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Association for Public Service Excellence

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Bloomin' Good Services

APSE Direct Spring Edition

Parks and Greenspaces survey

Matt Ellis
p8

Plantlife's No Mow May

Andrew Doyle
p24

The case for universal free school meals

Sharon Hodgson MP
p30



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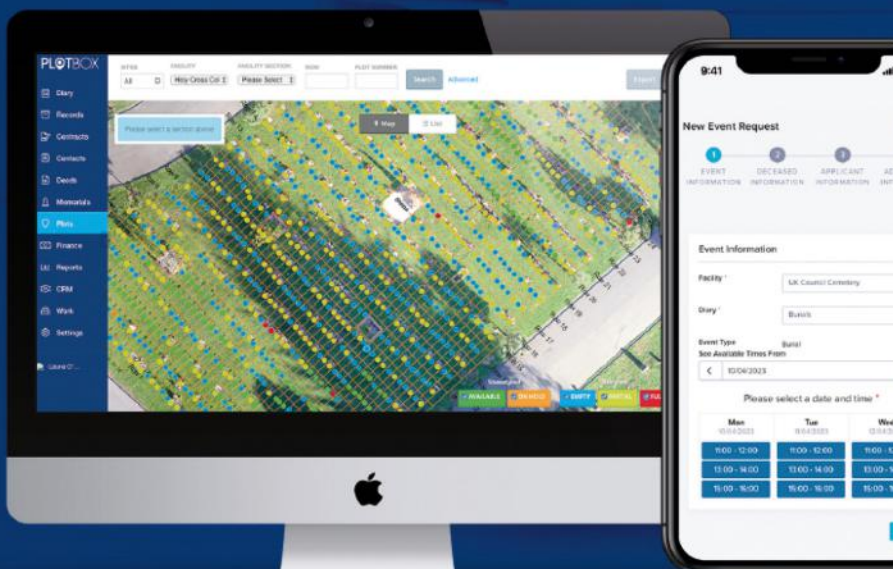
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Editorial



Mo Baines
Chief Executive,
APSE

Adaptation: Is it being ignored?

The Climate Change Act 2008 compels the production of a National Adaptation Programme every five years with progress monitored by the Climate Change Committee.

A recent monitoring report, coming on the back of the warmest on record February, in 2024, found that despite the major challenges presented by climate change, our National Adaptation Programme is inadequate.

A key criticism found in the CCC monitoring report is the disjointed approach to decision-making at a government level, which fails to match together the big public policy ideas and developments with adaptation outcomes. Local authorities are noted by their absence, in the sense that their role in adaptation is under-represented at best, and further hindered by a failure to align government spending to NAP outcomes, and government department decision-making.

Local authorities matter in this space. Core components of the NAP are anchored to local council areas; towns and cities need to be resilient to river and coastal flooding; buildings need to be resistant to heat and flooding; community resilience will be tested and needs to be supported with the ability to respond to climate shocks; local infrastructure in the form of our strategic roads network and access to ports, alongside food security considerations, all sit at a local level.

Nature too is critical to adaptation, with local ecosystems and biodiversity alongside climate-resistant agriculture.

However, what we are seeing is a fragmented system without clear targets and monitoring in place, which is in stark contrast to the approaches in places like Germany and the Netherlands, where adaptation approaches straddle government departments and are integrated into investments, particularly on long-life assets.

Much more could be done without necessarily a huge uplift in resources. Better regulation may be a starting point to ensure that big infrastructure projects are future-proofed for adaptation. That will mean reinstating real powers to local authority planning. Alongside this coordination of adaptation policy at a government level will be essential to end the fragmented decision-making that hinders local actions.

And finally... we have to recognise that our local frontline council services are part of the solution, from Highways to Parks, from Housing to School Meals, each has a role to play in adaptation to safeguard communities in the future.

Contents

- 4 Report back**
A round-up of APSE advocacy and events
- 8 APSE Parks and Greenspace survey analysis**
Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor
- 9 The Big APSE Energy Summit 2024**
Phil Brennan, Head of APSE Energy
- 10 Calculating carbon emissions**
Hannah Winstanley, General Manager and Country Lead UK at Brightly
- 12 East Ayrshire's community defibrillator initiative**
David Doran, Health and Safety Manager, East Ayrshire
- 15 The Calderdale Sphagnum Project - Growing Moss for Peat's sake**
Gill Wigley, Sphagnum Project Officer, Calderdale Council
- 18 Historic homes, heat efficiency, and net zero**
Charlotte Banks, Principal Advisor, APSE Energy
- 21 Funding street trees**
Simeon Linstead, Project Director at Trees for Streets
- 24 Plantlife's No Mow May**
Andrew Doyle, Conservation Officer for Road Verges and Greenspaces
- 26 New cleaning apprenticeship means local authorities can upskill staff at no extra cost**
Delia Cannings, Chair, British Cleaning Council
- 28 Preparing for future floods**
Rob Bailey, APSE Principal Advisor
- 30 "Hungry children can't learn" - The case for universal free school meals**
Sharon Hodgson MP, Chair of the APPG for School Food
- 33 Creating a sustainable journey out of homelessness in Swansea**
Phil Stapley, Strategic Operational Lead for South West Wales, The Wallich
- 35 Vehicle to grid charging - The CleanMobilEnergy project**
Case study extract from the upcoming APSE Energy publication 'Energy across the authority'
- 41 The importance of active wellbeing**
Matt Bazeley OBE, CSSC CEO

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Report Back

A round-up of APSE advocacy and events

Abuse of councillors and staff putting democracy at risk, say local government groups

© 5 February



The BBC News piece cited research by APSE and De Monfort University on elected members' experiences, the full report is due to be released

APSE at the Conservative Councillors' Association Conference 2024

On 23-24 February, APSE was in Warwickshire for the CCA Conference 2024 exhibiting, hosting workshops, and facilitating plenary sessions.

APSE's Friday workshop was titled 'Enhancing public engagement and satisfaction with your council services', and analysed the results of APSE's annual public opinion poll on local government frontline services. Panelists for the session included Cllr Richard Wright, Leader of North Kesteven; Cllr Graham McAndrew, East Herts District Council and Hertfordshire County Council, and Rob Bailey, APSE Principal Advisor.

APSE's Saturday-morning plenary - chaired by Cllr Philip Broadhead, Chairman of the Conservative Councillors Association, focussed on local government finance with APSE Chief Executive Mo Baines addressing delegates alongside Cllr Abi Brown, LGA Conservative Group Deputy Leader and Under Secretary of State Simon Hoare, MP. The panel discussed the increase of Section 114 Notices, with APSE urging Government to make some immediate changes to avoid cliff-edge scenarios for many councils, particularly on new rules around minimum revenue provision and capitalisation issues.

The latest APSE briefings...

APSE has a dedicated team of Principal Advisors providing regular updates via briefings. Our latest include:

- Household waste composition
- Mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements
- Proposals for a Heat in Buildings Bill
- DIY waste charges
- Use of hydrotreated vegetable oil in transport
- Plant biosecurity survey results

APSE runs one of the largest briefings and research programmes in local government. All briefings can be accessed via the APSE website.

APSE in the MJ

In February, APSE Chief Executive Mo Baines was interviewed for an article in the MJ titled 'The first cuts are the deepest', looking at the one of the most challenging budget-setting periods ever faced by the sector, and impact this is having on local authority staff numbers.

Mo commented: "The tradition across the public sector has been one of career pathways, learning service operations and within that gaining the supervisory and managerial skills necessary for the next tranche of potential officer leaders. Redundancy and recruitment freezes have eroded those pathways to a career in the public sector.

"We urgently need to consider workplace planning on a pan-public sector basis and anchored to localities. It seems that with little opportunity to increase monetary resources we should at least look to gain some traction on people and career opportunities in a more innovative way."

Published on 27 February, you can visit The MJ website to read the full article.

APSE cited by BBC News

Research by APSE was featured in a BBC News piece about the experiences of councillors and local authority staff. The research found that 45% of councils surveyed have had serious issues with intimidation and harassment from members of the public, while 22% had issues so serious that they created plans to keep councillors and officers safe.

Inquiry into urban green spaces

On Tuesday 30 January, APSE Chief Executive Mo Baines gave evidence to the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry into urban green spaces. Mo discussed the wider context of local government funding, highlighting the impact of budget cuts on longer term planning, as well as the maintenance of these spaces, which are crucial for community health and wellbeing.



APSE Chief Executive Mo Baines gives evidence to the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry into urban green spaces.



Scottish Conservative Party Conference delegates attending APSE's fringe event.

APSE at the Labour LGA Conference 2024

On February 10, APSE hosted a packed workshop session entitled "How can a Labour government stem the tide of s.114's?". The session was chaired by Cllr Mark Pengelly, APSE Central Region Chair. The panel of speakers included Cllr Lisa Brown, Deputy Leader of Cumberland Council, Cllr John Kerr Brown of Warrington Council and APSE Chief Executive, Mo Baines with delegates debating what measures they would like to see to improve the financial position of local government.

Excellence in School Food Awards

APSE is delighted to announce the winners and finalists of the APPG Excellence in School Food Awards 2023/2024. Partnering with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food to deliver the awards, APSE would like to extend a huge congratulations to all those who were shortlisted:

Individual Category

- Fiona Black, Food and Nutrition teacher, Community and Partnerships Officer at The Halifax Academy
- **Winner:** Kath Breckon, North Yorkshire Council / NYES Catering

Groups Category

- The Food Teachers Centre - Levelling-up food education
- Juniper Ventures Ltd
- Magic Breakfast - Breakfasts in Schools
- **Winner:** London Borough of Tower Hamlets - Universal free school meals for secondary pupil

Schools Category:

- Rushey Green Primary School
- **Winner:** The Grove School

Speaking about the Awards, judge Sharon Hodgson MP said: "I want to say a big thank you to everyone who sent in a submission to this year's APPG Excellence in School Food Awards. It was a pleasure to read through the fantastic work that is being carried out across the country. You are all a credit to the sector."

"I was thrilled to meet the finalists at the APSE Facilities Management Seminar 2024, and would like to congratulate all submissions for their tireless efforts to ensure the delivery of school food continues to be at the highest and most innovative standards."

The winners were announced at the APSE Facilities Management, Catering and Cleaning Seminar, Leeds, 25 January 2024.

Service design and transformation with Socitm

On 28 February, APSE Principal Advisor Matt Ellis attended Socitm's conference in Sheffield. 'Reimagining communities and places' focused on how organisations should address the complex social, economic and environmental issues that are central to service design and transformation.

The National Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in the Workplace Conference

Representatives from APSE Southern Region, Abi Ademiluyi, Principal Advisor and Shami Scholes, Research Officer attended the conference in London on 31 January. The event explored strategies for organisations to effectively integrate EDI practices and promote a environment that is inclusive of everyone.

Scotland

Archie Dryburgh nominated for Veterans Award

APSE Chair of Highways and Street Lighting, Armed Forces Champion, and Prospective National Chair Cllr Archie Dryburgh has been nominated as a finalist for the Scottish Veterans Awards 2024.

The Veterans Awards seek to celebrate the success of armed forces veterans who have excelled in the transition from military to civilian life and act as role models for future service leavers. The winners will be announced at an event on 24 April 2024 in Edinburgh.

APSE at the Scottish Conservative Party Conference

On 1 March, APSE hosted a fringe event at the Scottish Conservative Party Conference in Aberdeen. The fringe focused on APSE's latest publication *Under Pressure: The Future of Councillor-Officer Relationships*. Our excellent speakers included Pam Gosal MSP, Deputy Party Chair and Deputy Finance and Local Government Spokesperson; Graham Simpson MSP, Deputy Net Zero, Energy and Transport Spokesperson and Cllr Rachel Nunn, Stirling Council.



APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey, Cllr Richard Wright and Cllr Graham McAndrew at the CCA Conference.

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3/4 of local councils expect their budgets to decrease by more than 5% in the next five years



Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor, shares the findings from APSE's annual survey on the

state of local authority parks and greenspace services.

Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor, shares the findings from APSE's annual survey on the state of local authority parks and greenspace services.

A new survey on the state of local authority parks and greenspace services finds 74% are expecting budget cuts of over 5% in the coming five years, with 40% expecting cuts of over 10%. This is despite the survey finding over half of those surveyed are experiencing a growing number of visitors to their parks.

The survey, conducted annually by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and now in its 14th year, found that 84% of those surveyed said budget cuts have led to reduced maintenance and an increase in unmaintained land.

The survey also found that nearly three-quarters of respondents intend to increase fees and charges over the next two to three years to meet efficiency pressures.

Speaking about the findings, Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor, said:

"The outsized role parks play in delivering positive health, wellbeing and climate change outcomes is well documented. Sadly, APSE's latest survey demonstrates the belief amongst parks professionals that service quality is in danger of collapsing due to the ongoing pressures on budgets. There is a real need for investment in people, technology and infrastructure, particularly as visitor numbers remain high and, in many cases, are increasing.



Other key findings

of the local authorities surveyed:

- ✿ Biodiversity continues to be identified as the main environmental priority for parks services at 91%. The second highest is litter control at 69%.
- ✿ Just 2% expect their training budget to increase in the next 12 months.
- ✿ 55% experienced a decrease in the frequency of grass cuts (amenity) in the last 12 months – A 26% increase since 2023 (29%).
- ✿ 82% of those surveyed are reducing the amount of chemical treatment they use to eradicate weeds – a 14% increase since 2023 (68%).

"Amidst the local government funding crisis, the survey does show that local authorities are successfully introducing new and innovative ways to manage parks sustainably. Whether this be through income generation, partnerships or alternative forms of funding. However, there is a limit to how many budget gaps these innovations can plug.

"APSE's latest polling with Survation shows the public does not distinguish between statutory and non-statutory services. They want to see all local services protected and flourishing. Regrettably, the latest budget seemed to be designed through the prism of cost rather than value. Our parks and greenspaces more than demonstrated their value during the dark days of the pandemic. Further cuts, as announced by the Chancellor last week, seriously risk these services being hollowed out of existence and unable to respond in the future."

The full State of the Market report will be available on APSE's website soon.

"There is a real need for investment in people, technology and infrastructure, particularly as visitor numbers remain high and, in many cases, are increasing."

The Big APSE Energy Summit 2024



Phil Brennan,
Head of APSE
Energy, reports
back from one

of the biggest events in
the local authority energy
calendar.

Another APSE Big Energy Summit has come and gone. Held on the 28th and 29th of February, this was the 10th summit we have held and by far the biggest. With around 300 delegates, speakers, exhibitors and partners in attendance, there was a vast amount of experience, expertise, and knowledge in the room. The feedback we have received points to a hugely successful summit.

A number of themes emerged over the two days.

The first was around finance: we heard from several speakers from large organisations like the UK Infrastructure Bank and Green Finance Institute as well as councils discussing their experience in the current financial environment, such as the need to bid for external funds and establish partnerships.

Local authorities cannot meet the targets set by the Government, devolved administrations, and themselves without adopting a creative approach to securing finance. Potential routes include private sector funds (though APSE always cautions this by reminding people that funding needs to work in the public interest, and should be available), moving away from a reliance on grant funding to more permanent sources and looking at scale. Funding pots such as PSDS and SHDF, the Towns Fund, Shared Prosperity Funds, and the Public Works Loan Board are available, as well as drawing from reserves and crowdfunding.



The main conference hall packed with delegates

However, none of these will be sufficient to provide the funding needed for local authorities to decarbonise their assets, electrify their fleet, insulate homes, and support small businesses, to name but a few measures - the job at hand is massive. This challenge requires thinking at a grand scale, following the example of authorities like Bristol, Coventry, and Warrington. Local councils We need to carry out due diligence, consider risks, commerciality and culture within their organisations and get those in senior positions to think that way too.

Data was another recurring theme throughout the event - whether this is data about council assets, local communities and the local economy, housing condition surveys, support for council policies and emissions data, all decisions and business cases should be made based on quantitative evidence.

The 'pipeline of projects' was another phrase we heard a lot. This might be anything from a long-term, city-wide, multi-million-pound series of projects in partnership with the private sector to a programme of improvements for a set of civic buildings before 2030. Public-private partnerships and internal asset investments may vary in scale but are similar in approach - pipelines need to be planned with early engagement with the right people and an endpoint in mind. Think about the pipelines your local authority will be involved in now - there will be more than one and may vary in terms of interested parties, duration, and outcome, but they all start today.



Calculating carbon emissions – reach your sustainability goals with Brightly Software from Siemens



Hannah Winstanley, General Manager and Country Lead UK at Brightly, explores how digital asset management tools can be used are

becoming increasingly important in local authorities' efforts towards a greener future.

As climate change continues to be a pressing global issue, local authorities are increasingly recognising their responsibility to take action.

Digital asset management tools, such as our very own Confirm Enterprise Asset Management solution, are playing a pivotal role in the fight against climate change by tracking the emissions generated by vehicles, buildings, materials, waste and more, while maintaining a local authority's assets – thereby enabling them to make informed decisions and monitor progress made towards their carbon reduction goals.

Beyond this, our leading asset management solution can help authorities to use their assets' data to operate more efficiently, make accurate and strategic decisions, enhance transparency and communication between local authorities and their communities, and save resources.

Safety First

At Brightly Software, we recognise that safety is paramount for local authorities. Through the monitoring and preventative maintenance of multiple assets – from streetlights, to pavements, roads, pedestrian crossings, park benches, trees, bins and more – as well as timely, appropriate responses to issues flagged by the

community, local authorities can ensure their environment is a safe, enjoyable place to live.

Part of this element of safety includes communities having clean enough air to breathe and live in, and our software can help local authorities to monitor this.

Overcome Challenges in Carbon Reduction

Measuring carbon emissions and assessing progress toward reduction goals can be challenging due to the complex and interconnected nature of assets and the data that they generate. However, assets' data obtained by Brightly Software is made more digestible, so comprehensible reports can easily be generated. Brightly Software also contains a tool called CarbonZero that is aligned to the Future Highways Research Group (FHRG) methodology and is based on the UK government's greenhouse gas conversion factors. The solution enables its users to see exactly which activities are most highly contributing to their carbon footprint – for example, identifying and reducing carbon intensive operations during highway maintenance. This helps them to make informed, strategic, evidence-based decisions moving forwards.

Powerful Functionalities

Brightly Software, including its CarbonZero tool, provide key functionalities that can help local authorities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These include:

1. A Proven Standard

Our CarbonZero solution is based on the FHRG's methodology for recording emissions in local highways authorities. The FHRG provides the industry with a standard method for calculating and recording carbon emissions.



2. Real-time Monitoring

Brightly and the CarbonZero tool offer real-time monitoring, so local authorities can continuously track their assets' energy usage and emissions. This enables them to promptly take action if there are deviations from their reduction goals.

3. Scenario Modelling

Our software has the capability to create scenarios and assess the impact of local authorities' various carbon reduction strategies. For example: the outcome when using different types of servicing vehicles and the materials used during repairs. This allows authorities to optimise their resources and implement the most cost effective and/or energy efficient solutions.

Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar 2024

Expert speakers include:

Alan Sheldon, Head of Bereavement Service,

Liverpool City Council

Vickie Hacking, Principal Advisor, APSE

Christine Walker- Kelley, Crematorium Manager, East

Riding of Yorkshire Council

Stuart Turner, Service Manager, Sheffield City Council

Justin Smith, Director, The CDS Group

Andrew Bazeley, Lawyer, The Law Commission

This seminar will also include the APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Innovation Awards 2024. The three shortlisted finalised for the Innovation Award 2024 will be presenting an overview of their submissions.

4. Analytics

Our software is also equipped with advanced data analytics, which are capable of processing huge datasets to identify trends and patterns. This can, in turn, help local authorities to make data-driven decisions based on their carbon reduction goals and other strategies.

5. Data Management

The Brightly Software suite allows our users to centralise data collected from their assets. This includes information about each assets' condition, maintenance requirements, energy consumption, and more. Having all of their data in one place simplifies and speeds up the process of tracking and analysing carbon emissions.

“As local authorities continue to tackle the pressing issue of climate change, Brightly is proving to be a valuable tool to calculate and report carbon emissions.”

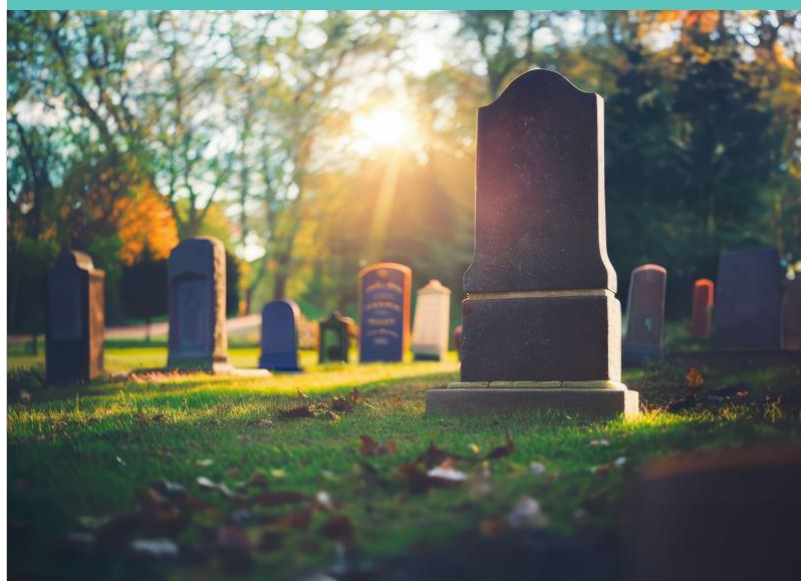
Looking forward

A growing number of local authorities face the challenge of operating and delivering the same, continued services to their communities, while dealing with shrinking budgets. Our software can help them to overcome this challenge by recording and centralising their assets' data, and enabling preventative maintenance through more accurate control of resources.

As local authorities continue to tackle the pressing issue of climate change, Brightly is proving to be a valuable tool to calculate and report carbon emissions. Our asset management software's advanced analytics capabilities is empowering local authorities to make informed decisions, track their progress and contribute to a more sustainable future – for their local communities and the world.

Looking forward, digital asset management tools such as Brightly Software will play an increasingly important role in the journey towards a carbon-neutral society.

Brightly, a Siemens company, is the global leader in intelligent asset management solutions – because we know that smarter assets drive more sustainable communities. Brightly pairs its complete suite of intuitive software - including CMMS, EAM, Strategic Asset Management, IoT Remote Monitoring, Sustainability and Community Engagement - with tailored consultancies and award-winning support services to light the way to a bright future where we can all thrive.



Thursday 25 April

The Edge Conference Centre, The Edge, Riveredge, Wigan, WN3 5AB



East Ayrshire's community defibrillator initiative

David Doran, Health and Safety Manager, explains how his innovative use of community benefit provisions has put a defibrillator in every town and village in East Ayrshire.

East Ayrshire Council launched their Community Defibrillator Initiative in April 2022 to ensure that every town and village within East Ayrshire had access to this life-saving equipment within five years.

The initiative is a joint venture led by the Council's Health and Safety and Procurement teams, which used community benefits provisions within Council contracts in a focused way to deliver this key objective. Since the launch, it has been an overwhelming success, both with the communities who have benefited, and with the Council's contractors who have donated equipment worth over £90,000.

We launched the initiative in response to approaches from community groups and clubs seeking support from the Council to help them purchase a defibrillator that the Council had no budget to cover, either for the initial purchase of the equipment or the ongoing maintenance cost.

As I administer contracts as part of my role, I was aware of community benefits provisions, so I approached our Procurement

Manager to discuss the possibility of using these benefits in a targeted way for us to address a specific objective, which in this case was to provide this life-saving equipment to community groups and clubs, while at the same time building a network of community accessible defibrillators across East Ayrshire, which otherwise we would not have been able to achieve.



A defibrillator handover at the Bunker Gym in Kilmarnock.

We worked with colleagues in the Information and Communications Technology team to build a website portal, which could be used by community groups and clubs in East Ayrshire to apply for donated equipment. As we were doing this, we were also working on developing a letter for circulation to contractors, seeking donations of equipment, which would be sent to our contract administrators for issue, and on governance arrangements, which would ensure that the basis for approval or otherwise of applications was clear and consistent.

Once we had the equipment to donate, we launched our website and promoted the initiative with the support of our Communications team and our elected members, who brought the initiative to the attention of community groups and clubs within their constituencies.

After the launch, we very quickly started to receive applications from groups and clubs across East Ayrshire, so much so that within 12 months we had achieved our objective of ensuring that every town and village has access to at least one community-accessible defibrillator.

“We have donated 51 community-accessible defibrillators to groups and clubs across East Ayrshire”

We engaged with our partners in Scottish Fire and Rescue throughout, delivering free CPR and defibrillator training to almost 900 people - building resilience across our communities. We have also worked with Save a Life for Scotland - a partnership between emergency services, third-sector organisations, the Scottish government, and academic researchers, to further our joint aim of saving lives and improving survival rates for out-of-hospital cardiac arrests.

Since we launched the initiative, we have donated 51 community-accessible defibrillators to groups and clubs across East Ayrshire. All of this is financed through targeted community benefits; the clubs and groups take on full guardianship of the

equipment they are given, meaning that there is no cost to the Council other than officer time facilitating the donations from the contractor to the group.

“Every town and village has access to at least one community-accessible defibrillator”

The most satisfying aspect of the initiative, other than the positive difference it makes in our communities, is that our contractors and communities are fully committed. Contractors regularly comment on how they appreciate knowing exactly what is asked of them in terms of community benefits, which aren't always clearly defined. They also appreciate being involved in the handover of the equipment with the recipient club or group, and the positive publicity this generates.

Overall, this initiative demonstrates what can be achieved when community benefits are targeted at achieving a specific outcome. This example centred on community-accessible defibrillators, but the Council has already turned its attention to alleviating food poverty using this focused approach.



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The Calderdale Sphagnum Project - Growing moss for peat's sake

Calderdale Council's Sphagnum Project, funded by the National Lottery, aims to help restore local peatland which is vital to mitigating the impact of climate change. Gill Wigley, Sphagnum Project Officer, spoke to APSE about the significance of this initiative.

Funded by The National Lottery, The Growing Resilience Partnership is a partnership between The Calder and Colne Rivers Trust (CCRT) and Calderdale Council to target the carbon sequestration of landscapes in our efforts to become Carbon Net Zero by 2038. The CCRT have appointed a Farm and Rural Liaison Officer who offers free confidential advice to farmers about ways to improve the sustainability of their land and Calderdale Council appointed a Sphagnum Project Officer who together with a team of volunteers has set up the Calderdale Sphagnum Project, experimenting with ways of growing sphagnum moss to restore peat landscapes, and using this as a conversation starter around the Climate Emergency.



Sphagnum Moss can hold 20 times its weight in water and produces an acid that pickles surrounding plants which stops them from rotting, helping more peat to form.

What is Peat?

Peat landscapes are common in the UK but make up only 3% of the world's habitats, holding 30% of the world's land-stored carbon, making their health crucial in our efforts to reach net zero. Peat was laid down on the hilltops of Calderdale roughly three thousand years ago when nutrients leached out of the soils on the deforested hills and formed a clay pan, creating wet, low-nutrient conditions.



Project volunteer Kelly with a tray of Sphagnum Moss.

Sphagnum moss grows in these conditions. With no roots, it continuously grows upwards, and it absorbs water through every surface, raising the water table as it grows, slowing the water flow into the valley, reducing moorland fire risk and improving water quality. The water held by the sphagnum creates anaerobic (without oxygen) conditions preventing the presence of bacteria, so as the base of the sphagnum dies it doesn't rot. Instead, along with all of the other bog plants, it is crushed by the weight of water and preserved as peat.

Drying out of peat exposes it to oxygen, which allows the release of carbon into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. In Calderdale, this process started in the Industrial Revolution when much of our sphagnum moss was poisoned and has been compounded by historic land use of drainage, burning and overgrazing.

How are we doing?

The Calderdale Sphagnum project so far has successfully grown 3000 plants of 11 species. This is a fraction of what is needed. However, the techniques we have developed are of great interest to many Conservation Organisations. Personnel from organisations such as The National Trust and Lancashire Wildlife Trust have visited the project and are setting up their own nurseries using our methods. They have been encouraged by how our project inspires the volunteers and public of Calderdale to realise the importance of their landscapes in mitigating the causes and effects of climate change.

Many school visits and community events have taken place, helping the public to understand that carbon is in all living and dead material and that the way we use our landscapes impacts their ability to hold water and carbon.

How are we growing sphagnum moss?

Our parent plants were sourced from our moorlands and with Natural England permissions from local SSSI sites. We are using Melcourt Sylvagrow Peat Free Ericaceous compost as our media. In late Winter the plants are left whole and laid flat across the compost, overlapping each other slightly and we are using a rainwater misting system. One polytunnel is set up with a Solar panel to supply the misters, the other is mains operated. When

there is insufficient rainwater, de-chlorinated water is used. The trays of sphagnum are sheltered from the sun and draught with a reclaimed blue vegetable crate. Dozens of new shoots appear along the stem of the plants after a few weeks. After six months the plants are large enough for planting out.

What can I do?

The project runs until September 2025. We are available to offer free support and advice to any potential growers. As an individual and an organisation: stop buying peat and plants that are grown in peat and encourage others to do the same. Treat peat landscapes in your area as valuable carbon stores. If they are drained, burned, overgrazed or degraded, they will release carbon. Restoring them is necessary for achieving net zero. Consider carefully how useful a habitat may be for carbon storage and sequestration before changing land use, for example when selecting sites for tree planting and solar or wind farms.

To find out more about the Calderdale Sphagnum Project or to get involved, please email countryside@calderdale.gov.uk



Supporting *your* food waste management

YPO[®] 50

The capital funding will be provided to waste collections authorities before the end of this financial year, 31st March 2024. This capital funding is intended for the purchase of food bins (this includes internal kitchen caddies, external kerbside caddies and communal bins) and food waste collection vehicles.

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- + **Plastic Wheeled Bins including Distribution Services - 1040**
- + **The supply of larger bins that may be required for communal properties**
- + **The distribution of any waste products to individual households**
- + **Recycling Products - 1063**
- + **The supply of kitchen and kerbside caddies for your food waste**
- + **Purchase Lease and Hire of Specialist Vehicles - 1170**
- + **Alternative Fuelled Vehicles - 1066**

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Historic homes, heat efficiency, and net zero

Charlotte Banks, Principal Advisor for APSE Energy, gives an overview of the latest government review into the barriers to adapting historic homes for energy efficiency.

Our heritage buildings are a vital part of our culture but when it comes to decarbonising them, there can be barriers.

In January 2024 APSE Energy sent out a briefing to members, summarising the key guidance issued by the government on adapting historic homes for energy efficiency. Some specific points, particularly in relation to planning, apply to England only. However, a lot of general information will be useful to all member authorities.

The UK government believes that improving energy efficiency and protecting buildings of historic and architectural interest are compatible and complementary goals. Improving the energy efficiency of these sites is necessary for their long-term survival, as it will ensure that they remain desirable places to live and continue to be maintained.

Planning was identified as one of the main barriers to installing energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures in listed homes and homes in conservation areas. A common assertion from attendees at the roundtable was that, while it is recognised special rules are needed to protect the integrity of historic buildings, obtaining planning permission or listed building consent took “too long” – which could result in a loss of financial support.

DLUHC statistics show around 27,000 listed building consent applications to local planning authorities every year. While 93% are approved, the need for consent often causes delays, with only 76% of applications decided within the expected 8-week timescale.

Historic England sampled how local planning authorities handled applications for solar PV in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings and suggested that some authorities granted almost all requests, whilst others were much more restrictive, sometimes owing to poor planning knowledge and practices.

The review’s findings confirmed that there is confusion in the public’s mind about the type of approval needed, inconsistency between local planning authorities, and the process sometimes being slow and uncertain.

“Improving the energy efficiency of these sites is necessary for their long term survival”

Historic England is consulting on a Historic Environment Advice Note (HEAN) on Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation, including advice on the common types of changes that householders may wish to carry out to reduce carbon emissions and improve the energy efficiency of historic homes.

There is a significant appetite for increasing the use of Local Listed Building Consent Orders (LLBCO) to provide upfront listed building consent for some energy efficiency improvements so owners can make these without applying for permission. As a first step, DLUHC will consult on the opportunities for using LLBCOs.

Respondents raised the issue of skills, training, and capacity within local planning authorities as a significant barrier. Many local planning authorities have no conservation officer and either share a post with neighbouring councils or buy in heritage advice from consultants. The guidance outlines that while many reforms can be enacted by legislative and policy changes the government also needs to support local authorities to develop critical skills and build capacity.

“Many local planning authorities have no conservation officer”

The government says it recognises that local authorities and the planning sector face serious capacity and capability challenges resulting in delays. To address this, they have developed a

comprehensive Planning Capability and Capacity program looking at funding, upskilling opportunities and developing the future pipeline into the profession.

Some of the actions to be taken:

- DLUHC will work to ensure that the evidence gathered as part of this review into the capacity and capability issues of heritage specialism within local authorities is fed into the department’s work on planning capacity and capability.
- Historic England will deliver training for local authority staff on how to apply advice set out in the final HEAN on Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation.
- Historic England will improve the targeting and promotion of its broad training offer to ensure maximum impact on professional audiences.

“Local authorities and the planning sector face serious capacity and capability challenges”

The guidance states that the review and engagement have helped the government to understand the practical barriers to installing energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating in historic homes. By identifying the key issues, they have developed a package of measures that will have a tangible impact on the ground. The government hopes this will make life easier for those who own and live in historic homes while ensuring that an irreplaceable part of this country’s heritage is protected for future generations.

It remains to be seen whether the actions will result in a local government planning service with adequate capacity and the skills to ensure listed buildings are decarbonised, whilst retaining their architectural features. In the meantime, actions need to be taken to decarbonise these buildings and it is a difficult task, both in terms of procedure and applications, as well as technologies. External wall insulation and air source heat pumps outside a listed building aren’t an option.

APSE Energy’s consultancy service has experience in surveying and recommending solutions for energy efficiency upgrades and heating systems for these types of buildings. If your local authority requires support with decarbonising listed buildings, please contact Phil Brennan at pbrennan@apse.org.uk





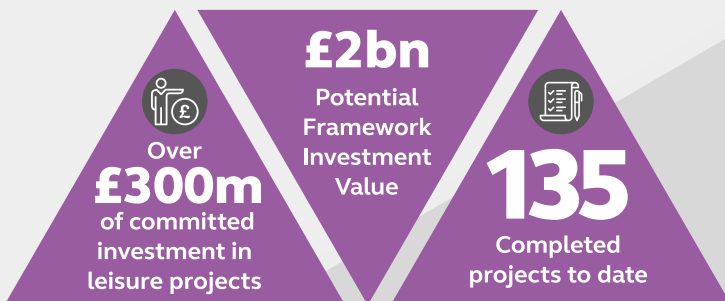
UK leisure framework

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“ The UK Leisure Framework is unique in that it delivers an end to end solution for leisure developments. Whereas most Frameworks simply procure and manage the transformation of physical buildings, the UK Leisure Framework offers services that contribute to whole-community engagement, providing an efficient means of increasing opportunities for physical activity through the creation of inspiring active spaces. ”

Jamie Groves
Managing Director,
Denbighshire Leisure Ltd.

“ The UK Leisure Framework allowed the Council to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and get our projects to market with expediency. Working with Alliance Leisure, provided a range of options, early cost certainty and our projects were delivered on time and within budget. ”

Damian Hughes
Senior Manager, School Planning
& Provision, Flintshire
County Council

For more information visit www.leisureframework.co.uk or email framework@allianceleisure.co.uk



Funding street trees

Simeon Linstead, Project Director at Trees for Streets, details the tech-for-good project greening up neighbourhoods across the UK.

With councils seemingly ever more cash-strapped, plans to increase street tree planting often feel more aspirational than achievable. Many councils can just about afford to maintain their existing street trees, and some not even that.

A national tree charity, Trees for Cities, working in collaboration with the civic innovator Start with Local, is making positive in-roads in the street tree funding space with their UK-wide project, Trees for Streets.

Trees for Streets is the national street tree sponsorship scheme. It offers an intuitive online platform that makes it very easy for residents and local businesses to donate towards the planting of new street trees. These can be in locations of their own choosing or pre-selected locations, which often include areas of low canopy cover and high deprivation.

The charity manages the relationships with the sponsors, including admin and payments, whilst the council retains the job of approving and planting sponsored trees.

Money is raised from individual donations for single trees, groups fundraising for multiple trees, and corporations wanting to green up their neighbourhoods. The Trees for Streets online platform includes crowdfunding functionality.

The scheme is promoted through social media, door-drops, press/PR and each council's own in-house communications. Trees for Streets also engages directly with the local community to encourage tree sponsorship, from informal street groups to community associations.

Planting more street trees is something that a growing number of people and organisations want to do. There is now a better understanding of the impact that street trees have on well-being, the local environment and protection against extreme weather (both higher temperatures and heavier rain).

While many councils already offer the opportunity to fund trees, Trees for Streets makes it a much simpler process to get a tree planted on your local street. The project organisers were inspired by stories of 'Plant A Tree In '73', and wanted to bring tree sponsorship up to date.

The project currently supports 19 local authorities, including cities such as Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Cambridge, and a third of London Boroughs.

Haringey in North East London is a shining example of how much impact this scheme can create. Over the last three years, over 800 large street trees have been funded through Haringey Council's partnership with Trees for Streets. Many of the sponsors have also committed to watering the trees, saving between £300-400 per tree in contractor costs.

Meanwhile, Trees for Streets features in London's Urban Forest Plan; and the Mayor of London used the programme to manage funding for 1,000 trees in disadvantaged locations across nine boroughs.

If you work for a local authority and would like to find out more about taking local street tree planting to a new level, contact [Trees for Streets at team@treesforstreets.org](mailto:team@treesforstreets.org). They offer an online briefing session on request.

A tree planted by the project in the London Borough of Haringey.



CALL FOR ENTRIES

How to Enter

Unlike many local government awards, the APSE Service Awards are UK wide so they are open to APSE member and non-member councils from across the UK. It is also FREE to enter.

Step One

Decide which categories you would like to enter into. Remember you can even send in more than one submission in a category but... please do not send in the same submission across different categories because we will have to reject them other than the first one we receive.

Step Two

Tell us! Please register your interest. You can do that online at www.apse.org.uk or you can use the form enclosed in this booklet and email it to serviceawards@apse.org.uk. Please tell us by Thursday 31 March 2022.

Step Three

Once you are registered we will send you the awards template. You can then start work on your submission. Use our hints and tips to enhance your chances of success. Once you are done send your completed submissions to us by 12 April 2024 to serviceawards@apse.org.uk. Confirmation will be sent out by email after all submissions have been processed no later than 31 May 2024.

Step Four

Put the kettle on and relax. The hard bit is done. It is now over to our judging panel of local government experts. We aim to let successful applicants know if they have been shortlisted as finalists by 31 July 2024.

Step Five

Our shortlisted finalists will be invited to the Service Awards Charity Dinner. This provides a spectacular end to the APSE Annual Seminar, which will take place in Southern England in September 2024.

Any questions?

Please use our Q&A sheet and if that doesn't answer your question feel free to contact our APSE Service Awards team on 01698 459 051 or email serviceawards@apse.org.uk.

Good luck!

apse service awards 2024



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Supporting life's true champions



Plantlife's No Mow May

Andrew Doyle, Conservation Officer for Road Verges and Greenspaces, discusses how local authorities can start to make a long-term change for nature, people, and climate by signing up for Plantlife's upcoming campaign.

No Mow May is an annual campaign calling on green space managers not to mow during May. This growing movement is rooted in promoting local biodiversity, enabling us to reimagine how we see our road verges and green spaces and celebrate their role in providing a space for wildflowers and wildlife.

Wildflower-rich grasslands are among the most threatened habitats in Britain, with what's remaining often isolated in small fragments. Our network of verges and green spaces can offer an opportunity to reconnect wildflower-rich habitats, making bridges and not barriers across the UK.

Crucially, No Mow May can be the stepping stone to creating a meaningful change for nature throughout the year.

By registering, as a local authority for Plantlife's No Mow May, we will help guide and support you along the way to deliver for nature, climate, and people during May and beyond. Click here to register: [Local Authority No Mow May Registration \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.arcgis.com/sharing/rest/content/items/7d2df327edc5462c8669b051a87847de)

By changing your long-term green space management, you can:

- Deliver on statutory biodiversity duties by creating wildflower-rich habitats
- Reduce carbon impact (wildflower-rich habitats can store up to 10% more carbon)
- Reduced long-term costs, by cutting less often and collecting the grass. Dorset Council reduced management costs by 45% in just seven years.

Plantlife wants to support local authorities in delivering for nature, climate, and people through a year-long managed for nature approach. Getting the best out of No Mow May can be pivotal in celebrating that change as an amazing platform to help communicate a change for nature in your local community.

Bringing the community with you

Joining the No Mow May movement can be a great way to bring the community with you by putting up signs, writing articles in local newspapers, posting on social media, and engaging people in activities related to establishing wildflowers, such as collecting cuttings and sowing seeds.

Building a sense of community in your approach to creating wildflower-rich habitats through No Mow May allows decisions made on cutting frequency and location to be informed by those who know it best.

This year, we invite you to consider the opportunities different structures of grassland habitat can offer to help make room for nature, while maintaining the functionality and community spaces your green spaces provide.

Reimagining our verges and green spaces

Grassland habitats can be a spectrum, depending on how often you cut - they can be tuned to the local context according to budget, carbon targets, local preference, and biodiversity opportunity.

From short flowering lawns mown every 6-8 weeks compared to wildflower meadows cut-and-collected twice a year (outside of April to August) that can support more wildflower species and invertebrates.

Tall or structural grassland is vital for wildlife too, so if you have the space, it is crucial to complement your flowering lawns and meadow areas with boundaries, hedgerow bases or patches of unmown grassland that are allowed to stand over winter.

For example, a low-level flowering lawn can frame a green space, providing clear pathways and sightlines. Meanwhile, a buzzing wildflower meadow can thrive in less active zones, avoiding desire lines, picnic benches, and play areas.

It's registration time!

At Plantlife, we want to support, empower, and enable you to deliver this in your community.

By signing up as early as February this year, we will help you along the way to make a change for nature by providing:

- Plantlife's best practice guidance to managing verges and green spaces for nature in the context of No Mow May.
- Key case studies for change from local authorities across the UK showing a pathway to overcoming challenges such as community support, equipment costs, or green waste management.
- Research and resources such as signs, posters, and infographics to help communicate the change to the local community.

We look forward to helping celebrate your local natural heritage by delivering for nature, people, and climate in 2024 and beyond.

Local Authority No Mow May registration link: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/7d2df327edc5462c8669b051a87847de> or more information, and to register,

For more information, visit [Managing Road Verges and Green Spaces - Plantlife online](#).

Plantlife is a conservation charity that works to secure a world that is rich in plants and fungi. Its work spans four strategic areas: protect and restore, connect people with nature, work in partnerships, and collaborate and influence.





New cleaning apprenticeship means local authorities can upskill staff at no extra cost



Delia Cannings, Chair of the British Cleaning Council, discusses the introduction of a new apprenticeship

scheme that will allow councils to develop the skills of their workforce, whilst recognising the vital role that cleaning operatives undertake.

The new Level 2 Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeship will enable local authorities to invest in their cleaning staff, providing those employees an opportunity to access a recognised work-related cleaning qualification.

The apprenticeship standard for the whole of cleaning and hygiene sector was launched on 1 January 2024, following approval from The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

Local authorities now have the opportunity to divert compulsory Apprenticeship Levy payments into funding Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeships, offering councils significant benefits without the need to identify new funding streams.

All employers with an annual wage bill of more than £3 million pay the Apprenticeship Levy and can use Levy payments to implement the new apprenticeship standard in their workplaces. Unused Levy funds go into Government coffers.

In 2022, it was reported that £111m worth of Apprenticeship Levy payments were unspent across 140 English councils. These unspent funds could support thousands of apprenticeships.

Setting up Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeships will bring huge benefits to local authorities including:

- helping develop a workforce with skills specific to your business
- allowing existing employees to pass on their knowledge to the next generation of employees
- providing you with a motivated and fast-developing workforce

Apprenticeships are a great way to support staff development and bring early career talent into the organisation. This can include hiring local residents as apprentices, enabling them to develop skills to become work-ready. Apprenticeships can help organisations to fill skills gaps and prepare for future skills needs.



As well as unlocking millions of pounds a year for staff training in the cleaning and hygiene sector, the new apprenticeship will help the sector and staff achieve greater recognition for their vital and skilled work which contributes to the health and wealth of the nation.

The tariff for the apprenticeship standard has been confirmed as £5,000 per learner, which is inclusive of all aspects and proportionate to the quantity and quality of the work involved.

Local authorities interested in setting up the scheme in their cleaning service should carefully select a training provider who can meet their needs, agree the delivery plan and commence the onboarding process.

The British Cleaning Council is calling on councils to gift or transfer any unused Levy funds to local cleaning businesses to fund more Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeships.

Employers can choose to transfer up to 25% of their Levy funds each year to businesses to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment, via their apprenticeship service account, which can be set up online.

The benefits of gifting include:

- helping build stronger relationships between organisations and promoting collaboration
- supporting more apprentices and a more skilled workforce across the cleaning and hygiene sector
- providing SMEs with financial support for training and development
- and it is very positive for the brand image of councils gifting funds

Gifting organisations can specify which businesses, sectors, skills or local areas they would like to support, meaning funds can be kept local and within the cleaning and hygiene sector. The Government tops up the payment by 10%.

Transferred funds can only be used to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment up to the funding band maximum.

BCC Chair Delia Cannings said: "The apprenticeship standard for the cleaning and hygiene industry is a fantastic opportunity for local authorities to invest in staff training and for individual employees to gain a recognised work-related qualification, for no added cost to the public purse.

"The fact that councils can set up Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeships without creating extra budgetary pressures must be a huge positive in favour of this initiative.

"There are millions of pounds of Levy funding every year which goes unused, so let's put this money to good use.

"If your local authority isn't using up its Levy funding on apprentices, please think about gifting those funds to other businesses.

"Gifting can benefit your local community and improve the skill levels of staff in local companies, some of whom could be your future employees. Working together, we can benefit the whole industry. Unity is strength."

For more information about the Level 2 Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeship, visit: <https://britishcleaningcouncil.org/apprenticeships>

Established in 1982, the British Cleaning Council (BCC) is the authoritative, collective voice of UK's cleaning, hygiene and waste management industries. The Council's membership is made up of 21 trade and membership associations which all represent different industry sub-sectors. From contract cleaning to waste management, pest control to housekeeping, training providers to machine manufacturers, chemical suppliers to wheelie-bin washers – the BCC coordinates, campaigns and supports the affairs of the UK's entire commercial cleaning ecosystem.

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





Preparing for future floods

Originally appearing on LocalGov following Storm Henk, APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey sets out some of the steps local authorities should take to improve flood preparedness.

We've just lived through Storm Henk, the eighth storm of the 2023-2024 storm season, which brought damaging winds and heavy rain to southern and central parts of England and Wales on 2 January 2024. In Exeter, winds of over 58mph and gusts over 81mph were recorded, whilst parts of the North and Midlands experienced 150% of their long-term average rainfall, contributing to significant flooding.

Local flood authorities have the unenviable responsibility to reduce the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses, excluding statutory main rivers or reservoirs. This requires a coordinated effort by multiple agencies working together to reduce risk.

Although the accuracy of weather forecasts has vastly improved over the past couple of decades, no amount of planning will eliminate those risks entirely. A combination of saturated ground, excessive rain, and high tides can produce conditions that make localised flooding inevitable. Sometimes, flooding can occur so quickly that even when flood defence barriers are available, there is simply not enough time to deploy them.

Despite this, the public rightly expects local authorities to do as much as possible to prevent the most severe impacts of extreme weather events.

Gully emptying - which has been hit by a budget squeeze over the last decade - is one very visual area that needs to be prioritised and shown to be working effectively. Otherwise, local authorities must continue to take the key steps and measures required to mitigate the impact of flooding to ensure the safety and well-being of their communities.

Listed below are some suggested guidelines for flood preparedness at the local level:

1. Risk Assessment:

Conduct a thorough risk assessment to identify areas prone to flooding and assess the potential impact on the community. This includes understanding historical flood patterns, vulnerable populations, and critical infrastructure.

2. Early Warning Systems:

Establish and maintain reliable early warning systems to provide timely and accurate information to the public. This can include sirens, text alerts, social media notifications, and other communication channels.

3. Emergency Response Plan:

Develop and regularly update an emergency response plan that outlines specific procedures for dealing with flooding. This plan should cover evacuation routes, shelter locations, emergency services coordination, and communication strategies.

4. Public Awareness and Education:

Implement public awareness campaigns to educate residents about flood risks, preparedness measures, and evacuation procedures. This can include distributing informational materials, conducting community workshops, and utilizing local media.

“The public rightly expects local authorities to do as much as possible to prevent the most severe impacts of extreme weather events.”

5. Evacuation Planning:

Establish clear evacuation routes and designated shelters. Work with transportation authorities to ensure smooth evacuation processes, especially for individuals with mobility needs or without personal transportation.

6. Infrastructure Protection:

Implement measures to protect critical infrastructure, such as dams, levees, and water treatment plants. Regular maintenance and improvements to these structures can help reduce the risk of flooding.

7. Coordination with Emergency Services:

Foster collaboration among local emergency services, police, fire and rescue, and medical facilities. Regular drills and joint training exercises can improve coordination during flood emergencies.

8. Resource Stockpiling:

Maintain stockpiles of essential resources such as sandbags, emergency supplies, and medical equipment. This ensures a quick response when flooding occurs.

9. Community Engagement:

Encourage community involvement in preparedness efforts. Establish community-based organisations and volunteer groups like Flood Wardens to assist in emergency response and recovery efforts.

10. Monitoring and Forecasting:

Utilise advanced monitoring and forecasting technologies to track weather patterns and river levels. This information can help authorities make informed decisions and issue timely warnings.

11. Post-Flood Recovery Planning:

Develop plans for post-flood recovery and reconstruction. This includes assessing damage, securing financial resources for rebuilding, and providing support to affected residents.

12. Regular Training and Drills:

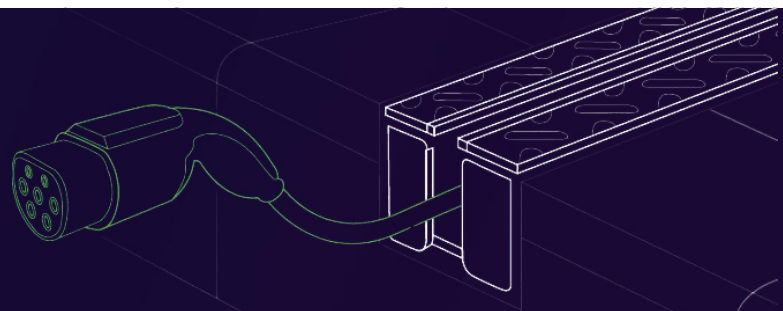
Conduct regular training sessions and drills to ensure that emergency responders and community members are familiar with the procedures outlined in the emergency response plan.

13. Coordination with Other Agencies:

Collaborate with regional and national agencies, as well as non-governmental organisations, to share resources and expertise in flood preparedness and response.

The effectiveness of flood preparedness relies on continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation based on the evolving nature of flood risks and community needs. Even in Britain, the impacts of climate change pose a risk to life and local authorities must adapt to this new reality.

Contact Rob Bailey at: rbailey@apse.org.uk



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Point of View

“Hungry children can’t learn” - The case for Universal Free School Meals



Sharon Hodgson
MP, Chair of the
APPG for School
Food, discusses the
importance of free

school meals for the UK’s children,
society, and economy.

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to APSE for inviting me to speak at the Facilities Management, Building Cleaning and Catering Seminar. The event is always a highlight of my new year.

An issue very close to my heart is the campaign for better and universal school food for all.

I have been active in this campaign for many years as the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on School Food, which I set up in 2010 and have chaired ever since. The APPG provides a cross-party platform to keep school food, child hunger and food education on the political agenda. We do this because we know that school food is an integral part of our children’s educational experience; it is the fuel for the fire that keeps children learning, playing, and growing.

In England, all children in reception, year one and year two receive a free hot meal every day. However, from year three onwards provision of Free School Meals is means-tested. Children in households in England who receive universal credit (UC) and earn less than £7,400, excluding benefit payments, are eligible for FSM. Everyone else is expected to pay for their children’s school meals or provide a packed lunch, even when still living below the poverty line.

The per meal funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals was last increased from £2.41 to £2.53 in 2022. This mere 12 pence per meal increase is wholly inadequate, especially when we consider that food prices have risen 20% or more over the last two years. That is why we need a real-time, inflation-busting funding increase that will guarantee great quality school food that is affordable. Without the foundation of adequate funding, the school catering sector will not be able to grow or even survive. Furthermore, policymakers must recognise the importance of this public service.

A recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on child poverty rates in the UK found that nationally, an average of 29%

of children live in poverty, and in my region it is at 35%. School food is an absolute lifeline for these children, but only when it is accessible.

Under the current system, around 800,000 children who live in poverty are not eligible for free school meals. This system could make a real difference to millions of families’ lives, but currently, it isn’t working. Research into the free school meals pilot in London - which has been extended for another year by Mayor Sadiq Khan – found that the provision of free school meals tackles absences, reduces obesity, improves pupil behaviour, and improves relations with parents, as schools no longer chase families for dinner money debt.

That is why the problems faced under the current system can no longer be allowed to be ignored by the government. In many schools across the UK, rather than acting as a social leveller, school food systems reproduce the persistent inequalities that families face in the outside world. We know that hungry children can’t learn, which is why Labour will introduce Universal Breakfast Clubs because starting the day with a full stomach will make an immediate difference and level the playing field in schools from the moment the bell rings. However, this is then undone if that hunger and stigma returns at lunchtime.

The UK is the fifth wealthiest country in the world, we should be able to afford to ensure our children are fed in school so that they can fully benefit from the world class education we provide them with.

Not only do free school meals alleviate poverty, improve attainment, health, and improve social mobility, but they would also benefit the country economically. Research by PWC found that the introduction of universal free school meals would cost £24.2 Billion over 20 years and would bring back a return on investment of over £99.5 billion in benefits to the economy, including more jobs in sectors that supply catering services and more money in families’ pockets.

We must maintain our drive to campaign for universal free school meals and the incredible difference this policy can make to children’s and families’ lives.

Finally, I would like to applaud those in the school catering sector, who despite facing another year of staggeringly high food and energy costs, have continued again and again to put food on the table for our children. I am constantly blown away by your tenacity and dedication, you make a world of difference to children across the country, and soon enough, we will see the change we seek.

Sharon Hodgson is the Member of Parliament for Washington and Sunderland West, she has chaired the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food since its creation in 2010.

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APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2024

A look ahead to APSE Scotland's Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2024

APSE Scotland is delighted to be returning to the MacDonal Aviemore Highland Resort this May for the Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Services Seminar. This year's event will once again have another bumper programme with speakers from the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, DVSA, Logistics UK and Zero Waste Scotland. Sessions will cover fleet procurement, drug and alcohol policies, food waste and much more with a variety of expert speakers from local authorities sharing their knowledge and best practice.

The seminar will also feature over 100 internal and external exhibition stands.

[Visit the seminar hub here to register your interest](#)

Book your place now!
Visit www.apse.org.uk

21 and 24 May 2024

MacDonal Aviemore Highland Resort

The Wallich: Creating a sustainable journey out of homelessness in Swansea

Phil Stapley, Strategic Operational Lead for South West Wales, the Wallich, discusses how his organisation is developing innovative solutions to tackle homelessness.

“Affordable housing shortages in the private rented sector and social housing are plaguing communities and putting people’s lives on hold.”

As demand on homelessness services continues to rise and funding challenges are cutting resources to the bone, The Wallich is the epitome of working smarter through difficult times. Although it works in 20 of the 22 Welsh local authorities, the charity recently highlighted its offer in Swansea at the recent APSE Wales: Housing, Homelessness and Community Support Group.

The Wallich’s Phill Stapley, Strategic Operational Lead for South West Wales; Mark Winston, Anna Hooper, Swansea Area Managers spoke at length about the challenges, what’s working and how their type of support is vitally important to manage demand.

What are the challenges people of Swansea are facing?

As the cost of living crisis deepens, the Bevan Foundation has cited 1 in 4 Welsh households skipping meals, 13% already in arrears on at least one bill and 11% concerned about losing their home soon.

Affordable housing shortages in the private rented sector and social housing are plaguing communities and putting people’s lives on hold. With that, comes a deepening of poverty, substance use and mental health crises. A revolution in legislation is putting a higher standard on landlords and while generally a good thing, it poses further challenges to finding even the most basic accommodation.

Joined-up working

Approaching homelessness as a spectrum that someone can travel up and down is paramount to ensuring people don’t fall through the cracks. The Wallich operates through a mission of three core objectives:

1. Getting people off the streets

Outreach and drop-in centres for people at the sharp end of homelessness. The Wallich Rough Sleepers Intervention Teams (RSIT) continues to help homeless people on our streets by providing Assertive Outreach.

2. Keeping people off the streets

Accommodation and support consist of residential projects with built-in support. These include direct access hostels and accommodation for people with specific issues such as substance use or challenges with mental health.

3. Creating opportunities for people

Learning and employment projects encourage people getting support from The Wallich to use their current skills or gain new ones in order to get back into volunteering, education or employment.



Residents at Ty Tom Jones doing a fitness class

Service delivery through innovation

Some of The Wallich’s innovative services were highlighted to others in the sector. Each of The Wallich services can feed into each other, or rally together, to advocate for and better support people experiencing homelessness services in Swansea.

- Assertive outreach – Rough Sleeper Intervention Team (RSIT) out supporting rough sleepers from 6.30am.
- Direct access hostels Dinas Fechan, Ty Tom Jones and St Leonards collectively provide 55 beds. These hostels can provide the springboard for people to move on whilst being able to stabilise.
- Shoreline - Long-term accommodation for residents with alcohol dependency
- Gorwelion – For residents with a criminal record who are working towards being substance-free
- Cross Borders Women’s Project – flats for women who have experienced domestic violence, substance use, criminal justice, or other complex issues
- Alternative to Bed and Breakfast Accommodation (ABBA) – supports 44 individuals and numerous families in temporary accommodation
- Housing First – support the most complex, who have a history of homelessness.
- Rapid Rehousing
- Swansea Private Rented Sector (PRS) team – Work directly with landlords to provide longer term accommodation.
- Prevention and Wellbeing Service (PAWS) - support people to sustain their tenancies.



Derwen Newydd resident Philip with staff member Faye.

These accommodation-based services operate in Psychological Informed way (PIE) and are bolstered by service enhancement. This is where that ‘Creating opportunities’ arm comes in. Often a pathway to engagement may come from arts, sports, DIY or any interests people have. The knock-on effect of positive engagement helps build trust, sustain tenancies and address any issues. The Wallich has also developed its own in-house counselling service called the Reflections Network, it has welfare vehicles which can be driven to an area and create mini hubs.

It’s all about creating options to try new ways of working, tackle homelessness entrenchment and keep those who are treading water from sinking.



New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome **Villiger**



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In the UK, regular waste collection services have been part of our lives since the single dustbin (with no bag), was provided for household rubbish in the 1950s. Things have moved on since then, with Councils arranging recycling of the main waste streams and the use of wheelie bins becoming widespread.

However, the lack of space to store wheelie bins, whether in new-build housing developments or in existing city centre locations, is encouraging authorities to look at new systems of waste storage and collection. Anywhere space is limited and waste is stored is a potential home for underground refuse systems; with these as the Villiger main product line, we are looking to attract attention to this innovative market.

Robin Buller, Regional Manager for Villiger in the UK, said: “We see our membership of APSE as a great way to start the Villiger campaign in the UK. By participating in APSE seminars and other events, we feel that Villiger will be able to show the market what we have to offer. Villiger has a reputation for quality and also value for money, and working with APSE will allow us to showcase those elements. We hope to be part of the movement to introduce these new waste disposal systems to the UK which will ultimately have a positive effect on people’s lives and in reducing council expenditure on waste collection.”

For more information visit: www.villiger.com

Contact Robin Buller, Villiger UK Regional Manager at: robin.buller@villiger.com



Villiger underground bin being emptied.

Vehicle to grid charging - The CleanMobilEnergy project

In this case study extract from the upcoming APSE Energy publication 'Energy across the authority', discover the innovative approach Nottingham City Council is taking with its EV charging infrastructure.

Nottingham's target is to become the first carbon-neutral city in the UK by 2028. To achieve this target, Nottingham City Council has set out a 250+ point Carbon Neutral Action Plan, one key aspect of this plan is decarbonising transport and moving energy generation to renewable sources and away from fossil fuels.

Nottingham City Council is making excellent progress in transitioning away from traditional internal combustion engine vehicles, with electric vehicles (EVs) now making up over 50% of the Council's fleet. European cities are increasingly investing in renewable energy production and EV charging infrastructure, but there are challenges due to a mismatch in renewable energy production and consumption peaks.

The CleanMobilEnergy (CME) City Pilot is one way in which Nottingham City Council is overcoming the challenges faced by this difference between the production and consumption of renewable energy. CME is an EU-funded scheme, with Nottingham's participation as part of an Interreg North-West Europe Consortium. The consortium focuses on reducing carbon emissions through the development and application of REMove, a new interoperable energy management system to better balance energy demand with supply. Nottingham City Council's pilot is using EU funding, alongside a contribution from Innovate UK.

CME has enabled the Council to significantly expand its EV fleet and install innovative infrastructure to support charging, using locally generated renewable energy with groundbreaking energy management systems, at the same time significantly reducing the Council's fleet and building emissions, supporting Nottingham's carbon neutral ambitions.

Eastcroft Depot is the centre of activity for the project. Electric vehicles return from the day's duty in the afternoon with unused energy stored in their batteries. This is exported back to the grid at times of high demand when a higher fee can be gained by the Council. Meanwhile, EVs are recharged, either with energy generated locally from solar PV that is stored in stationary batteries or from the grid at times of low demand when energy costs are much cheaper.

The development and application of the REMove energy management system (EMS) was a key aim of the CleanMobilEnergy City Pilot. Current energy management systems are not able to predict, measure or decide how resources are allocated. At present, CO2 reduction energy systems are demonstrated through small, single-topic systems that address either mobility management or energy production. REMove introduces a system that integrates existing, but fragmented solutions, based on mobility and energy flows.

In Nottingham, the CME project aimed to integrate renewable energy sources, storage devices and optimisation of consumption through the REMove energy management system. Through the project, the Council was able to install:

- 138kWp of solar PV generation;
- A 600kW/720kWh lithium-ion battery system;
- 40 V2G bidirectional chargepoints.

The 40 V2G units allow electric vehicles to act as short-term storage for energy produced by the 138kWp solar array on site. The vehicles will be able to discharge to the onsite battery energy storage systems (BESS) or the grid during peak times. The 720kWh battery energy storage system is made up of second-life electric vehicle batteries. While these batteries are no longer sufficient for car journeys, they



Nottingham
City Council



have plenty of life left in them for storing power. 40 V2G vehicles were also procured; these EVs, alongside the V2G infrastructure, will not only minimise CO2 emissions but also the high capital costs of an expanding EV fleet are turned into an opportunity, by capitalising on the EV storage capabilities, thereby avoiding expensive electricity grid reinforcement works.

To facilitate the project, the Council was required to install a new site incoming power supply on the high voltage network and upgrade the on-site low voltage network – which was a significant piece of work.

Through the project, Nottingham City Council has enhanced its fleet with 46 electric vehicles, including 36 Nissan eNV200 vans, four Nissan Leaf electric cars and six electric refuse collection vehicles, with the vans and cars being V2G capable. The Council also future-proofed its EV fleet expansion, through a new 11kV power supply, along with a much-needed upgrade to the low-voltage network.

The installation and optimisation of solar PV generation and EV charging have enabled the Council to lower its emissions and work towards the target of Nottingham being a carbon-neutral city by 2028.

The Council's future plans include:

- Continuing the optimisation of the overall system, using monitoring data, along with fleet operational requirements, and including simulations to improve future performance;
- Effective management of in-front and behind-the-meter energy flows, using energy storage;
- Data to be used to further develop the REMove EMS, to enable it to act as the command and control for the system;
- Investigation of the potential to obtain best value from energy contracts, using time of use and grid services procurement.



Energy across the authority 2024

Case study examples of how local authorities are engaging in the energy and climate change agenda





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RESEARCH FOCUSED: If we don't have the answer, CDS undertake and commission research into products and services in the industry.



*Shirebrook Crematorium
(in construction)*



Layston Cemetery

*Huntingdon Cemetery
and Crematorium*



The final theme that emerged was one of hope. We at APSE Energy meet a lot of people engaged in the energy, climate change, and sustainability agenda the vast majority of whom are positive and confident about the impact their work is having. They are taking that attitude to their colleagues and prompting them to take on a new perspective that puts this agenda at the heart of each service area.



Delegates viewing exhibitors

The audience at the summit was informed about such a wide range of topics, models, products, services, and examples from elsewhere that they can educate and advise their colleagues that there are ways and means to take their services forward even within the current limitations of local government. We have said for a long time that for those with responsibilities in this agenda, the education of colleagues is a key part of their role. It will be around for many years and is something APSE Energy is here to help with.

“Local authorities cannot meet the targets set ... without adopting a creative approach to securing finance.”

Finally, all APSE staff who attended the summit enjoyed it immensely and relished the opportunity to connect and learn. We hope you did too and look forward to seeing you again. Keep a look out for more events to come!

Joining APSE Energy is a sign that your local authority acknowledges that it has a role to play in tackling climate change, being energy efficient, generating renewable energy, working with residents and businesses and realising community benefits. If you are interested in becoming an APSE Energy member, visit: <https://www.apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/local-authority-energy-collaboration/join-apse-energy/>

Alternatively, contact the Head of APSE Energy, Phil Brennan at pbrennan@apse.org.uk or on 0161 772 1810.

Data led intelligence

The key to decision-making in hard time

Expert speakers include:

Robin Porter, Chief Executive, Luton Borough Council

Mark Fowler, Deputy Chief Executive, Luton Borough Council

Debbie Johns, Head of Performance Networks, APSE

Lucy Cornwell, GB Non-Native Species Secretariat

Andy Mudd, Head of APSE solutions

Paul Naylor, Service Director, Neighbourhood and Green Spaces, Eastleigh Borough Council

Gail Witchell, Operations Manager - Catering and Cleaning, Oxfordshire County Council

Ian Jones, APSE Associate

Sue Kinsella, Street Light Asset Manager, Kent County Council

Alistair Wilson, Strategic Delivery Manager, Cambridge City Council

Don Blair, Operations Manager, Cambridge City Council



Wednesday 22 May 2024

Luton Town Hall

The importance of Active Wellbeing



CSSC's CEO Matt Bazeley, OBE, reflects on what sport means to him, and how he manages to balance the demands of a challenging job with staying active.

How did it all start?

I'm fortunate that I can remember being both interested and involved in sport for as long as I can remember being on this planet. I grew up in a very rural little village in South Oxfordshire, where we essentially lived outside, and this certainly helped.

I fell into what were then considered 'boys' sports of football, rugby and cricket, following those through senior school, university and into my time in the army. I was lucky enough to enjoy playing all of those sports until well into my 40s. I still play badminton and bad golf in my 50s!

I have a passion for sport as a spectator, as a participant, as a volunteer, and as an organiser. I'll turn up to watch a game of tiddlywinks if there's something competitive going on.

Looking after myself

To be effective in my role I know in myself that I must do some sport or exercise to maintain my sense of personal wellbeing and if I go more than four to five days without having done any exercise, I feel mentally and physically sluggish. There's a local gym in my village that I go to and in the winter and in the summer I'll try and run. If it's a beautiful summer's morning in North Oxfordshire, that's not the worst way to start the day.

It allows me to refocus my brain. I am busy and I find myself juggling a lot of things. It's remarkable how you can dislocate from work just by going to the gym, taking the dogs for a walk, and in that time your brain works through things. You can put things in an order and it's constructive time. It might be away from work, but it has genuine work benefits.

I think it's a bit like putting your car into the garage to get serviced. Fundamentally, nothing's changed. The car is still the car, but you've had that opportunity to freshen things up a little bit. The oil and filters are a bit better and you've just got things running a little smoother in your head. It is amazing how often you reconcile a way ahead on a particularly crunchy problem by stepping away from actually confronting it.

The benefits of taking part

Active Wellbeing exists to give the opportunity for as many public sector employees to enjoy the benefits of some increase in their physical activity over the course of the challenge. We're thoroughly celebrating the fact that we got a record number of participants this year, in excess of 13,000, an almost 50% increase on 2023. That said, any growth in the number of Public Sector workers who are able to access and enjoy the benefits of the campaign would be a huge success for our perspective.

We're not trying to turn anyone into an athlete overnight, quite the opposite. It doesn't matter what you do, just do something, and if that means you step away from your desk at lunchtime for half an hour, take the stairs instead of the lift, walk or roll one more tube, metro or bus stop further than usual that's great – it all counts.



I firmly believe that physical activity gives you that opportunity to step away from work, get away from your responsibilities, focus on yourself, your own health and wellbeing. The time you are able to give to that activity will pay enormous dividends when you re-engage with work and with your family, you will simply be in a better place.

At CSSC, our business for over 100 years has been supporting the mental, physical health of the public sector by providing sports, fitness, days out, experiences and opportunities for everyone to take care of themselves and their families. Active Wellbeing has proved we're doing something right, and we're already looking forward to next year.

Civil Service Sports Council Active Wellbeing represents the organisation's biggest push to get the Public Sector moving. A record 13,000 colleagues signed up to 2024's challenge, the largest number in the six years it has operated.

Discover more at: cssc.co.uk



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