a variety of sizes, the biggest being able to take up to 5,000 litres of waste, the equivalent to a week's worth of refuse for 20 houses.
- The uniquely designed smart bins, which are made of steel or reinforced plastic to reduce odours, issue an alarm when full and are emptied with a crane lift via a release mechanism in its base.
- The emptying and re-installation process takes around 10 minutes.
- The bins are fully accessible to those with limited strength, or mobility, some operated with foot pedals, others with ground-level mechanisms.
- Underground waste systems are very popular across Europe, used in several major European cities and capitals.

Alongside Liverpool Streetscene Services (LSSL), The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) helped create the procurement framework that has brought all the main European Underground Refuse System (URS) suppliers into the UK market.

Speaking about the scheme, Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions, said:

"Replacing tens of individual refuse bins with single underground units not only improves the look of our streets, but also brings huge cost savings and slashes the carbon footprint of refuse collection. For new developments,



installation costs can be lower than the cost of incorporating above ground bin storage areas and saves valuable space on the site. But, as the rollout in Liverpool demonstrates, underground bins are not just for new developments. For terraced housing, it is the answer to the problem of back alleys blighted by rows of ugly wheelie bins, and can be used in parks and on sea fronts to greatly reduce emptying frequency and eliminate problems associated with litter spilling out on to the streets."



'Super Bin Showcase' Event – 8 December, Liverpool

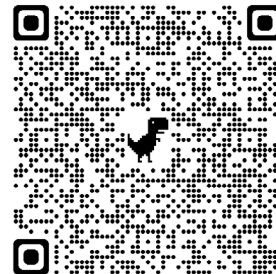
On Thursday 8 December, APSE and LSSL held a special showcase event in Liverpool incorporating an exhibition of the products available through the Framework as well as a chance to see the Liverpool bins in action.

This event – free for APSE members - provided an opportunity to engage directly with the main suppliers of all things URS. Members of the APSE/ Liverpool URS framework were invited along to exhibit their products. From underground bins themselves, to the vehicles that collect them and the associated technology that makes URS such an efficient option, the Framework is a genuine one-stop shop.

In the morning, delegates from across the UK heard from a diverse range of speakers, discussing a range of relevant themes and topics such as how to use the Framework, the IT required for a smart city revolution as well as the experience of The City of Edinburgh Council in installing 'semi-underground' bins. In the afternoon, delegates enjoyed a ticket to ride... the open top bus to an underground refuse site in Kensington, to watch one of the bins be emptied. A highlights package of the day can be found on the APSE website

Discover the future of waste collection - access the APSE / Liverpool URS Procurement Framework on the APSE website or using the QR code >>>

Alternatively please contact Head of APSE Solutions Andy Mudd on amudd@apse.org.uk •



Delivering and installing
Underground Refuse Systems
 for Local Authorities and the APSE framework





apse

Performance Networks Seminar 2022

Report Back

A quick look at this year's innovative speakers and thematic forums

Best and Most Improved Performer Awards

Check out the winners and finalists of this year's prestigious APSE Performance Networks Awards

Environmental measures on maintenance: 2021-22

The data is currently being validated and will be published when the data is complete. The data is currently being validated and will be published when the data is complete.

90%	From the 2017-22, what is the average percentage of vehicles are covered to date?
87%	What percentage of vehicles are currently in at March 11, 2022. Electric, Serviced or other non-petrol/diesel vehicles?
8%	

Best Green

A woman in a black top is speaking at a podium. On the podium, there is a sign that says 'Best Green'. There are also some bottles and a laptop on the podium.

A Data Remember!

Performance Networks Seminar Report Back

One of the biggest events in the local government calendar, we provide a summary of the speakers, workshops and forums from APSE's annual benchmarking seminar in Blackpool.



[L-R] Debbie Johns, Head of APSE Performance Networks; Damian Lyons Lowe, Chief Executive at Survation; Johanna Ragnartz, CEO of Keep Sweden Tidy; and Mo Baines, APSE Deputy Chief Executive open, session one.

At this current time, it has never been more crucial to collect data so as to fully understand the impact and consequences of the cost of living crisis, and how this has impacted on resources and performance across council services. Benchmarking is essential to achieving this; informing budgets, target setting and highlighting areas of improvement over time.

With this in mind, the APSE Performance Networks Seminar remains a unique date in the local government calendar as it provides an unrivalled opportunity for service managers and directors to network and exchange ideas on data intelligence.

On the first day of the seminar, delegates heard from various high-profile keynote speakers discussing the ways council services can leverage their data to demonstrate competitiveness and improve performance. In the afternoon, delegates could attend one of five informative and engaging forums and then one of eight service-specific workshops. The forums and workshops allowed delegates to discuss issues of local concern and develop solutions with colleagues through problem solving surgeries.

International perspectives

The opening session of this year's event - a panel session - had an international flavour as we were delighted to be joined from Sweden by Johanna Ragnartz, CEO of Keep Sweden Tidy (KST).

Johanna began her presentation by providing an overview of Sweden's demographics, economy and geography. Johanna then moved on to highlight KST's mission: promoting recycling and combatting litter through public awareness campaigns, awards and environmental education. Johanna spoke of how working strategically, engaging civil society, good communication with local media and, most relevant to those in attendance, using data effectively, is key to realising KST's ambitions.

Staying on the theme of data intelligence, Johanna stressed the importance of performance data in shaping and sustaining effective litter monitoring. As well as being a platform for cross-departmental problem solving and programme evaluation, Johanna spoke of how data plays a key role in driving a culture of innovation. "

Public trust in councils on the rise

Our next speaker of the session, Damian Lyons Lowe, of Survation, shared the latest results of the APSE/Survation 2022 public opinion survey. The survey has found that trust in local councils was slightly higher than last year, and significantly higher than trust in national government and private companies. In addition to being the most trusted to make decisions about how services are delivered in their local area, councils were also the most trusted to make decisions about local planning. The poll also surveyed the public on the pertinent issue of climate change. You can learn more about these findings on page 6.

A snapshot of APSE's benchmarking service

APSE's Debbie Johns presented a picture of how far local government services have recovered from the pandemic by drawing on the data sets in Performance Networks. First, Debbie set some context; the latest data was drawn from the 2021-22 financial year and this was compared to 2020-21, which was the financial year heavily affected by Covid-19. Covid still had some impact in 2021-22, particularly in April 2021, but we did see the start of recovery from the pandemic. The baseline year (2019-20) was also used to illustrate performance pre- and post-Covid. By comparing the averages for councils who have been in the data set consistently, the analysis demonstrated the impact that the pandemic had and how far local government has recovered.

Overall, council services have had different experiences in terms of additional spend over and above usual spend on PPE and covid-related costs such as materials, equipment, signage, etc. The data showed that even though we have had some reduction in this for most service areas this year, there is still a significant amount of spend on covid-related costs. For instance, for building cleaning, this represented 7.42% of spend in 20-21 and this has reduced to 6.86% in 21-22. The data also showed the impact of Covid on income and recovery from this. The reduction in income for Building maintenance during 20-21 (15%) was a short-term reduction, as compared to 19-20, income in 21-22 has increased by 14%. For refuse collection, the 8% reduction in income again was short term as there has been a 9% increase in income in 21-22 compared to the base year 19-20 (pre-Covid). The services which have only partly recovered to pre-Covid levels in terms of income are catering and leisure, which are still showing a reduction in income compared to pre-Covid. This will be because some schools were still closed during this year, as were some leisure centres.

Delegates take notes during the first session.



Debbie then analysed the impact on staff. Refuse collection, building maintenance and building cleaning have all shown an increase in staff in 21-22 compared to the base year 19-20. This is due to increased workloads and catching up on work (such as housing repairs) now buildings are reopen. However, catering and cemetery and crematorium services have experienced a reduction in staff this year compared to pre-Covid which is more likely to be a result of recruitment and retention issues being experienced in these sectors.

Next, Debbie discussed the impact on service provision. Overall, only 9% councils suspended any refuse collection services in 21-22 compared to 69% last year. However, these were pre-dominantly very short suspensions. As a result of Covid, 13% of councils have made long term changes to their refuse collection timetables, including collection frequencies and shift patterns. The data showed a large increase in service request changes for street cleansing compared to the base year 19-20, so Covid has increased demand in the long-term, with additional demands being faced by the service in emptying litter bins (38% increase) and dog bins (60% increase). This has been affected by an increase in the number of bins to cope with demand and also an increase in dog ownership. Fly-tipping increased by 51% last year as a result of the pandemic and has since reduced by 13%.

For roads, highways and street lighting services, 20-21 meant restrictions in work that could be carried out and 21-22 figures demonstrate recovery. Recovery has not only seen councils get back to pre-pandemic levels but exceed those levels in a lot of cases. Improvements include an increase in the percentage of emergency defects made safe within response times from 90% in 19-20 to 92% in 21-22 (for carriageways) and from 91% to 93% for footways. In addition, the percentage of safety inspections completed on time increased from 94% to 97% for carriageways and from 87% to 92% for footways.

The LAMS (Land Audit Management System) is a quality inspection system to monitor grounds maintenance and/or street cleansing. The results had been extracted from LAMS for street cleansing and grounds maintenance for inspections undertaken during the 2020-21 financial year. In street cleansing, there were improvements in all of the averages for litter, detritus, weeds, fly tipping and staining/gum with the other issues staying at similar levels compared to the base year 19-20 (pre-pandemic). This improvement across environmental issues will have been aided by monitoring tools such as LAMS helping to identify and rectify environmental issues. A similar picture emerges for ground maintenance although flower bed maintenance deteriorated, which is likely to be a result of a reduction in maintenance funding.

Debbie then drew on some of the climate change measures reported by APSE Performance Networks. 84% of councils had made a formal Climate Emergency declaration with a further 6% having a commitment to actions. 68% have set targets on carbon reduction whilst only 19% have set targets on ecological emergency. Last year saw a proliferation of measures in performance networks on environmental sustainability for each service area. This included that 80% of parks services have reduced the amount of glyphosate used from 5 years ago and 75% of catering services recycle food waste. The data is showing that progress has been made, although in some of the areas there is still a lot of scope for improvement such as the use of alternative fuels and electric vehicles and renewable energy sources.

Finally, customer satisfaction levels show that support for refuse collection services has continued and this has increased to an average of 92%. Satisfaction with building cleaning has increased in the past 2 years despite additional demands being placed on the service as a result of the pandemic. However, customer satisfaction for street cleansing, even though it increased during Covid, has retracted since and this could be due to an increase in demand for the service with reduced budgets and an increase in expectations.



Fiona Sutton-Wilson, Head of APSE Training, discusses creating more environmentally sustainable cemetery and crematorium services in Workshop C.

Following on from this, Debbie updated delegates as to the progress being made by the Performance Networks service in launching new projects, expanding its influence and improving user experience. This included the LAMS app which now has 46 councils as users, measuring the quality of service delivery for grounds, streets and cemetery land. In addition, APSE will be developing new dynamic interactive reports and dashboards through the use of new reporting tools on the web portal to complement the current report set.

Debbie closed her address by noting that Performance Networks is a vital tool for councils to be able to compare their inputs, productivity, outputs and outcomes with similar councils who are facing the same challenges. APSE Performance Networks is the best source of information for local government, which is needed now more than ever to battle for budgets and to provide evidence to internal and external stakeholders.

Forums and workshops

In the afternoon, delegates attended thematic forums that honed in on particularly pressing issues for range of local government frontline services.

Talking Workforce

The forum on workforce matters explored the issues of recruitment and retention of staff, the elephant in the room in terms of pay and conditions and competition with both the private sector and other areas of the public sector for staff. Mo Baines, APSE, reported on the outcomes of APSE's latest research on recruitment and retention issues, alongside the economy wide perspective on workforce and labour shortages. Terry Pycroft of Leeds City Council outlined Leeds approach to creating a modern and agile working environment. Importantly Terry stressed the need to ensure all workforce changes are inclusive and support diversity, particularly when looking at post-Covid working conditions and the return to the office environment.

Inspection Apps for public spaces

This forum discussed the Apps which have been developed for public spaces including LAMS (Land Audit Management System) for green spaces, streets and cemetery land. The two new Apps being piloted were also highlighted including PIMS (Playground Inspection Monitoring System) and MIST (Memorial Inspection Safety Tool). Stuart Russo, Senior Technical Officer for City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, demonstrated how the reporting of the inspection results could be enhanced through the use of Power BI, including drawing in other comparators such as deprivation, the use of mapping features, dynamic reporting and using drill down features. This will all be discussed further at the next LAMS working group meeting in the new year.

Are "green" indicators the most important?

This forum examined what we mean by "green indicators" and ways in which they can be used to address the challenges of climate change. Lucy Northey, Climate Emergency Manager at Wirral Council shared a case study which highlighted the use of Power BI as a tool to track progress over a number of ecological and climate-related indicators, from street lighting, eco-schools to woodland planting. The forum addressed the importance of monitoring performance in an environment of stretched resources and pressures. Key issues such as recruitment of staff/consultants with the skills and depth of understanding to undertake baseline benchmarking were discussed, alongside the challenges of determining the source of emissions within each service sector.

APSE Council of the year 2022 - Eastleigh Borough Council

The Executive Head of Neighbourhood Services at Eastleigh Borough Council, Paul Naylor, gave delegates an insight as to the councils approach to complex policy and operational matters and how they work hard to maintain a 'one family' culture within their organisation. Rather than look at the councils success through statistics he used examples based on how Eastleigh had responded to the Afghan evacuees emergency in terms of creating healthy and sustainable communities, the councils approach to the climate emergency – including the creation of a tree nursery where apprentices were recruited and trained as part of Eastleigh's approach to workforce recruitment and development. Paul O'Brien, APSE, then facilitated a discussion with delegates on how some of these approaches to integrating policy matters with operational activities could be scaled up across different authorities.

After lunch, day one of the seminar ended with eight highly informative workshops. With various frontline service experts facilitating the discussions, each workshop looked in depth at ways frontline staff can identify and overcome challenges, and thereby improve their effectiveness.



Our day two speakers line up for questions on the cost of living crisis.

Cost of living crisis

The second day of the seminar opened with Paul Bellotti, Executive Director of Communities and Environment, East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Having won APSE Overall Council of the Year in 2020, Paul spoke of how his authority are building on this success, with a special focus on the measures the authority is putting in place to protect vulnerable communities across the UK amidst the cost of living crisis.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion, made up of a number of senior frontline service managers from across the UK, discussing how frontline services can respond effectively to the cost of living crisis. The panel included: Anita Brown, Service Manager - Catering & Building Cleaning, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council; John-Paul Lovie, Head of Waste Policy and Partnerships, Blackpool Council; Paul Wright, Operational Director, Halton Borough Council; Fiona Horgan, Senior Design Engineer Manager, Doncaster Council; and Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive.

If you would like to view any of the speakers' presentations, please visit the APSE website. Alternatively, email Megan Butterworth on mbutterworth@apse.org.uk

The new generation is here...

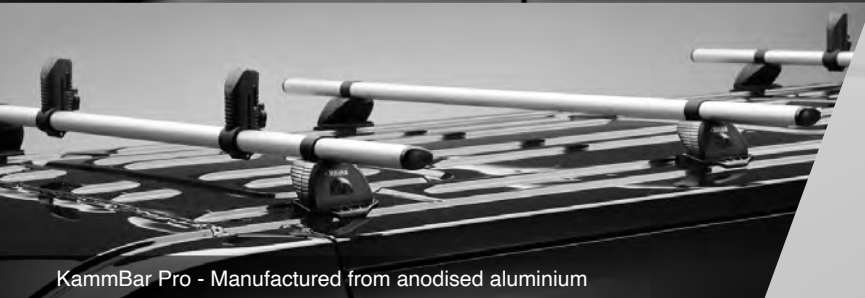
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Best and most improved performer 2022

In aid of
PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
JOIN US.

APSE Performance Networks is pleased to announce the winners in the most improved and best performer categories for the Performance Networks Awards for 2022. The awards ceremony, hosted by BBC Radio 1 Presenter Emma Louise, took place at the Performance Networks Seminar at the Village Hotel, Blackpool on the evening of Thursday 1 December 2022.

Commenting on the Awards, Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive said, "With the ongoing pressures on council

finances, now is not the time to let up on the need for effective performance management. Looking at tonight's finalists, I am delighted to see such a large number of authorities successfully utilising APSE's benchmarking service to develop their services and achieve excellence. Congratulations to all."

The charity awards dinner is a special event in the local government calendar and in recent years has raised over £60,000 for Parkinson's UK.

Congratulations to all finalists and winners!

Building Cleaning *kindly sponsored by Staffordshire University*

Best Performer



Finalists

- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Moray Council
- Shropshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council

WINNER: EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Education Authority NI
- Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
- Shropshire Council

WINNER: GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Building Maintenance kindly sponsored by *bbits*

Best Performer



Finalists

- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- Education Authority NI
- Moray Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- Durham County Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- Education Authority NI
- Moray Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- South Ayrshire Council

WINNER: DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

Catering kindly sponsored by *Toltec*

Best Performer



Finalists

- Denbighshire County Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
- Shropshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Sunderland City Council

WINNER: DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- Moray Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Shropshire Council
- Sunderland City Council

WINNER: OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Cemetery and Crematorium Services *kindly sponsored by Greenbridge Designs*

Best Performer



Finalists

Aberdeen City Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Middlesbrough Council
North Lincolnshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council

Warrington Borough Council
Wyre Borough Council

WINNER: KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Aberdeenshire Council
City of Lincoln Council
Cornwall Council
Flintshire County Council
Moray Council
Northumberland County Council
Warrington Borough Council

WINNER: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Parks, Open Spaces and Horticultural Services *kindly sponsored by Bucher Municipal*

Best Performer



Finalists

Bolsover District Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Stafford Borough Council

WINNER: EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Cardiff Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Halton Borough Council
London Borough of Hounslow
North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

Royal Borough of Greenwich
South Lanarkshire Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

WINNER: STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Refuse Collection kindly sponsored by National Enforcement Solutions

Best Performer



Finalists

- Bolsover District Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Hull City Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council

- West Lindsey District Council
- West Lothian Council
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- Cardiff Council
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

- Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
- West Lindsey District Council

WINNER: NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL



Roads, Highways and Winter Maintenance *kindly sponsored by Tarmac*

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Caerphilly County Borough Council	Northumberland County Council
Cheshire East Council	Nottinghamshire County Council
East Ayrshire Council	Plymouth City Council
East Dunbartonshire Council	South Ayrshire Council
East Renfrewshire Council	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Kent County Council	
Milton Keynes Council	

WINNER: WIGAN METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

Angus Council	Renfrewshire Council
East Ayrshire Council	South Ayrshire Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	West Lothian Council
Inverclyde Council	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Milton Keynes Council	
Moray Council	
Nottinghamshire County Council	

WINNER: MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

Sports and Leisure Facility Management

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Chelmsford City Council	North Northamptonshire Council
<i>Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre</i>	<i>West Glebe Sports Pavilion</i>
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Nottingham City Council Harvey
<i>East Riding Leisure Haltemprice</i>	<i>Hadden Sports Centre</i>
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	
<i>Mile End Park Leisure Centre and Stadium</i>	
North Lincolnshire Council	
<i>Riddings Community Hub</i>	

WINNER: NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL - RIDDINGS COMMUNITY HUB

Finalists

East Riding of Yorkshire Council	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
<i>East Riding Leisure Bridlington</i>	<i>Haven Point</i>
North Lincolnshire Council	
<i>Ancholme Leisure Centre</i>	
Nottingham City Council	
<i>Victoria Leisure Centre</i>	
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	
<i>Aston Cum Aughton Leisure Centre</i>	

WINNER: NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL - ANCHOLME LEISURE CENTRE

Street Cleansing *kindly sponsored by Bucher Municipal*

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Bolsover District Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough
Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Hull City Council
Stafford Borough Council
West Lindsey District Council

WINNER: EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

Bolsover District Council
Cardiff Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Falkirk Council
Hull City Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough
Council

West Lindsey District Council

WINNER: WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**Street Lighting** *kindly sponsored by Tarmac*

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Dundee City Council
Falkirk Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough
Council
Moray Council
North Lincolnshire Council

Northumberland County Council
Orkney Islands Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough
Council

WINNER: WIGAN METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

Denbighshire County Council
Dundee City Council
East Dunbartonshire Council
Falkirk Council
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough
Council
Nottinghamshire County Council

South Gloucestershire Council
West Lothian Council

WINNER: FALKIRK COUNCIL

Transport Operations and Vehicle Maintenance *kindly sponsored by APSE Solutions*

Best Performer



Finalists

- East Renfrewshire Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Shetland Islands Council

WINNER: SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- East Renfrewshire Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Shetland Islands Council
- Tayside Contracts

WINNER: EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

APSE would like to thank all sponsors of the Performance Networks Seminar and Awards 2022 for their support



The APSE Highways Innovation Awards 2023 are now open for entries!

These awards celebrate outstanding local councils that use innovative ideas and solutions to tackle the current challenges facing their frontline services. The awards provide participating authorities with an opportunity to showcase their expertise, alongside the results that they have achieved.

The Innovation Awards are split into three categories:

- Winter maintenance and winter resilience services
- Street lighting
- Highways maintenance services

The ideal submission will contain a description of the problem or challenge faced, and the innovative approach taken to remedy it. This could be, for example, a service redesign, new training techniques, use of new materials or equipment, or new methods of responding to/communicating with the public. The submission should also include the outcomes that have been achieved. As a helpful guide, a brochure featuring the successful submissions from yesteryear is available to download.

Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony held as part of the annual APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar on 23 March 2023.

Member and non-member authorities are welcome to submit an application.

Entries will be assessed on a submission basis by an independent judging panel.

Send your expressions of interest
to Matt Ellis at mellis@apse.org.uk

2020.



New APSE Approved Partner:

Welcome **WasteHero**  **WASTE HERO**



[L-R] Danielle Weir, Content Marketing Manager, WasteHero; Chris Cutforth, former APSE National Secretary; Andrew Crofts, Managing Director, WasteHero, Cllr Andrea Lewis, former APSE National Chair.

WasteHero, a leading supplier of municipal waste management software, has announced its status as an APSE Approved Partner.

WasteHero was established out of the need for modern, up-to-date software for the municipal waste industry. They provide a reimagined and up-to-date 360° SaaS Suite helping cities manage waste collection, reduce operative time and engage citizens effortlessly.

"Systems built 15 years ago don't consider the workflows and challenges cities face today," says Andrew Crofts, UK Managing Director at WasteHero. "With every added layer of complexity in waste management, the more frustrated administrators and drivers become using outdated software that forces manual processes."

"The industry is seeing a raft of legislative changes coming through, and without a solid software foundation in place, local authorities are going to face a tough time delivering sustainable, affordable and high-quality waste services to residents."

"WasteHero is delighted to partner with APSE and bring software into the spotlight as an essential focal point for local authorities. We look forward to sharing our software solutions and technological expertise with local councils in APSE's network as they face challenges in budget cuts, emission reduction targets and retaining talented employees."

The company specialises in software tailored specifically for the municipal waste industry, offering route and street cleansing planning and optimisation, driver in-cab technology, a customer service system, citizen self-service, and fleet & asset management. WasteHero's focus is to create user-friendly and robust operating systems that support local authorities in overcoming challenges now and into the future.

With integrations to existing third-party systems, such as CRM and finance programmes, WasteHero's integrative architecture bridges the gap between systems, centralising all data and team members in one platform, empowering cost savings, sustainable operations, and workflow automation.

Speaking about our new Partner, APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, "With a renewed outlook on how to best deliver waste services to our communities, WasteHero will be a welcomed addition to the APSE family, providing a fresh perspective to our members."

As an APSE Approved Partner, WasteHero will attend upcoming events and share its industry expertise with various advisory groups. For more information about our new Approved Partner and how they can help improve your municipal waste services, please visit <https://wastehero.io/>



CDS
Cemeteries
& Crematoria



CDS
Parks
& Leisure



CDS
Environmental
Solutions



It's our experience of what you can't see, that helps create our beautiful spaces

Formerly known as Cemetery Development Services, The CDS Group has been on an incredible journey.

We have undertaken over 400 feasibility studies and completed over 40 new cemeteries in the UK and overseas. As a result of the success and reputation in the cemetery market, CDS expanded into designing and developing new crematoria sites for both private companies and local authorities using our inhouse team of engineers and architects.

Our dedication to your vision has enabled us to gain recognition in both the cemeteries and crematorium market, **but now we are expanding.**

Our business now focuses on three distinct areas, namely Cemeteries and Crematoria, Parks and Leisure, and Environmental Solutions.

Our Parks and Leisure team can help design sports facilities, landscaping of parks and public spaces as well as designing drainage solutions.

The Environmental team can assist with investigating contaminated land sites under Part IIA and brownfield land, bringing to life forgotten parcels of land, helping to contribute to the local community and provide potential income generation for the local authority.

We currently have new sites under construction with many more in different stages of project feasibility, design and planning. The quality of our work has not changed; maintaining the high level of service you expect.



CDS are with you every step of the way, from Feasibility Studies, Landscape and Concept Design through to Planning, Construction and Delivery, ensuring a seamless experience from inception to completion.

Our team of highly qualified specialists - field surveyors, engineers and designers - are committed to creating beautifully landscaped and thoughtfully constructed developments.

Ones that have distinctive spatial qualities but also offer excellent commercial value, and that are low-maintenance environments with minimal operational costs.

Our Green Agenda also ensures that our developments are environmentally friendly, offer reductions in emissions and pollution whilst helping improve biodiversity.

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



Discover what's beneath.

Plymouth Parks: Buzzing with innovation!

Plymouth City Council has been trialling new nature-based solutions with very impressive results. Jemma Sharman, Green Minds Programme Manager, and Emmie Readman, Engagement and Campaigns Officer, provide an overview of this bold - and APSE Parks Innovation Award winning - approach.

There is now widespread support for grass cutting reduction in 1310 sites, enabling meadow habitat to flourish. This new approach has been embedded as business as usual, with 40% of PCC's grassland now managed for wildlife



Often, the challenges that we face present us with opportunities to think differently, to grow, and to innovate. We all know that locally, nationally, and globally, we face climate and biodiversity challenges which require new solutions; nature-based solutions which support nature recovery. At the heart of these solutions are people: People determine the success and sustainability of any initiative which is taken.

With this in mind, Plymouth City Council (PCC) has been trialling new nature-based solutions across the city, actively engaging residents, stakeholders, and staff in these changes. One of these changes is in our grassland management across Plymouth, to support nature recovery. We brought together a partnership with environmental and social charities, and education and cultural sectors, which enabled us to co-design and deliver creative digital technology interventions with communities. These interventions were to support pro-environmental attitude and behaviour change.

Where were we starting from? Before 2020, 85% of the 700 hectares of PCC grassland was managed as amenity grassland, mown every four weeks. Partnership work with Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) helped us to develop a strategy to improve our spaces for wildlife in line with the Council's strategic aspirations in our Climate Emergency Action Plan. As a result, changes to our grassland management to support more wildlife were prioritised as a key objective.

However, to support the management changes a key challenge was to change public, stakeholder, and workforce perception of greenspaces from 'neat and tidy' to accepting their value as wildlife habitats. Alongside our programme of grass cutting changes, we worked as part of Green Minds partnership (led by PCC, funded by European Regional Development, Urban Innovative Actions Initiative). This work focused on co-designing and delivering a creative digital tech and marketing campaign. Working with local artists, environmentalists, educators, and residents to help change attitudes and support pro-environmental behaviours, alongside our programme of grass cutting reduction. Using a 'See, Think, Do, Care' framework the interventions aimed to move people on a journey from seeing/noticing social media and online content, to understanding more about the natural world and our land management, through to taking action for wildlife and caring for local parks/greens.

So, how did we do it? First of all, we needed to understand our audiences: who do we talk with and how? Given that we wanted to engage with a broad range of people: from decision makers to school children, businesses to the general public, our approach needed to consider how people engage with us, and if they don't, how can we reach them. Here are some of the initiatives we have implemented:-

- Easier, clearer access to information: Changing the Plymouth City Council website to support public understanding of our changed approach, incorporating a Google Map to show grass cutting schedules. This was featured in The Guardian as an example of best practice. This has changed from a 'report an issue/complaint' approach to proactively providing information on grass cutting schedules and how we are supporting urban wildlife. This work was carried out in partnership with the Future Parks Accelerator Team: www.plymouth.gov.uk/how-we-manage-our-grass
- Knowledge sharing workshops with Street Services and Devon Wildlife Trust, to show how important the work on the ground is from a biodiversity perspective, to explain the changes in approach to grassland management, and to equip them with answers if and when members of the public ask them about the changes.
- Social media campaigns – including getting involved in The Wildlife Trusts' 30 Days Wild (June 2022), and our Wildflowers in Plymouth films, where the Grass Cutting Team Leader in our Street Services team explains the value of wildflowers people may see every day in their local areas: <https://youtu.be/nL6ZpSFr1u4>
- Seeds for Schools – working with a local social enterprise, Pollenize, to provide each of the 36,000 school children in Plymouth with a packet of wildflower seeds. Followed by the opportunity to get involved with an interactive digital pollinator experience at Plymouth's brand



new, immersive dome, led by Real Ideas Organisation: bit.ly/SeedsForSchools

- Digital, online co-design workshops with Arts University Plymouth- AUP's Fab Lab linked up with residents and community groups to design playful meadow signs to install on wildflower sites around the city, to promote understanding of parks management: bit.ly/WFsigns
- Workshops with local secondary school pupils and University of Plymouth to pilot digital interventions to make nature more visible, in our largest urban park. This involved installing a LOWARAN mobile network across the park with environmental sensors and trialling a chatbot installed on the park café wall, enabling people to 'ask the park' questions: bit.ly/GMLivingLab
- Augmented reality creative commission – working with Arts University Plymouth, 'Ashnilation' reached new audiences through cutting edge Microsoft HoloLens digital technology, promoting engagement and learning around insects and wider wildlife habitat: bit.ly/Ashnilation
- Take Action for Wildlife – 'how to' online resources and webinars for landowners, professional, families, and schools: bit.ly/webinarsGM
- Large scale public arts events – including a 'Rewilded' building installation at Plymouth's 2021 Illuminate festival, organised by Real Ideas Organisation to engage people in the concept of nature recovery bit.ly/GMIlluminate

What has been achieved so far?

Social media highlights include June wildflower films with 25,143 views with 79% of comments being positive/more information about increasing urban meadows

110 new people have actively engaged in Plymouth's new Rewilding Network and 362 people have participated in online Take Action for Wildlife webinars

36,000 seed packets have been planted with local primary schools as well as an increase in biodiversity, and therefore increased opportunity for residents to connect with nature

The Council has reduced operational costs and increased operational capacity; reducing fuel use by 33%

Street Services staff have been referring to themselves as 'habitat managers', and have reported a greater awareness of wildlife. This has also culminated in stronger, long-term partnerships between community groups, wildlife charities, and our operational staff

There is now widespread support for grass cutting reduction in 1310 sites, enabling meadow habitat to flourish. This new approach has been embedded as business as usual, with 40% of PCC's grassland now managed for wildlife

We are also monitoring nature connection through a biannual citywide survey using the Nature Connectedness Index helping us evaluate change and inform future marketing campaigns.

We are proud to have won the APSE Parks Innovation Award 2022. The Award recognises the broad range of work across Plymouth City Council teams and our delivery partners, all of whom we would like to thank and congratulate. We are already looking at ways that we can develop this learning and take it forward into innovative, collaborative future projects. •

Emmie Readman and Zoe Sydenham delivered a presentation on Plymouth's Green Minds Partnership at the APSE Refuse, Recycling, Streetscene, Grounds and Parks Seminar 2022. The presentation is available for download from the APSE website.



New APSE Approved Partner: Welcome **PlotBox** **PL0TBOX**



Niall Adams, Solutions consultant at PlotBox, receives the Approved Partner certificate from Cllr Billy Mullin at the APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar in Wigan on 17 November.

Beginning life in 2012, PlotBox has grown from entrepreneurial startup, to become a leader in deathcare management technologies.

Founded by husband and wife team Sean and Leona McAllister, PlotBox was the first, purpose-built solution of its kind to integrate two previously separate functions - deathcare management software and georectified mapping, helping to revolutionise the way cemeteries and crematoria operate and grow.

A decade on, PlotBox customers now benefit from the global expertise of a growing, world-wide multi-disciplinary team that stretches across the UK, North America and Australia.

PlotBox CEO, Sean McAllister said, "Our mission is to help take away some of the pain around dealing with death - for families, and those who serve them. Key to realising that mission has been working closely with local authorities and councils across the UK; in understanding what their challenges are and what's important to them, we have been able to give them time back to focus on what matters most.

In looking at issues from sustainability to capacity, to service design and facility planning, it becomes increasingly clear that legacy modernisation through digital transformation is no longer a 'nice-to-have' for bereavement services, but rather a 'must-have'.

As the foremost specialist in local authority frontline services, I'm delighted that this partnership with APSE will allow us to support and facilitate best practice, resulting in positive outcomes for providers and the best possible level of care for families."

PlotBox's cloud-based solution seamlessly integrates all of the essential functions of deathcare management into a single system, accessible from anywhere at any time - providing a 'single source of truth' that removes silos of information, increases efficiencies, and streamlines operational workflows and processes.

APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien said, "Having enjoyed a long-standing relationship with PlotBox, APSE are delighted to have them on board our Approved Partner scheme. As we recover from COVID, local authority bereavement teams face serious financial uncertainty. PlotBox's market-leading cloud-based deathcare management solution and industry expertise will deliver a wide range of benefits for our members; freeing up time and money for them to focus on what matters most - their local communities."

To learn more, visit: www.plotbox.io or email: info@plotbox.io •

Meet our new members of staff!



Julie Cook, Data Analyst

What is your professional background?

I worked in various analytical roles prior to APSE within the private sector. I love data and enjoy seeing the raw data transformed into useful reports for the end user. My main skillset is with Microsoft Excel and Access, but I am currently learning SQL and PowerBI.

What is your role at APSE?

I work in the Performance Networks team as a Data Analyst. My role involves creating data templates each year for the members and then extracting the data from the completed templates. I then transform that data into meaningful benchmarking reports. I am also the lead team member for the Building Cleaning Inspection App and I am currently in the process of creating a new dashboard style report for app users to interpret inspection results. I work a lot with APSE associates, mainly on work relating to Northern Ireland benchmarking and UK data validation.

What is your favourite thing about the role?

My favourite thing about my role is the scope for learning and development that it allows. Technology is constantly evolving and as a Data Analyst you have to adapt to those changes in technology. I enjoy looking for ways to streamline processes and develop new products for our members.

Where can APSE members meet you?

I am based at the Manchester office. I will also be involved in some of the Performance Networks working groups. I am also available at jcook@apse.org.uk.



Olivia Giles, Training Co-ordination Officer

What is your professional background?

Before my current job role at APSE, I spent six years working in retail. During those six years I worked my way up from being a staff member to a senior manager. Given my level of experience I was then given the opportunity

to support other members of staff with their continuous professional development. As this was a customer facing role, I was responsible for delivering outstanding customer service on a day-to-day basis and supporting my team towards achieving this goal.

What is your role at APSE?

I joined the Training Team as the newly appointed Training Co-ordination Officer in October of this year. My responsibilities include providing project co-ordination, business support and responsive, customer focussed communications. I also build relationships with customers, partners and Associate Trainers to assist in the co-ordination of online and in person training events.

What is your favourite thing about the role?

My favourite thing about my job role so far has been engaging with a completely different client base to which I am used to. It has been really fulfilling seeing councils and individuals passionate about what they do and how they are willing to invest in their employees through our training. Furthermore, I enjoy deepening my understanding of what it means to deliver exceptional frontline services in a local authority context, as well as collaborating with my new colleagues internally within Energy, Solutions and Performance Networks.

Where can APSE members meet you?

I will be based in our Manchester Office where I am contactable by emailing ogiles@apse.org.uk. •

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We are currently offering earn out schemes*, whereby we will recover the amount of the quoted cost of the project through the pay per view revenue. Get in touch to find out more by emailing info@deceasedonline.com, or phoning 01536 791568 * subject to an assessment of the records

Hosting your records on Deceased Online is beneficial in a number of ways. You'll *generate revenue* from your records. Your records are *digitised* and preserved. The data we provide from your records is suitable for use in any *management system*, or even just in spreadsheet format. Providing 24/7 online access for your records to the public will *save your staff time*. We have unrivalled specialist knowledge and experience to sensitively interpret burial and cremation records, including all aspects of *data protection compliance*.

Mastering apprenticeships in housing and building maintenance

Held as part of APSE's Big Housing Retrofit Summit, and announced at a charity dinner on the evening of Thursday 13 October, the APSE Building Maintenance Apprentice Awards recognise the incredible work apprentices and councils have been engaged in over this past year.

We caught up with this year's winners to ask them about their apprenticeship journey; the challenges, the rewards and the advice they would give to existing and potential apprentices.



Ruaridh Strachan, Fife Council - Building Skills Winner

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the Council?

Towards the end of my sixth year of high school I attended a careers fair and Fife Council were one of the exhibitors promoting their apprentice scheme. This gave me an insight into the possibility of becoming an apprentice stonemason. I was immediately interested in the Stonemasonry trade and the potential high standard of an apprenticeship with Fife Council was appealing.

What has been the most challenging part of the apprenticeship and why?

The most challenging part of my apprenticeship so far has been gaining confidence within myself. I was accepted straight from school for this apprenticeship and to start with I struggled with various tasks. Looking back on my apprenticeship I can now recognise that my lack of confidence is a natural feeling. I have matured both as a person and as a stonemason and have become more confident in completing the tasks I am given.

What has been the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

The most rewarding part of the apprenticeship has been working on local historic buildings and knowing that the work I am completing just now will help to maintain these buildings for years to come.

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

The advice I would give to someone who is just starting their apprenticeship is to always try their best to listen, learn and maintain a good attitude to their work. I would also say that you shouldn't be afraid to ask questions when unsure and always try to improve.

Any other comments? Plans for the future?

I look forward to finishing my apprenticeship and to becoming a fully qualified Stonemason. I am excited to continue to work on important and historical projects in my local community, and I hope to in future become a supervisor at Fife Council.

"The most rewarding part has been working on local historic buildings and knowing that my work will help to maintain these buildings for years to come."



"The local authority apprenticeship model remains a diverse, highly-rewarding and mutually beneficial investment for councils; providing a great opportunity to reskill the local workforce and grow the local economy." Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive



Philippa Boagey, Bristol City Council - Mechanical and Electrical Winner

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the Council?

I was very pleased to be able to embark on my apprenticeship with the Council as I knew I'd be with a corporation who would surround me with a wealth of experience and opportunities. Before I was accepted the position I was able to meet my future manager/ work colleagues and see the workplace. I felt very welcomed and at ease on this visit which for me was really important and encouraged me to take on my apprenticeship specifically with Bristol City Council.

What has been the most challenging part of the apprenticeship and why?

The start! Looking back I really didn't know anything at all, every day at the beginning was tough as there was so much to take in, learning to use the machines and tools. I made a big effort to write everything down and looked at failures as the best lessons. I wanted to be as good as my colleagues so I pushed through and now I'm worlds ahead of where I started and it feels even more of an achievement because I got myself to where I am now through a lot of dedication.

What has been the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

Achieving a distinction in woodmachining and of course winning apprentice of the year! It's really great to see all your hard work recognised and also for my own self confidence in my work and progress.

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

My advice would be to stay proactive and productive with your time, with a wealth of experience around you. I've found everyone I work with to be more than willing to give their time to help me along with my work or answer any questions I have. This is still true two years in and probably 10 years down the line too!

Any other comments? Plans for the future?

I've found this industry to be very rewarding; the more you stick at it and persevere the better it gets. It's most difficult at the beginning as everything is new but once things start to click into place it is the best feeling and very encouraging. For the future, I've many projects I'd like to achieve such as working with, and encouraging, women into woodwork, most of all focusing as much time as I can on improving my skills and being the best I can be.

“My advice would be to stay proactive and productive with your time, with a wealth of experience around you... I've many projects I'd like to achieve such as working with, and encouraging, women into woodwork”

The APSE local authority apprentice and trainee awards scheme is open to candidates from all stages of training and have been running successfully for close to two decades throughout the UK. Visit the APSE website for information on how to apply. •

New APSE Energy Approved Partner: Welcome **LASER Energy** L•A•S•E•R



The LASER Energy Team exhibiting at the APSE Annual Seminar 2022 in Swansea.

APSE are delighted to welcome LASER Energy - a leading provider of de-carbonisation and energy services for the public sector - as APSE Energy's new 'Frameworks for Zero Carbon Energy Technologies Partner'.

Since 1989, LASER has been delivering unique end-to-end solutions for their customers' energy requirements; exploring new solutions and technologies to become more energy efficient and greener in an increasingly environmentally conscious world.

Nigel Hartnup, Director of Energy & Carbon at LASER, said, "From our signature Zero Carbon solutions to our market leading energy procurement services, LASER can draw on three decades of unrivalled knowledge and experience to help local authorities choose the perfect solution for their organisation via our compliant frameworks.

"APSE Energy have established themselves as the go-to resource for all things municipal-energy related, and so the opportunity to embed our collaboration in the form of an official partnership was a no-brainer. Like APSE, LASER has a long record of success within local government. Therefore, we are highly confident this partnership will strengthen the hand of councils as they grapple with spiralling costs and the ever-increasing demands of working towards net zero."

Created by Kent County Council in 1989, LASER work with a large number of public sector bodies including Local Authorities, Blue Light, NHS Trusts, Universities & Colleges and Housing Associations. One of the largest energy buying organisations in the UK, they now purchase over £1 billion of energy per annum and serve over 200 public sector customers.

Speaking about our new Energy Partner, APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien said that, "With over 30 years' experience in the sector delivering for local authorities across the UK, LASER Energy will be an excellent addition to the APSE family and an indispensable resource to all of our members."

"Adding LASER Energy as our exclusive 'Frameworks for Zero Carbon Energy Technologies Partner' gives the APSE Energy membership special access to LASER's rich team of industry-experienced professionals. With LASER's customer-first approach, there is no doubt that they will provide a real budget boost and market-savviness for our members, particularly at this time of serious financial uncertainty in the energy sector."

As Energy Partners, LASER Energy will appear at upcoming events and will be sharing their technological and industry expertise at a range of advisory groups and other meetings.. For more information: <https://www.laserenergy.org.uk/> •

Salt Ayre of the Earth

A closer look at Lancaster City Council's APSE Service Award winning 2022 Decarbonisation Initiative.

On 30 January 2019 Lancaster City Council declared a climate emergency after councilors unanimously voted to work towards creating a zero-carbon district by 2030.

The decision triggered a new approach for the Council and challenged officers to think differently about how services could operate and better appreciate the impact each has on the environment.

As the single largest CO2 emitter in the Council's portfolio, a Heating and Thermal Efficiency review of Salt Ayre Leisure Centre took place in August 2020 to review decarbonised heating solutions and building fabric improvements.

The report detailed that significant CO2 reductions could be achieved by replacing the ageing gas boilers with a two-stage system using air source and water to water heat pumps combined with retrofit glazing and LED lighting upgrades.

Working with APSE Energy and other specialist consultants, officers further developed plans to include a 1.3MWp solar array on a nearby disused landfill site owned by the council and connect it to the leisure centre with a direct wire. Full feasibility was completed.

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In September 2020, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced £1b of public sector decarbonisation scheme funding and the City Council submitted a bid for £6.8M to fund the full scheme at Salt Ayre.

In February 2021, the Council was informed that it had been successful and was the third highest recipient of PSDS grant funding in the North-West and the single-highest recipient for a district council.

Due to the significance and scale, it is anticipated that this single project will reduce the Council's entire carbon footprint from natural gas by as much as 35%, saving in the region of 642 t(CO2e) when combined with the Council's REGO-backed green energy tariff.

Improvements achieved and challenges overcome

The Council engaged with energy management experts to develop and design a heating system that could supply the heat loads required to completely remove the need for natural gas. A bespoke design was required, and the Council settled on a two-stage heating system using air source heat pumps connected to water-to-water heat pumps.

The Council isn't aware of any other leisure centre in the UK that has taken this approach due to the complexity, design requirements, cost



implications and head loads required. Innovation and creativity were required to overcome the hurdles of complete decarbonisation.

Due to the timescales, officers formed a comprehensive project group. Expert advice was provided and officers developed concise, robust delivery plans which have guided the project through to the final stages of delivery. Officers have worked at pace, in an agile manner and pulled together all key stakeholders, both internal and external, to fast track the project whilst ensuring all necessary diligence is completed.

The scheme was fully completed in March 2022, with all work at the leisure center reaching mechanical completion by December 2021.

The project has been an enormous collaborative effort that has demanded a high degree of organisation, problem solving ability, dedication and negotiation skills to deliver.

Outcomes and future goals

The carbon reductions anticipated on completion of the scheme are significant and the design of the scheme along with the technology being utilised will enable further developments in the coming years.

The success of the Public Sector Decarbonisation funding has enabled the Council to save and, in some cases, redirect capital funding originally ringfenced to the leisure centre to other priority projects. Modelling suggests that the scheme should generate a positive financial return once delivered.

Based on the revised energy demands expected and capital savings, the Council expects to make revenue savings of £114k over the next 10 years. Whilst a relatively modest sum, this should be considered alongside a net CO2 reduction 35% from natural gas. Natural gas constitutes 48% of the council's direct emissions and the delivery of this scheme represents a significant reduction.

It would not have been possible to deliver such a large CO2 reduction and a positive financial outcome without PSDS funding and methodical modelling and design.

During the procurement, officers also considered social value and, in line with the Council's social value and local wealth building ambitions, a 10% weighting was allocated for all packages over £100k. This is expected to provide further benefit to local supply chains and employment and is estimated to be worth £155,928

To provide further futureproofing, the planning application, lease negotiations and updated restoration plan for the landfill site are based on a 3MWp solar array with battery storage. This will enable the 1.3MWp solar farm to be extended when local grid restrictions are lifted by 2026. This provides the Council with an opportunity to increase solar energy production, supply more renewable energy directly to Salt Ayre Leisure Centre and consider other commercial options.

Discover how your council can benefit from investing in renewables - visit the APSE Energy website.

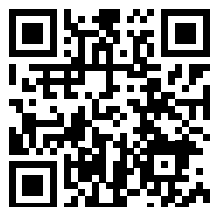


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