

Environmental Services



Innovation Awards





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This brochure contains everything you need to know about the winners and finalists in the Environmental Services Innovation Awards 2017, 2018 and 2019.

For details on how to enter the 2020 Environmental Services Innovation Awards, contact Matthew Ellis at mellis@apse.org.uk

For exhibition and sponsorship opportunities at any APSE event, email Matt Paton at m.paton@spacehouse.co.uk

Technology Finalists 2017

Nottingham City Council

Innovative use of integrated technologies at Loxley House

Nottingham City Council faces ever-increasing cuts in funding. Energy usage is one of the Council's biggest non-fixed costs and the first to be targeted for reduction. Committed to green energy generation, Loxley House, the Council's head office, had multiple innovative energy efficiency technologies and projects installed in it. The building's electricity is now supplied directly by a private wire, sustainably generated in conjunction with the city's District Heat Network which produces the majority of the energy required for the building's usage; including heating, cooling and power. Today, this system annually delivers 126GWh of renewable heating and cooling, which is distributed through approximately 90km of pipework to customers across the city, diverting 160,000 tonnes of non-hazardous waste from landfill per year and supplying over 200 commercial premises and 5,000 homes. In 2017, the Energy Projects Team installed 100 solar panels using a non-intrusive ballasted system. The PV system is expected to generate over 21,000 kWhs in the first year and is expected to provide a return on investment of 8%. The system is forecast to produce a financial saving of £133,500 over a 30 year period, saving the council on average £4,450 per year.

Oxfordshire County Council

The Dragon Patcher

With increasing budgetary pressures and deteriorating highway assets, an innovative method of service delivery was required to mitigate against the escalating rate of defect repairs. Traditional industry inspection and repair techniques are labour-intensive, time consuming and wasteful. The Council recognised that to solve the problem, it had to innovate. By working closely with construction and development company Skanska, the solution was the Dragon Patcher. The Dragon Patcher is designed to treat a multitude of defect types through its ability to both surface dress and deliver bulk hot coated material. Having developed confidence in the quality of repair achieved by the Dragon, operatives have been trained to undertake and record statutory inspections, allowing a find and fix approach to pot holes and removing the need for a traditional inspector identifying a defect. The Dragon Patcher has surpassed expectations by repairing

defects quickly, efficiently, cost-effectively and sustainably. Compared to the daily output from a traditional 2-person gang, the Dragon Patcher process brings over a 900% increase in area repaired. Significant cost savings have also been delivered with costs per m2 repair reduced by over 80%.

South Gloucestershire Council

St Bromley Heath Viaduct Major Maintenance and Improvement Scheme - Communication and Engagement

The A4174 Bromley Heath Viaduct major maintenance and improvement scheme required the Council to close a major bridge on the busiest road in South Gloucestershire right next to the M32 and M4. The works would severely restrict a major strategic route linking Bristol to the motorway network; a network that has over 55,000 vehicles on it every day. To avoid a massive negative impact on communities and businesses, both local and multi-national, the Council implemented an imaginative and innovative communications plan to inform and engage everyone with the aim of changing travel habits permanently. Adopting an unprecedented integrated, multi-platform communications campaign allowed the Council to significantly exceed their aims. The proactive communications strategy helped the Council avoid sustained gridlock on the West of England's busiest road, influence employers and individuals to encourage a long-term modal shift towards sustainable travel (evidenced by a 31% increase in cyclists), and protect the reputation of the Council.

Suffolk Coastal District Council

PHILIS – Port Health Interactive Live Information System

In 2008, the Port of Felixstowe was expanding and Suffolk Coastal District Council Port Health Authority (SCPHA) needed to make sure it could deliver its services as efficiently as possible; dealing with the increasing workload without taking on additional staff. The old and inefficient DOS based computer system was not able to meet the changing and growing demands on the Port Heath service. The Port Health Team looked to the technology market place but there were no off-the-shelf systems available that would meet requirements, so the decision was made to develop a system in-house. Consequently, the Port Health Interactive Live Information System (PHILIS) was developed, going live in 2009. The innovative software has since been licensed to 4 other ports in the UK. 2017 saw its implementation at Heathrow Animal Reception Centre. PHILIS has been continuously developed to

include modules such as document scanning, mobile working and to manage animal welfare with live animal movements at Heathrow. Workload through PHILIS across all four ports totals approximately 180,000 jobs, with import containers handled by PHILIS at Felixstowe in excess of 3 million per year.

Winner

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Smartlight

The Council's Smartlight project was born from the need to reduce street lighting energy, carbon emissions and upgrade all street lighting to Light Emitting Diodes (LED's) and Computer Management Systems (CMS). In 2015, the burden of financial pressures, carbon taxation and street lighting manufacturers moving away from old technology lead to the development of a financial model which showed the advantage of upgrading all Doncaster's streetlights to LED's and CMS. Doncaster's Mayor, Cabinet and senior managers fully supported the project.

To deliver the project, the Council secured £14.4m of Salix and internal funding. Through vigorous procurement and tender evaluation, the Council procured suppliers that could bring added value and substantial experience in delivering the project. A robust communication plan was developed to minimise any negative impact. The Council used press releases, local radio, email, the Council website, Chamber of Commerce and Twitter to inform residents and businesses.

A major challenge for the project was what to do with 44,000 redundant lanterns and 211 miles of internal column cable. Redundant lanterns contain valuable materials. Recycling companies offer disposal services. However, the Council wanted to challenge this way of recycling by recovering the materials in a cost effective and meaningful way.

Through detailed meetings with the National Offender Management Services, the Council secured Doncaster's HMP Lindholme as a recycling partner. The Council also secured the services of a local company that had the capacity to transport the redundant lanterns, dispose of the recycled materials, comply with HMP Lindholme's strict security arrangements and offer direction about the most economically advantageous time to sell the recycled materials.

Security measures at HMP Lindholme result in detailed accounting of material and show that 97% of materials have been recycled. The project has also delivered a surplus of £1.98 per lantern. Additionally, the Council wanted to align with the Government's strategy of 'purposeful activity to better prepare offenders following release into their communities'.

Recycling offers meaningful work and qualifications that can break the cycle of crime and the subsequent financial pressures that an offender places on society (keeping a prisoner costs £65,000 a year). Approximately 32 prisoners have been employed throughout the project and many have enrolled on the City and Guilds NVQ. The Council has enjoyed considerable financial and corporate benefits as a result of the project. There has been over 50% reductions in street lighting energy spend and a reduction in carbon taxation. Condition surveys at the time of the LED lantern installation allows the Council to risk rate columns and better target column replacement budgets. CMS will allow the Council to manage lighting stock and minimise any future energy increases. Furthermore, income generation from the recycling element of the project will lead to a reduction in project borrowing. In terms of environmental benefits, the project has resulted in a year on year reduction of 9,400 tonnes of carbon. The project also keeps the recycling of the redundant lanterns within the geographical boundaries of Doncaster; reducing the number of road miles.

The Council has met with and provided information to other local authorities and contractors who will be delivering similar projects. Additionally, the Council has provided contact details for the prison service; actively encouraging them to make contact to discuss this innovative recycling route.

The street lighting manufacturing industry will eventually stop making old technology street lighting. As such, an excellent country wide opportunity exists for the prison service to replicate the recycling element of the Smartlight project. The prison service has subsequently secured further recycling projects with a mixture of private companies and local authorities utilising six English prisons to carry out lantern recycling.



Parks and Greenspaces Finalists 2017

Kirklees Council

Natural Kirklees – Greenspaces

Kirklees has a diverse and exciting range of parks and green spaces. However, with a reduced budget, the Council has been unable to maintain all these spaces to the high standards of previous years. As service standards reduce, this increases the risk of areas degrading –becoming subject to anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping. To avoid this degradation, the Council looked for different ways to engage the community and enable them to take a greater ownership of parks and green spaces. The Council worked with Natural Kirklees to create a project called Natural Kirklees – Green Spaces. As part of the project, the Council provides Natural Kirklees members with free insurance, access to tools and an online portal with a vast array of information. This enabled better peer to peer information exchange. The collaboration has helped to create initiatives such as imagination stations, other ways to walk cards and the woodland wellbeing trail.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

Newcastle in Bloom - the economic power of the flower

The Council sought to cultivate and maintain an attractive town centre in the face of dwindling resources. To achieve this, the Council's Community Development team developed a network of businesses, residents, schools and partner organisations who worked together to create a vibrant, attractive and cared-for town centre. This in turn encouraged inward investment and visitor dwell time.

The banner of "Britain in Bloom" was used to co-ordinate these efforts, and to provide recognition and celebration of achievements. A high-profile, jointly-funded public art programme on the town centre roundabouts was also launched and created a unique sense of place and legacy from the campaign. A Community Pledge scheme has also ensured continuing floral impact at key locations.

Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers and Hertfordshire Public Health Board

ParksHerts

The ParksHerts project originated from the Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers Parks Officers Group (HACO) recognising that there was a lack of consistent, accessible and good quality online information about the County's parks and open spaces. This is a particular challenge for a county such as Hertfordshire where park ownership is spread across administrative areas. Hertfordshire also faces challenges to address the levels of obesity and physical activity within the population. ParksHerts was developed by the Council to provide an innovative solution to these challenges. It is a mobile-first website providing a single information point for Hertfordshire's many parks and open spaces. The website also provides details of free to use parks and open spaces, highlights available routes (with step count for each) and provides information on events to promote health and wellbeing e.g. in park exercise classes and health walks. These activities also support emotional wellbeing by reducing social isolation. Owing to considerable interest from potential partners, the Council now has the opportunity to expand the site to include more non-district Council partners with key sites across the County.

Winner

Leicester City Council

Leicester Environmental Volunteers

Along with dwindling revenue budgets and an ever-increasing reduction of resources to look after Leicester's Parks and waterways, the Council's service also had a disjointed, low key volunteer engagement which was fragmented to a few sites. Parks Grounds Staff were able to deliver regular maintenance but had no capacity to deliver improvements and regeneration projects. Volunteer engagement was mostly with schools, colleges and universities and occasional group bookings through the Park Officers, with no dedicated team.

Following a review, the Council decided to create a dedicated community development team to centralize and standardize their delivery of volunteer engagement. Building on previous successes, the new team created "Park Force". Volunteers who had previously supported the Council were invited to sign up to the new scheme. As members, the volunteers would receive a monthly "What's On" bulletin from which they could choose the sessions they would like to engage in, book onto and attend. Activities were seasonally focused with pond improvements, coppicing and woodland thinning in the winter,

path improvements in the summer and regular gardening and litter picking groups throughout the year.

When the service level agreement for conservation sites came to a close, it was decided to bring those activities in-house and amalgamate them with Park Force. Initiatives such as the Flood Warden Scheme, Wild about Leicester and the already highly successful Royal Horticultural Society scheme "It's Your Neighbourhood" were amalgamated to form the Leicester Environmental Volunteers (LEV) scheme.

Leicester Environmental Volunteers currently have over 18 environmental volunteering projects that fall under 5 themes:

- Conservation volunteering
- Land-based volunteering
- Water-based volunteering
- Neighbourhood volunteering
- Partnership volunteering

LEV consists of many different volunteering groups. Via the LEV scheme, the Council engages with corporate companies, community and recreation groups, schools, colleges and universities. Through the LEV groups, the Council is now able to plan and deliver improvements across the City much more effectively.

In relation to water-based volunteering, LEV are involved in the infants swimming programme "Puddle Ducks". The Council also has a new narrowboat, the Kingfisher that safely conveys volunteers up and down the twelve miles of waterways throughout the city. The Kingfisher extracts fly tipping, floating debris and reduces invasive aquatic plants to support wildlife. Other water based opportunities include improvements to city ponds. Island Castaways for example, help to reduce bank erosion and maintain habitats on lake islands. Litter removal sessions are conducted on the river Soar tributaries to prevent rubbish entering the main watercourses, and the "Riverbank Crew" repairs water course bank erosion and makes improvements to tow paths.

Regarding land-based volunteering, regular gardening activities offer an opportunity for volunteers to improve their plant identification skills. These occur on several sites throughout the year. Volunteers take ownership and feed their ideas into improvement projects to enhance special secluded gardens within larger parks. With the LEV Botany Group, volunteers visit sites collecting plants that can be saved, cared for and then replanted on another site. Volunteers spend time in Leicester's greenhouses growing and tending plants. The Litter Legacy group also has regular volunteers who meet on Monday afternoons all around the city to target troublesome sites to help to keep litter under control.

Volunteers can also sign up to become "Street Champions", regular lone volunteers who pick litter from their neighboring streets and report fly tipping and hazards. The Council advertises the Flood Warden scheme, supporting volunteers who provide regular information and help to their neighbours about imminent flood alerts who offer themselves as an emergency contact. Conservation tasks help to improve designated wildlife sites and corridors for the wildlife in addition to Leicester's parks, with tasks that follow the seasons. This ranges from coppicing and woodland thinning to creating dead hedges and removing self-set trees. The Council also offers horticultural work experience for adults through Job Centre Plus.

In terms of publicising Leicester's volunteer schemes, the Council promotes its volunteering groups on Facebook, Do-it, banners throughout the city, posters on parks and on the Council's mobile vehicle units.

The improvements speak for themselves; the benefits are felt by the wildlife, Leicester residents and visitors alike. Last year, the Council engaged with 5930 volunteers who kindly donated 58,000 volunteer hours. The Council now has over four hundred volunteers signed up to LEV. Volunteers receive increased personal confidence and life skills, social interaction and once they are a member, they can choose to engage as little or as much as they choose and experience all of the activities on offer across the City.

Leicester Environmental Volunteers wanted



Make a difference in Leicester and get involved!

Many opportunities available from litter picking, reporting street scene issues, gardening, painting, cleaning, coppicing, ecology and water based projects.

E: lev@leicester.gov.uk

W: leicester.gov.uk/parks-volunteering

 [leicester_news](https://twitter.com/leicester_news)

 [@LeicesterParks](https://www.facebook.com/LeicesterParks)



Waste and Streetscene Finalists 2017

Ards and North Down Council

Food Waste Recycling Project

The Campaign involved banning food waste in landfill bins. A 3 sticker warning system was created with the aim of educating householders; a yellow, amber and red sticker system where bins are emptied (yellow/amber), a follow up letter to householder and house visit (amber) escalating to a red sticker (bin not emptied until the food waste is removed). The project also included the provision of liners and containers to householders. The project was accompanied by a major communication initiative. The initiative used a variety of channels: Facebook, direct mail, email and direct advertising. The Project has delivered an almost 30% reduction in residual waste with an additional 9000 tonnes of food waste diverted from landfill. It has increased the Council's recycling rate by 9%, ensured compliance with the Food Waste Regulations (NI) 2015 and the NILAS targets for the diversion of biodegradable waste from landfill. The project has also yielded significant financial savings.

London Borough of Redbridge

"Our Streets" Commission

The Council believed there had been a lack of effective community engagement over the quality of Redbridge streets. The "Our Streets" consultation was set up to give local residents a voice in shaping Council strategy. The consultation took a new approach to capture participants' suggestions and ideas. The process was led by five community representatives who met regularly to discuss their findings. The discussions were led by an independent facilitator which gave the opportunity for residents to speak their mind and provide constructive comments without being too critical. The commissioners then agreed recommendations for the Council to consider. This was presented in an easy-read report which was then later shared with participants and published online. The Council considered the recommendations provided a response via a directorate-level strategy called "Our Streets". The strategy involves increasing resources for volunteer led community garden forums, fly-tipping reduction measures, increased safe-street patrols and public area vegetable patches.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council

Smarter Environments Programme

Following a slew of budget cuts, the Council's service was left depleted with fewer resources to combat the same demand. Instead of reducing services, the Council decided to use this as an opportunity to work smarter and utilize modern technology and innovative forward-thinking ideas. The first initiative was to launch a smartphone application 'Find it, Fix it, Love it' (FIFILI). The application allows residents to report any issues in the borough that would go straight to the Council's contractors to remedy. The Council then launched a similar initiative that saw all public litter bins fitted with quick response (QR) codes. The Council encoded QR stickers to generate a text message. This was created so overfilled bins could quickly be reported by scanning the QR code, generating a free text message to our contractors. FIFILI and the QR code project introduced a great alternative to calling or emailing and opened a new channel of communication prompting residents that wouldn't normally report issues. After a period of 3 years in operation, the Council has saved £300,000. This has allowed for officer time to be better utilised.

Winner

Wigan Council

The Wigan Deal - Deal For Your Street Experience

Austerity and public sector reform has forced the Council to seek new ways of working. "The Deal" is an informal agreement between the Council and residents, to work together to create a better borough. A key element of "The Deal" relates to re-thinking how the Council delivers environmental services, particularly in relation to frontline staff.

The principles behind the "Deal for Your Street" (DFYS) focus on an asset based approach which builds on community capacity and empowers and enables communities to help themselves and take pride in the borough.

The key to the successful implementation of this innovative concept is to promote a new workforce culture, centred around "BeWigan" behaviours. This empowered the Council to work more creatively and imaginatively in partnership with residents and provide a safe, clean and green borough.

By developing a walk through DFYS Experience, the Council provided staff with the tools and confidence to engage with residents and business partners to be more involved in delivering their part of The Deal. The experience shows how staff and residents alike can become more involved, giving

them the opportunity to enhance their local area and explore the digital and physical toolkits that will assist them to achieve this. The Council also wanted to ensure they got the best out of existing and new technologies to build self-reliance, ensure the right intervention at the right time and deliver value for money services.

The experience has been designed with the operational workforce in mind and is fully interactive. On a fictional street - No Deal Street - attendees identify a range of issues that they may encounter on a day to day basis that have financial, social or physical impacts on residents, employees or the Council. Attendees are then encouraged to identify options of how they can report problems, encourage residents to resolve issues by being more self-reliant or get the appropriate intervention where required.

As part of the experience, an "Eyes and Ears" reporting toolkit has been developed to reduce the costs and will speed up the process from initial report to resolution. This also gives employees the courage to anonymously report sensitive issues such as domestic abuse, child abuse and anti social behaviour. Such issues are then dealt with by a dedicated team to protect the most vulnerable residents of the borough.

A fictional "Ideal Street" is part of the experience and shows the community in future to be thriving and self-reliant. It is an aspirational element to the experience which encourages staff to work with residents and communities to achieve this. Staff are encouraged to identify ways in which the street has changed, such as using digital services, taking part in litter picks and volunteering in community groups ranging from flood wardens to recycling champions.

By promoting these groups and inspiring more volunteers, the impact on council resources will be reduced and will help keep council tax to a minimum in keeping with "The Deal" principles. The Council has encouraged staff to volunteer and, for those who reside in the Borough, to champion the DFYS in their own communities and join or create volunteering groups. Volunteers are also celebrated during the experience by being recognized for "giving something back" on a stars-wall. Since the experience was launched over 400 frontline staff have attended and over 95% of attendees have expressed positive feedback.



Outstanding Achievement

Orkney Islands Council

By 2022 the Council's revenue budget will have reduced by around 25% from what was a gross budget of approximately £90m. This has the potential to significantly disrupt frontline services, adversely impacting the Council's new capital investment in housing, education, marine, highways and waste management. This in turn will have an adverse impact on the construction and civil engineering sectors. Orkney is particularly vulnerable; it does not have the potential economies of scale of mainland Scotland.

The overall challenge is to meet a predicted £12m cut in available funding, inclusive of several steps to stop, reduce or change services. The ongoing strategy of traditional efficiency measures around cost reduction, future year's mitigation and piecemeal income generation are insufficient to meet demands with falling resources. The Council have a targeted approach to "sweat" their assets to the full, be they tourism sector or naturally occurring assets. This is "Service Redesign" but at a whole council level, cross-cutting the executive and political landscape and new cornerstones of their medium term financial strategy.

The Council has a strong track record of investing in resources needed to make a pivotal change. Over the last three years the Council has seen "Harbour Dues" rise to multi-million surpluses against a corresponding 40% increase in trade. The Council has also seen aggregate manufacture rise from circa 65,000 tonnes to over 110,000 tonnes. On the back of these successes, the Council's senior management team and politicians, guided and supported by key officers, have chosen to take further proactive and innovative approaches with future strategic projects.

The Council is now focusing on four key strategic projects that will help offset the cuts in central government funding:

- Development of a “scale” wind farm of circa 60 – 100mw.
- Development of a “Private Wire” local electricity network to reduce fuel oil dependency, initially in public buildings.
- Development of an “Integrated Waste Solution”.
- Development of an Energy Supply/Services Company.

The projects are considered sustainable, profitable and will “stretch” performance to a new level, thus providing greater long-term prosperity for the Council and local community. The combined impact of delivering these projects will address a significant part of the £12m budget challenge, circa £5-7m p.a. The potential investment into the local construction sector could be as much as £100m over the development period of between 5 and 7 years. Significant steps forward have been made politically to secure the funding for the development stages as well as buy-in from the local community through consultation in the Council’s energy strategy work. More is planned as part of the next stages of detailed business case work. Key to this stage is the “telling” and “selling” of the positive outcome and benefits this will have for Orkney as a whole.

The Council is working in partnership with bodies such as SSE to strengthen their business case for energy supply (new export capacity), thereby providing greater export potential to support Scotland’s energy demand/resilience issues. The knowledge that the Council is prepared to “self-develop” and underwrite its development is a “good bet” in terms of taking up perhaps 60-100mw of the business case needs of circa 200mw of new capacity by 2022 to 2025.

This is in many ways a typical “invest to save or invest to gain” solution, but different given the complexities and the risk profile associated with venturing into a typically commercial environment and at an “island scale”. The Council is confident it has a workable solution, in part through support and work done by APSE Energy on the renewables aspects, and support from Zero Waste Scotland on an emerging integrated waste management solution. This solution will help develop the potential for “circular economy” solutions with local SME’s; adding value to waste products before final processing.

This is a detailed and fundamental service redesign. It involves wrapping up and delivering a new approach to the Council’s revenue and capital pressures. The delivery of the strategic projects will support ongoing provision of essential frontline services, provide direct support and financial contribution to local community priorities and support wider funding applications for local project initiatives. Orkney has, at present, a strong and growing economy/population, but its success is fragile. A sustainable investment strategy, with a strategic use of borrowings and reserves, will see the local economy survive

through austerity by safeguarding and creating jobs in the public and private sectors. It will also help Orkney’s supply chain, be it commercial, retail, industrial or tourism sectors. This will provide a financially positive legacy for decades to come.

Waste and Recycling Finalists 2018

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Together we made a difference!

The Council was confronted with three significant waste-related issues: weekly bag collections were creating major litter problems (particularly in city centre tourist areas), the £450k waste grant would soon be ending, and the Council’s recycling rate had stagnated at around 49/50%. Consequently, a programme was set up to encourage more recycling, less street litter and to help save money. In addition to replacing weekly bag collections with fortnightly collections, the programme involved educational measures (roadshows in schools, poster campaigns, waste ‘doctors’) and enforcement to meet both financial and environmental objectives. The deliverables included the insourcing of the recycling contract, the procurement of an entirely new vehicle fleet, routes planned with driver input, incredible volumes of recyclate (the recycling rate increased by 6.6% whilst domestic waste collected dropped by 36%), innovate ways to tackle the gull problem, retaining flexibility to enhance customer service, and also performing well whilst tackling the Beast from the East and the heatwave!

South Gloucestershire Council

Reducing waste, improving recycling and saving money in South Gloucestershire

After carrying out a waste analysis on household residual waste bins (240l black bins), the Council found that 52% could have been recycled, despite the comprehensive fortnightly, kerbside-sort recycling collection. The recycling rate was 47% and the Council had more waste per household than their neighbours. The Council’s waste strategy 2015-2020 implemented some major changes to waste and recycling collections in response to greater savings targets and to try to exceed a 50% recycling rate by 2020. Having carried out research using both local and national data, reducing the residual waste bin allowance per household was identified as the key to reducing recyclable material in the black bins. After exploring options for reduced

collection frequency and capacity, it was decided that the best option would be to reduce the size of the residual bin and maintain the fortnightly collection. So far we have collected an extra 4,419 tonnes of recycling (June 2017-Aug 2018) and seen a reduction of 5,012 tonnes from black bin collections. The results mean that the Council has so far seen a 16% increase in recycling collected at the kerbside and are on course to exceed the 50% target for 2020. Based on current data the Council's overall recycling rate is 51.6%.

South Lakeland District Council

St Bromley Heath Viaduct Major Maintenance and Improvement Scheme - Communication and Engagement

There are many charities working in the waste sector collecting domestic appliances and furniture. These collections are typically free or low-cost for donated items. However, the charities are able to restrict the items they accept to those that are suitable for re-sale. The Council saw an opportunity to provide a service based on this model; but with the key difference that the contractor would be required to collect items that may not readily be suitable for re-sale and could require refurbishment, recycling or disposal through waste routes. Right2Work Social Enterprise - a South Cumbria based charity that works primarily with young people with learning disabilities - rose to the challenge. Right2Work introduced a collection service to meet the customer service requirements and established the Furniture Warehouse to maximise opportunities for recycling, refurbishing and selling items that had been collected. The service delivers high levels of customer service, is cost neutral to the Council, and provides a great deal of training opportunities (27 disabled or disadvantaged people were supported into paid work). Right2Work provide collections from within the household, at a time agreed with the customer. Collected items are re-sold, re-used, refurbished and recycled wherever possible, and around 70% of the materials collected are diverted from landfill.

South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership

WEEE Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle Project

South Tyne and Wear Waste Management Partnership (STWWMP) comprises Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Sunderland councils. A strong collection infrastructure is in place to enable residents to recycle a range of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). However, WEEE can be a 'difficult' waste stream to recycle, as residents are often unaware of services available to them, so regularly dispose of

WEEE within the residual waste stream. Supported by partners Valpak and Groundwork, STWWMP developed a dedicated project to encourage residents to reduce 'unnecessary' WEEE waste and drive materials further up the waste hierarchy and away from the residual waste stream. Specific activities were developed and delivered, utilising STWWMP's state-of-the-art visitor and education centre and outreach activities with local schools and community groups. The project sought to increase WEEE recycling by 2%. However, the final results saw an overall increase of 9.6% throughout STWWMP, across a number of WEEE streams. The success of the project enabled STWWMP to secure funding to deliver a follow-up WEEE project, which is currently ongoing. This will ensure that behavioural changes will be maintained and WEEE recycling performance sustained.

Winner

Oxford Direct Services

Blue Bin Recycling League

Oxford is a diverse and ever-changing city. With a population turnover of 25%, 33,000 students and 1,800 properties unable to store bins, the city needed something radical in place to help tackle these challenges. With stagnating recycling rates across the UK, this scheme is a unique way to improve recycling rates whilst simultaneously reducing residual waste.

The restraints around increasing recycling rates sat with the lack of education. At a time when local authorities were forced to cut education budgets, this scheme allowed the Council to meet these challenges with frontline education.

A range of methods were used as part of the scheme, with education and behaviour change at the heart of the work. This included door knocking (almost 17,000 doors knocked to date), holding educational road shows (roughly 100 per year) and written and digital communications. Given that research has shown that people are more likely to follow through on actions when they are written commitments, the Council asked residents to pledge to improve their recycling; with almost 7,500 households committing to change.

The Council offered a £400 cash boost every month to local charities and good causes, as voted for by residents who have pledged as part of the scheme. Involving these charities with recycling and the scheme was a unique way of working and further increased resident participation and promotion of the scheme.

Social media was another fantastic form of engagement, with over 45,000 followers on the Council's corporate Facebook account alone, the reach of social media platforms meant that the scheme and key education messages can be promoted extensively. Although other

councils do make use of these platforms, it is essentially how these platforms are run that makes for the innovation.

Social media

Videos distributed through the Council's YouTube channel are a fantastic way of engaging residents, and these work alongside social media pages. Videos were created in-house, giving the team creative control over output. This allowed for exciting, engaging and original videos such as stop motion animation, gifs and boomerangs. The team even created a video lead by the campaign mascots, touring a food recycling plant!

Mascots

The Council's three recycling mascots played a huge part in the scheme. The first mascot, Phil the Bin, has been joined by Felicity the Food Caddy and Oilyver in his mission to increase Oxford City's recycling rate. Having more recently had a change in service, The Council acquired Oilyver to help promote the new kerbside collection of cooking oil and fats!

Plant tour

As part of this scheme, the Council offered free tours for city residents to processing outlets. This gave residents first-hand experience of exactly what happens to their waste. Positive feedback from these tours and other aspects of the programme further supports this scheme.

School design competition

The scheme also created an innovate competition in which school children got involved with recycling. The Team created a competition to design a recycling poster for recycling engagement purposes. The winning pupil won a prize and their design got displayed on one of the Council's dustcarts which visited their school.

Consultancy project with Oxford University

This scheme works with Oxford University with the student consultancy project. The student consultancy allows student to explore the realm of consultancy by working closely with the Council. It allowed the Team to enhance their knowledge whilst building on the student's teamwork and business skills. A large part of this involves them working with the public to undertake surveys and research on the Council's behalf; allowing the Council to understand how to further its educational work.

During the last year the Blue Bin Recycling League has organised the innovative and cross organisational Clean Green campaigns which targets key hotspot areas where litter, fly tipping and waste issues have been identified. The program uses a holistic approach towards prevention, education, engagement and enforcement which aims to reduce and prevent waste and litter generation to sustain a clean

and green city. During the work, results have shown up to a 60% reduction in litter in some hotspot areas and improved community satisfaction with a 55% increase in the positive perception of the target location.

The scheme started to come to fruition at the end of September 2018; with substantial success taken from the project which can be seen through the correlated increase in recycling improvement rates. Councillors decided to renew the scheme at a council level for a further three years.



Parks and Greenspaces Finalists 2018

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Making our Money Grow

The Council's team has taken an innovative approach to every element of their service, in order to address the challenge of finding significant savings (15%) whilst delivering an excellent service. Collecting and building on feedback from park users was key to this programme. With users commented that prices were too high, the team completed a benchmarking exercise and found that several local providers were charging 30% less. Park users wanted to deliver more in their parks so the Council successfully applied for a Nesta Grant, partnered by Bristol City Council, to form a parks foundation aimed at increasing charitable giving. Wedding couples told the Council they wanted wider options, that the capacity offered was too low, and that weather was a limiting factor. As a result the Council

developed a wedding offer utilizing underused park buildings, and purchased a second hand marquee. Park users have told us they want to be more involved, so we have increased 'active' volunteers via friends groups from approximately 70 – 100 over the past year.

Birmingham Parks Service

Collaborative partnership working

Birmingham Parks Service strives to provide a "Value for Money" service despite a backdrop of severe budget cuts. During the last 10 years of austerity, the Parks Service has experienced a 27.72% reduction in head count and 38.1% reduction in net revenue budget.

Despite dwindling budgets and an ever increasing reduction in resources, The Parks Service wish to maintain a quality service and therefore has looked to work collaboratively with partners to deliver projects across the city. The Parks Service has linked with and is honoured to work with a wide range of partners, including Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF), 120 Friends of Parks Groups, the Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation (BDAC), the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country, National Trust, Princes Trust, Natural England, Birmingham Tree People (BTP), Birmingham Trees for Life (BTFL), Thrive, DATUS and Be Active, to delivery numerous projects across the city. From this partnership working, the service has also gratefully benefited from 19,932 days of volunteering in 2017/18 with financial savings to the Service equivalent to £780,338.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Working with Communities on managing assets

Dudley Council has invested in building the capacity of Parks Friends groups over the last 15 years. The groups work closely with the Council to assist with the restoration of buildings and park structures and now take on greater responsibility for their maintenance. These asset transfer arrangements have meant a more focused effort for the parks service on improving the sustainability of parks and open spaces. The Council has a long-term commitment for Dudley residents to work in partnership with others to become more resilient and independent, the asset transfer approach is a way to fulfil this commitment. The Council has been so impressed with the willingness for community groups to take on the responsibility for investing in and caring for their local spaces, that asset transfers have now become standard. The Council has just submitted a Lottery fund bid for a park in another area of deprivation. A Victorian Farmhouse will be restored and leased to a charitable organisation, which recycles metal and bikes, and provides training in horticulture for people with learning difficulties. The charity will provide

important day care for residents in receipt of personal budgets, which will assist with the sustainability of the building; there will be a small community café and training rooms for hire to increase income for the group. The Council now works with 38 different Parks Friends groups (about 430 people) and other community organisations to help deliver parks services. This roughly estimates as 15,500 hours annually or £110,400 per year.

Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council, Wakefield Tree Wardens & Day Opportunities Team

Regeneration of Thornes Park Nursery

This wonderful and rewarding project has brought life back to a rather forlorn and dilapidated nursery in Thornes Park. The nursery once produced seasonal bedding for parks in the western half of the Wakefield district as well as hanging baskets, cut flowers and floral decorations for civic buildings. The nursery closed more than a decade ago and steadily fell into decline. Over the last few years Street Scene officers have worked with Wakefield Tree Wardens volunteers and Family Services Day Opportunities Team on various activities that have breathed new life into the nursery delivering numerous benefits to the wider community. The Rose Garden Nursery Shop sells fruit and vegetables grown in the nursery. All income is re-invested into the project and the park. People regularly call in to buy and chat with service users and volunteers. This has brought further offers of help, support and donations including plants, trees and other gardening accoutrements. Recycling in action within the community. The project has become a hub of support for other groups who can source plants, benches and tools to carry out their projects. For example - In July tools were loaned to a corporate activity day when 47 staff helped to upgrade 1 km of footpath at Newmillerdam Country Park. That company also provided £2,000 worth of materials and helped in placing 80 tons of Toptrek footpath material to improve the woodland paths.

(This entry was also shortlisted for the Parks and Greenspaces 2017 Innovation Award).

Winner

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

The Transformation of the Grounds Maintenance Team

The grounds maintenance service is made up of 76 full time operational staff and 37 seasonal staff. They are responsible for cutting 1,400 hectares of grass in each cutting cycle – an area

roughly the same size as the North York Moors.

The team also maintains 22 hectares of shrub beds and two acres of flower beds. The areas maintained were previously recorded through the Government's regime of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT).

Using CCT charges to price for the maintenance of council assets proved to be outdated as it no longer reflected current working practices and costs. This approach limited grounds services' ability to accurately monitor and manage maintenance costs and performance. Like all Council services, the service is under increasing budget pressures due to a significant reduction in funding the Council receives from the Government.

Using CCT charging placed grounds maintenance in a vulnerable position. Its limited ability to provide accurate service provision costs would make it difficult for the service to defend against any budget reductions. It was also limited in its ability to justify any substantial increase in the budget to maintain additional areas that have been newly adopted by the council.

Grounds maintenance was tasked with accurately recording all areas of grassland maintained by the service, as well as the time taken to maintain those areas and also to calculate a cost of the service provision. Tracking devices were fitted to all the grounds team's vehicles as they were deemed the ideal tool to measure assets through the monitoring of vehicle activity. The devices captured GPS location and were linked to a vehicle's power take-off (PTO) so it could sense when a mower was cutting.

The data from the devices was imported into a mapping system. Areas maintained by a mower were electronically mapped and added to a map layer file. Each data point had a time stamp and so the duration of maintenance for each area was calculated.

This enabled more efficient work patterns to be created and dedicated rural and urban were set up. Each team received a planned work schedule, based on a productive time of 6 hours of cutting per day (after factoring in time for travelling and breaks).

The structured work schedules have increased productivity levels by 25% and increased the frequency of cuts, improving overall appearance of grassed areas. This has led to a 35% reduction in complaints and an increase in compliments from local residents.

Reports are generated on a monthly basis showing the performance of each team, judged on if they are achieving their 10-day, or 15-day, cycle. The results are used to maintain the culture of continual improvement that has been adopted. The service continues to monitor itself throughout the cutting season through the use of the tracking devices.

The new schedules have also reduced the reliance on employing seasonal employees through the summer. The number of seasonal posts has reduced from 54 in 2014 to 37 in 2017, a saving of £66,000.

In turn, significant job losses for full time staff have been avoided. Each area maintained has been identified as being owned by: highways, housing, or parks and open spaces. All services provide grounds maintenance with a budget to maintain assets on their behalf.

Grounds maintenance is now able to provide an accurate cost to each service to show they are receiving good value for money and enabled budgets to be fairly and accurately apportioned, allowing for better monitoring.

Savings have been invested back into the service in the form of 18 new ride-on mowers to replace the existing ones. The investment was made following liaison between management and operational staff to ascertain the best and most reliable equipment and vehicles. This greater engagement with staff is now carried out across the board during major tendering processes

Through smarter procurement, grounds maintenance will continue to reduce its budget, with a projected saving of more than £75,000 in the next financial year. Overall, the grounds team has reduced its costs from £1,623,587 in 2014 to £1,326,440 in 2017 – an overall saving of £297,147 Rural teams were placed on a 15-day schedule and urban teams were placed on a 10-day schedule.



Streetscene Finalists 2018

London Borough of Islington

Street Cleansing Service Remodel

This project developed and implemented a remodeled Street Cleansing Service to introduce a neighborhood principle, favour a more thorough sweep and increase the service's coverage and performance. The team moved from a 3 day-a-week litterpick of all roads to five day-a-week sweep. Operatives beats were designed so residents became familiar with cleansing staff and operatives could take ownership for the cleanliness of their area.

128 smart phones were provided to all frontline staff allowing access to council systems, live tracking and progress of work and a more efficient service, with staff providing live monitoring of cleansing incidents directly to reactive teams.

Despite being in place for only two months, initial results have so far been very positive. If compared to results from the old service the percentage of NI195 A scores for littering, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting have increased by 24%, 7%, 1% and 8% respectively. The percentage of surveys carried out scoring A, B+ or B has risen from 94% to 97% under the new service whilst surveys at B-, C, C- or D have dropped from 6% to 3%. Independent assessors from Keep Britain Tidy have also verified an improvement in overall scores since the introduction of the new service with reductions in all four indicators down 2% on last year.

Leicestershire Waste Partnership (LWP)

(#IfOnly Fly-tipping Campaign)

Fly-tipping is a significant blight on local environments; a source of pollution; a potential danger to public health; a hazard to wildlife and a nuisance.

During May 2018 a communications campaign was developed by the Leicestershire Waste Partnership to reduce levels of fly-tipping in Leicester and Leicestershire. The campaign educated residents about fly-tipping and raised awareness of their responsibilities to dispose of their waste correctly. It involved creating a hashtag (#IfOnly) which encouraged social media engagement; creating radio adverts and designing posters, leaflets and stickers – linked to real fly-tipping scenarios. There was also an innovative video featuring a fly-tipper character. In terms of social media, the team engaged with over 105,000 residents on Facebook and over 150,000 on twitter! The team had vast media coverage and featured on Radio Leicester,

ITV Central and BBC East Midlands Today. A total of 10,000 leaflets were distributed and over 4,500 bin stickers dispersed throughout the County and City. There was also good coverage in the Leicester Mercury as well as weekly papers such as the Melton Times and the Coalville Times.

Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group

#SCRAPflytipping campaign

The Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group is a multi-agency taskforce including the Boroughs, Districts and County Council as well as the Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Herts Fire & Rescue, Environment Agency, National Farmers Union and Keep Britain Tidy which has come together to improve how Hertfordshire responds to fly tipping. The on-going work programme is resulting in improvements in enforcement capability across the county as well as the rollout of new technology to assist in prosecuting fly tippers. The #SCRAPflytipping campaign, which has been simultaneously rolled out by all partners, aims to raise awareness of what constitutes fly tipping, how to dispose of waste correctly and how to report fly tipping. During 2017/18 the number of reported incidents fell by 2731 equating to a 17.9% reduction on 2016/17. Provisional results for April – June 2018 show that the number of reported incidents has continued to fall with a 5.7% reduction in the first quarter.

Winner

South Gloucestershire Council

Creating a 'Virtual' Envirocrime Team

South Gloucestershire Council's vision includes working with local people to resolve local problems.

This submission uses one example – creation of a 'virtual' Envirocrime Team – and demonstrates the efficacy of this approach. The aim was to develop the culture of a "can do" attitude with the focus on delivering a service that would concentrate on real outcomes. Working in partnership has enabled a wide variety of cases to be resolved using this 'joined up' approach.

Partnership working has proved particularly successful in tackling environmental crime. The innovative solution adopted combined environmental health, waste management and street care areas and expertise to solve issues. What is different with this approach is that traditional 'silos' have been removed and the 'virtual' Team work together with the aim of resolving issues and complaints.

The somewhat unique 'virtual' Envirocrime Team is a cross cutting team made up of and lead by officers from Environmental Health, working alongside Street Care and Waste Management. The team's aims are aligned to deal with issues including litter, graffiti, fly-tipping and dog fouling. The Team have excelled in coordinating resources across these Council services and is a good example of cross service working. The team has consistently demonstrated an ability to think creatively and innovatively to implement a regime which maximises the use of resources and gives the Envirocrime Team a far greater impact than its limited resources would otherwise have. As a direct result time and resources spent on the consequences of these issues (e.g. clearing up fly tips) has been significantly reduced. The Team have consistently produced excellent quality of work often to tight time deadlines. There is also a close working relationship with legal services, taking enforcement action against individuals who commit crimes which have a detrimental impact on the environment.

The nature of the work is complex and the Envirocrime Team have managed this complexity excellently resulting in a significant impact on Envirocrime. Feedback from the communities which have been impacted by the Team's work have been overwhelmingly positive which has helped to further strengthen local partnerships.

Members of the Team have demonstrated excellent qualities in taking on new work and getting to grips with the technical difficulties of an ever changing regime integrating government policy with the Council's aims of safer and stronger communities and valuing the environment. In addition to their other duties officers have demonstrated an exemplary attitude to taking on other roles and putting in significant time to develop the tools to implement a comprehensive and effective Envirocrime Strategy.

The virtual team meet regularly to discuss progress in implementing the strategy and address any challenges faced, and front line staff work together on a day-to-day basis.

Fly tipping activity over the past 18 months has focussed on the larger scale fly tips, perpetrated by criminals operating illegal waste and house clearance firms. These are perpetrators of multiple offences, so targeting them has the greatest impact. There were 15 successful prosecutions, many of them for multiple offences (fly tipping, and no waste licence/transfer notes). This builds on 28 prosecutions over the preceding three years and has resulted in over £16,300 in fines and costs, one 100 hour community service sentence and one 68 week imprisonment.

When the Team achieve a successful prosecution they seek to promote it in the local media, which it is hoped will act as a deterrent against others and reassure the public that these offences are being taken seriously. The zero tolerance message is that if you fly tip rubbish in South Gloucestershire, you should

expect to be caught and prosecuted. These are excellent results and reflect the quality of investigative work, case preparation and court presentation.

Through the reduction of Envirocrime the Team has had a direct impact on local communities improving their Environment and helping to make the community safer. Specific targeted initiatives have all but eradicated Envirocrime from certain 'hotspot' areas. Those who have benefitted from the Envirocrime Teams work include:

- Local Communities; residents and local businesses
- Enforcement bodies such as Police/Environment Agency
- Housing associations
- Private land owners
- Other South Gloucestershire Departments

The Team were named Team of the Year as part of the Council's Internal PRIDE Awards in 2016 for bringing enforcement action against individuals who commit crimes which have a detrimental impact on the environment and for producing and implementing an innovative strategy for tackling Envirocrime, which has been particularly effective in bringing about prosecutions against persistent fly-tipping offenders.



Streetscene Finalists 2019

Newcastle City Council

Smart Litter Bins Solution

In 2017, the Council had 2,200 litter bins across the city (each with a 90-litre capacity). The Council's waste operatives worked systematically around the city to empty all bins - whether they were full or not. Customers used online forms on the Council website to report overflowing bins but there was no way for the customers to know if the Council were already aware of the issue. This resulted in duplicate reports and complaints.

The Council therefore developed a streamlined end-to-end Smart Litter Bins Solution including: new and bigger litter bins; smart litter bin sensors from Enevo which detect fill-levels; using job creation, scheduling and routing systems to automate processes, creating a suite of reporting dashboards, bringing near real-time information to MyEnvirocall for customers and staff.

These changes have led to c.50% reduction in staff emptying litter bins at peak season. It has reduced overflowing bins, customer complaints and the Council's carbon footprint.

Kettering Borough Council and Corby Borough Council

FlyMapper

The Council recognised the impact flytipping had on residents, so invested in both staff and technology to develop a targeted approach across the Borough. There was a growing awareness across the organisations that by working together, they would be better placed to tackle the issue and see noticeable results; making it a better place to live and visit.

Fly tips have historically been dealt with on an individual basis and investigated case by case. Seldom were fly tips looked at in a whole area, and analysed to see if there are geographical, date, time, or typological relationships. This method of working prevented a systematic analysis of fly tips incidents.

Therefore, FlyMapper was introduced is a web based system to log flytipping, this has been rolled out in the Street Cleansing department at Kettering Borough Council since 2016. Although efficiencies have been developed in the department over the years, there was a gap in data collection and analysis. In addition, this encouraged more input from the staff who are out on site

and recognise flytip hotspots. After 2 years of working with the system, there has been a 20% decrease in reports. Kettering Council has also successfully prosecuted 4 defendants for fly tipping in court - with fines totalling over £4,000.

Cornwall Council

Community Enforcement Partnership Programme

According to a Cornwall Council Resident's Survey in October 2017, 58% of respondents felt that fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling was a very or fairly big problem in their local area. With reducing Council enforcement resources, a different approach was needed. By engaging with Cornwall's communities (123 elected members and 213 town/parish councils) a number of innovative solutions were devised to tackle community envirocrime issues more effectively.

The programme involved creating additional enforcement capacity - over 80 town/parish council staff have been trained/ authorised with enforcement powers to serve fixed penalty notices. A new no-contact enforcement tool (a pocket sized incident report card), was co-designed with inputs from nine town/parish councils and was received positively by the councils. Furthermore, a new multi-skilling training programme for Council's civil parking enforcement staff was introduced. The programme has CSAS authorisation (provided by the Police) and has resulted in 9 parking enforcement staff becoming authorised with environmental enforcement powers along with police CSAS powers.

These new measures underpin the Council's aim of creating a more green and prosperous Cornwall.

Winner

Liverpool Streetscene Services Ltd.

Creating the Site Enhancement Team

In 2016 Liverpool City Centre was being affected by an increased number of people involved in a street lifestyle. Begging, addiction, poverty and exploitation are just a few of the issues that were preventing Liverpool from reaching its full potential as a safer, cleaner and greener city. The accumulation of tents, bedding, cardboard, street living items, disguised used needles and drug using equipment posed a risk to the public and to street cleansing staff. Regular call outs for these areas meant regular interruptions to cleansing operations, which was becoming custom and practice and therefore absorbed into mainstream provision. This was affecting the cleansing programme by causing timescales to be missed, and time spent

catching up with core services and expectations.

Incidences of anti-social behaviour such as aggression, drug taking and disposing of human waste openly in the city centre are common activities around these sites. Therefore quite understandably, staff became reticent about cleansing these hotspots for fear of the above. This further hindered cleansing programmes, having an impact on businesses, tourism, and generating media attention and complaints from the public.

In 2016 the estimate per month for cleansing interventions and call outs was approximately £2,000 per month and £24,000 per annum.

The innovative approach taken

The issue needed to be tackled with a competent and robust approach to cleansing operations coordinated alongside a comprehensive engagement and enforcement process. A City Centre HIT (High Impact Team) called the 'Site Enhancement Team' was introduced, to provide an additional dedicated resource to focus primarily on tackling environmental blight at these specific areas. The team are highly trained, proficient, and have the transferable skills to deal with these specific problems sufficiently, ensuring that hotspots are cleansed in a safe manner.

The other objectives were to reduce begging and anti-social behaviour in the city and support vulnerable individuals through working with partners. Alongside the dedicated cleansing resource, a street lifestyle group was also formed with partner agencies Merseyside Police, Whitechapel and Addaction, to work closely with a cohort of rough sleepers every day. Whitechapel support individuals in accessing accommodation and Addaction provide specialist support to tackle addictions to improve the health and wellbeing of service users. The balance of this support and intervention combined with enforcing the law when support and services have been offered and refused, has proved successful in reducing overall activity of this nature in Liverpool City Centre.

Partnership working has proved particularly successful in tackling street lifestyle problems. With the right people, tools, powers and, most importantly, the joint-up approach of all partners, the challenge of building relationships with vulnerable members of the public became less of a challenge and many users on the service cohort were able to build trust with the team and receive the support they needed.

The outcomes achieved

There has been a reduction of street lifestyle activity in Liverpool City Centre since the programme began. In 2016 there were 40 sites of concern, which has been reduced to 20 sites as of September 2019, halving the areas of concern.

The Site Enhancement Team is responsible for enhancing

areas of environmental blight to aesthetically improve their appearance and minimise ongoing undesirable behaviour. They are returned to public use by installing lighting, fencing, plants and flowers, painting and removing graffiti, and of course carrying out a regular cleansing programme tailored for each site which includes removing materials dangerous to the public and ensuring that litter is recycled properly. Some sites are more difficult to improve and require constant and repetitive attention due to the nature of the problem. Persistence is key when working on these sites, as is an understanding for the people who congregate there, and patience when attempting to build a relationship with them in order to offer them support.

Going forward, the Council plan to expand this project outside of the city centre to widen and grow the impact of this innovative approach. There is even the opportunity to use the space at these sites to promote recycling and positive environmental campaigns. One suggestion to achieve this is by engaging with art students from local universities to create a programme wherein they would have a chance to create some environmental based art, in a voluntary or competition format, widening the diversity of partners engaged in this programme and giving students the opportunity to showcase their talent in the city.

The team will continue to map out new sites, provide a dedicated resource to tackle any problems at them, engage the people and signpost to partner agencies for support. Liverpool Streetscene Services Ltd's vision is to work with local people and businesses to support those who are vulnerable and resolve local environmental problems.



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Waste and Recycling Finalists 2019

Leicester City Council

Kick it to plastics

The Kick it to Plastics environmental art project aimed to bring key stakeholders and the wider community together to take positive action to reduce the scale of plastic pollution and raise awareness of the problem in Leicester. Leicester City Council Waste Management statistics from 2018 showed that over 9000 tonnes of plastic were used in the city but only 2250 tonnes were recycled. Working in partnership with Leicester City FC, the project engaged hundreds of volunteers who gave thousands of hours to undertake water-based cleaning sessions on the 8.5 mile stretch of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal running through the city. The plastic waste collected has then been used by volunteers to create a 6-meter-high sculpture of a Leicester City Football Club player.

The sculpture sits alongside a scoreboard created by disabled and special needs students from local Ellesmere College who used over 3000 plastic bottle tops to create the scoreboard displaying the score Leicester 1- Plastics 0. The project received high profile media attention making primetime 6pm ITV news for on Friday evening and the same slot on BBC the following night.

Daventry District Council

Introduction of 1-2-3 waste service

The introduction of Daventry District Council's 123+ service involved an unprecedented overhaul of waste collections for its 37,000 households. It marked the culmination of three years' work, during which the Council designed a completely new service, replaced an outsourced contract with a new Joint Venture to run it, and met the challenge of communicating these significant changes to residents. Delivered by Daventry Norse – a new joint services venture between the Council and Norse Commercial Services – the 1-2-3+ service proved to be far more successful than anticipated.

Alongside a weekly food waste service a new wheelie bin was introduced for co-mingled fortnightly recycling, refuse collections moved to three-weekly, a chargeable garden waste service introduced and collection days moved – all of this launching on one day. At the same time, the existing waste

depot was demolished and a new one developed.

Three months into the service, collections of food waste and dry recycling were up 56% and 21%, respectively, while residual waste collections were down 23%. By the end of the first year of the service in June 2019, the Council had seen an 85% increase in the collection of food waste, a 35% increase in the collection of dry recycling, and a 25% reduction in residual waste.

Winner

Newcastle City Council

WasteBot

Customers who drive a van or use a trailer need a permit to use the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Previously this was a paper-based process and it took up to two weeks for customers to receive a permit. This was inconvenient for customers and had a lot of "avoidable contact" from customers chasing permits.

The Council identified that it could transform the customer experience so people could get their permits almost immediately and save money for the Council at the same time. The Council used the Microsoft Bot Framework to develop WasteBot – an automated SMS text-based service.

The project focused on user need by following Government Digital Service principles and taking a "double diamond" approach to service design. Customers and HWRC site operatives and managers were consulted through a number of iterations; moving from a "proof of concept" into development.

ICT staff built on existing C# skills to develop and deploy the WasteBot to both SMS text and Skype for Business channels. This means the Council is self-reliant and has the skills within ICT to develop WasteBot and continue to innovate with new technologies.

The WasteBot number is advertised on the Council website. Customers text "Waste" and WasteBot replies with a greeting and options. If the customer replies "permit", then WasteBot advises terms and conditions and asks for a minimal amount of information. If they live at a valid address in Newcastle, WasteBot confirms their permit and tells them to bring their mobile phone number, photographic ID and proof of address to the HWRC when they want to use the permit.

WasteBot offers a number of other services. Customers can update their vehicle registration; check how many permits they have remaining; cancel a permit; get a list of council HWRCs; find out their next household bin collection days; and check the terms and conditions for using WasteBot.

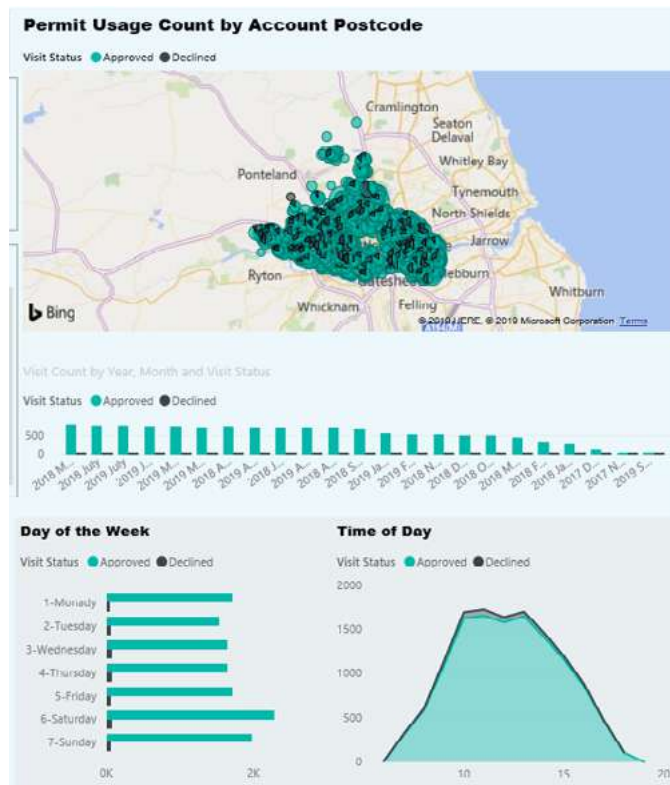
The Council decided to deploy the WasteBot using SMS text messages so it could be used by as many customers as possible (including people without smartphones or internet access). There is also a solution for customers who don't have a mobile phone – the WasteBot on Skype for Business is deployed so the Contact Centre agents can generate a permit on the customer's behalf.

More than 6,270 customers from over 5,830 properties have signed up since the WasteBot was launched in November 2017. The average time for customers to receive their permit has reduced from 14 days to 90 seconds. If customers have ID, they can register for WasteBot when they arrive at the HWRC and get a permit which they can use immediately.

Over 87% of customers said WasteBot was excellent or good when surveyed soon after launch; their feedback was used to further improve WasteBot. The Council has saved money due to a reduction in phone calls and the removal of the manual paper-based permits – approximately £25k p.a. in staff time, and over £1k p.a. in printing and postage costs.

It is now quick and easy for site operatives to manage the permit process. This has given them more free time to help customers and improve how waste is managed. The team has removed fraudulent use of paper permits and therefore reduced confrontation for our site operatives. There are now significantly fewer complaints than previously. For example, in Q4 2016/17, 30 complaints were received from customers chasing their paper permits. In the same period after WasteBot launched, no complaints were received.

To understand and evidence improved outcomes, the team used Microsoft's Power BI to create a reporting dashboard. This provided more insight into how customers are using HWRCs – including usage by ward; by postcode; by day of week; and by time of day. This means that managers can identify opportunities to expand and improve the service.



Parks and Greenspaces Finalists 2019

Darlington Borough Council

Darlington's Great Parks Auction

As a consequence of continued reductions in public sector funding, similar to other areas, Darlington Borough Council's budgets for environmental services have been squeezed.

Working with Darlington Cares, Darlington Borough Council devised 'Darlington's Great Park Auction'. Four Parks in Darlington were identified and member companies of Darlington Cares were invited to an auction where they could bid number of volunteering hours their staff would dedicate to a park. The highest bidder would win the right to work in that particular park to help rejuvenate the green areas. The auction saw four local firms commit a total of 2135 employee volunteering hours to working with the Darlington parks.

In numbers, the initiative has achieved: 3,376 hours delivered to date this year. This was way in excess of the 2,135 hours bid at the auction event) involving 921 volunteers. The companies are eager to continue volunteering in their respective parks and friendships are forged between employees and residents as

02/09/2019 12:00:40		HWRC Permit Usage Report	
Last Refresh Date			
Accounts:			
Registered Properties	Registered Customers	Closed Customer Accounts	
5834	6279	188	
Last 30 days			
Permit Usage:			
Last 30 Days		All Time	
Approved	Declined	Total	Site Counts
651	28	679	
Approved	Declined	Total	Site Counts
12503	456	12959	
Property: Distinct Count		Customer: Distinct Count	
Approved	Declined	Total	Site Counts
4397	387	4439	
Approved	Declined	Total	Site Counts
4379	390	4624	

further programmes of work are planned for the forthcoming year.

City of Lincoln Council

The Boultham Park Project

The City of Lincoln Council has embarked on a long-term plan to restore its most important parks – in this case Boultham Park. In 2010, Linkage Community Trust purchased from the City Council a piece of land adjacent to Boultham Park. It was an area of disused land that had previously been in use for plant nursery purposes, but had now fallen out of use all together. The Council, mindful of its Master Plan for this site, took the capital receipt they obtained for the land and ring-fenced this to act as a contribution towards match funding for an external funding bid. Working together, the Council and Linkage Community for Trust put in a bid for Parks for People /BIG Lottery Fund funding. The bid was a successful one.

The works to restore the key features of the 50-acre grade II listed historic park included: a brand new café for park visitors, an education centre and glasshouse for Linkage students, and restoration of the fountain, bandstand, sundial and the bridges.

The project has delivered both in terms of the built elements, but also in delivering vital social outputs. In 2018, visitor numbers were over 250,000 (up from 196,000 recorded in 2011). Visitor satisfaction also reached 94.6% and the volunteering that was established had a value £210,000 towards the project.

Nottingham City Council

StoryParks

In December 2018, Nottingham City Council and The Nottingham Building Society imagined taking 'the library into the park' to try raise standards of literacy and numeracy and to increase visitor numbers to the City's award winning parks.

Prior to the summer holidays beginning, the Council had an artist go into 15 local primary schools and work with the children on stories and the creation of the bunting which was used to decorate each of the story dens. The project used outdoor space to create structures where exciting learning could take place. Waste tree stumps became bookcases and decorative sculptures, with trees, hedges and branches providing a protective 'den'. Books and resources were left outside for families to use, encouraging them to read and play comfortably, twenty-four hours a day.

Facilitator led sessions provided engaging activities with librarians, park rangers, artists, storytellers and musicians, all

using activities to engage in literacy, based around a theme each week. The dens took people to areas of the park they had never been, using different areas of the park not often visited, creating quiet spaces allowing everyone to engage comfortably, no matter any disability or impairment they may face

6944 children engaged in facilitated activities during two weeks in school and five weeks of the summer holidays in the parks. It is estimated that over 6000 people used the dens independently, outside of the facilitated sessions, although this number could be much higher. The project reduced inequalities, discrimination and levels of deprivation, by providing equal opportunities for all to engage in free activities across the city

Winner

Brent Council

The Brent Bee Corridor

2019 was the year that the bees came back to Brent. The Council took its first steps towards this in 2017, and by 2019, theory became reality and it had created its first Bee Corridor, working in its own way to reverse the national decline in meadows and increase the biodiversity of the borough.

So what exactly is the Bee Corridor and how did it come about?

In 2017, Brent Council looked for creative ways to solve two problems. How to increase biodiversity across the borough and how to make savings of £240K. The two ideas seemed to be in conflict, until the Council decided to introduce meadow areas in 24 local parks. Leaving areas of longer grass in some parks seemed like the perfect solution; providing a safe and inclusive habitat for nature and at the same time saving money by reducing the amount of times grass had to be cut, from 16 times a year to once.

The challenges of the first two years were vast. No one liked the long grass, not even the insects the Council was trying to encourage! E-mails were received noting that the long grass fell considerably short of a real meadow. However, the Council persisted and produced an 'infographic' explaining the annual lifecycle of local meadows.

The public was warming to the idea; but the project still needed to win over both residents and the insects that it was seeking to entice to local parks, in the quest for an increase in biodiversity.

The challenges remained twofold. How to engage the public in a vibrant discussion about increasing biodiversity in parks within an urban setting, and how to create 'fast track meadows',

with natural bursts of wildflowers. Then the concept of the Bee Corridor was born. Bees everywhere issued a collective sigh of relief as humans at Brent Council caught up with their environmental needs.

The Council worked tirelessly on the design, with involvement from the parks team, Veolia and the internal communications team. Additional finance was invested in the purchase and sowing of wildflower seed over a three year period, and thereby creating the seven mile Bee Corridor.

A third of each of 22 meadow areas was designated as the wildflower area. Areas were selected near to pathways and entrances allowing visitors to the park to see the immediate impact of the wildflowers. The drifts had to be created in a natural looking pattern and with the use of absolutely no pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals.

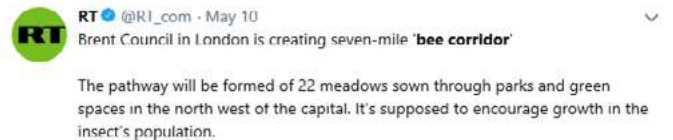
By the beginning of March, the drifts were being dug over, raked and wildflower seeds - carefully selected to ensure they were compatible with London soil - were being sown. Videos were produced to communicate the reasons for the large dirt 'snakes' appearing in their parks and social media communications were posted to help residents anticipate the colourful change that was coming. Briefings were held with councillors and a local environmental group and free wildflower seeds were also distributed to get people excited about the project.

Then, on the late May Bank Holiday weekend, the Evening Standard ran an exclusive story about Brent's newly created Bee Corridor. Coinciding with the release of the UN report on Biodiversity, the news article went viral, spanning not just media outlets in the UK, but worldwide. There was no pressure for the wildflowers to grow at all....

Then the Council held its breath; until on an evening walk home through the park on the 4th June 2019, the first flowers had started to bloom. Photos were frantically taken of the purple blooms of Fiddleneck and in a moment of reflection, there was a buzzing sound..... The first bumblebees had found their very own food corridor and habitat.

The Council has achieved our aim and not only saved money but creatively developed a solution that increased biodiversity in local parks in the most spectacularly colourful way. Residents were taking photos in the wildflower meadows and posting them on Instagram and the feedback was positive. "Best initiative Brent has carried out", posted one happy resident; whilst surrounded by bees, butterflies and bush crickets.

2020 will see the expansion of the Bee Corridor and bring with it more colour, vibrancy and biodiversity.



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