

Finding a path for Gen Z

How do we recruit the workforce of the future?

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Editorial



Mo Baines
Chief Executive, APSE

The value of international cooperation

I was privileged to recently meet a delegation of Ghanaian Municipal officials who had been invited by the University of Birmingham, through Associate Professor Shailen Popat, to take part in a knowledge exchange in the hopes of developing a community of practice.

Whilst Ghana may seem very different to the UK in local government terms, as is often the case, many similarities in public policy discourse emerged.

Just like the UK, there is a tension between government-level resources and the resources available locally. Municipalities are increasingly expected to do more with less.

There is interest in digitisation and the use of AI, alongside concerns that some citizens may be left behind - in many areas, it is the Ghanaian municipality that has led the innovation. I am sure by now everything is sounding very familiar!

One question to emerge in the post-lecture discussion centred on the viability of public-private partnerships and private finance initiatives. This was a slightly unexpected question, not least because of the documented difficulties that such arrangements have created. It strikes me that internationally we see public policy ideas floating in and out of favour.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the mass divestment of state-owned enterprises, including utilities, was advanced to attract foreign investment and allow government spending to focus on what was regarded as the 'core' priorities of government. And yet time and again we see fault lines in these approaches where regulations fail miserably to stem the often unacceptable social and economic fallout of such mechanisms to leverage the so-called innovative new funding streams. Mistakes are often repeated – not just in different global locations – but by different administrations in the same country at different points in time.

The importance of local government networks therefore cannot be overstated. However, there is a clear benefit to international policy exchanges. Increasingly, we all feel part of a much wider global network; the impact of geo-political disruption through warfare, new Presidents, and indeed climate disasters means global communities often share similar concerns, not just for their immediate livelihoods and families, but for the access and delivery of public services.

Sharing is caring as they say, so perhaps we should also make the effort to reach across boundaries in the pursuit of excellence in local government services.

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Report Back

A round-up of APSE advocacy and events



Beth with Cllr Terry Andrews, APSE Northern Ireland Chair, at the APSE Annual Seminar 2023 in Belfast.

Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Alderman Beth Adger MBE: A tribute

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of our former National Chair, Alderman Beth Adger MBE. Beth was not only a dedicated advocate for our association and the local government sector, but also a long-standing and respected councillor for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Her unwavering commitment to public service, her passion for her community, and her tireless efforts to make a difference will forever be remembered.

Beth was a true inspiration to us all, and her legacy will continue to live on in the countless lives she touched. Our thoughts are with her family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time.

Rest in peace Beth. You will be deeply missed.

APSE at the Conservative Councillors' Association Conference 2025

On 23-24 February, APSE was in Oxford for the CCA Conference 2025 exhibiting, hosting workshops, and facilitating plenary sessions.

APSE's Friday workshop was titled 'What should councils role be in providing leisure, health and wellbeing?' The panel discussed potential further integration of leisure services with health services, and whether local 'wellbeing services' should be created. Panelists for the session included Cllr Richard Wright, Leader of North Kesteven Council; Cllr Graham McAndrew, East Herts District Council and Hertfordshire County Council, Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive and Cllr Rob Bailey, APSE Principal Advisor.

APSE's Saturday-morning plenary - focused on the proposed changes to planning regulations to deliver 1.5 million new homes. The panel included Cllr Richard Wright and Mo Baines.

The latest APSE briefings...

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

- [Protecting local greenspace](#)
- [State of the Market in Parks and Greenspaces](#)
- [Grassland management - a guide for local councils](#)
- [Local authority general power of competence](#)

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

APSE at the Association of Labour Councillors Conference 2025

APSE hosted a workshop event at the Labour Councillors Conference on Local Government Reorganisation with APSE panelists Cllr Mark Pengelly, Chair of APSE Central Region and Cllr John Kerr-Brown, Vice Chair of APSE Northern Region and Cabinet Member for housing services and licensing at Warrington Council. APSE Chief Executive Mo Baines addressed the fringe event and a lengthy and detailed discussion on LGR has resulted in the development of an APSE LGR network to support all member councils impacted by reorganisation to access support. The network will include discussions on staff transfers, operational practicalities, assets and buildings, workforce and organisational culture change and performance measurements in a new organisation. [To join the APSE LGR Network, click this link.](#)

APSE goes global

APSE Chief Executive Mo Baines, was delighted to be invited to provide a guest lecture to delegates from municipalities across Ghana who were on a community of practice visit to Birmingham University, organised by Professor Shailen Popat. The Ghanaian delegation was led by Chief Director Felicia Dapaah, the most senior civil servant in Ghana. More collaboration and exchanges of practice are anticipated in the near future.

The real deal in school meals

APSE is delighted to announce the winners and finalists of the APPG Excellence in School Food Awards 2024/2025. 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

- Lauren Moore - Catering Area Manager, Shire Services
- Susan Vuli - General Manager, Shire Services
- **Winner:** Chef Russ - Pokesdown Community Primary School

Groups Category

- Eatwell project and family hubs - Telford and Wrekin Council
- How to feed a dragon programme - Mealtimes Matter CIC
- Allergn friendly days - Waltham Forest Catering
- Free school meals auto-enrolment project - FixOurFood
- **Winner:** Marketing planner - Shire Services

Speaking about the awards, Chair of the APPG and lead judge Sharon Hodgson MP said: "I want to say a big thank you to everyone who submitted an entry to this year's APPG Excellence in School Food Awards. It was a pleasure to read through the fantastic work being done nationwide – you have all once again demonstrated your absolute dedication to the sector. Myself and the judges were blown away by the entries, and commend the brilliant work being done across the sector."

"It was an honour to meet the finalists at the APSE Facilities Management Seminar 2025, and I would like to congratulate all submissions on their commitment to ensure school food is delivered to the highest and most innovative standards."

The winners were announced at the APSE Facilities Management, Catering and Cleaning Seminar, at Oulton Hall in Leeds on 30 January 2025.

The APPG on School Food

On 13 March, Vickie Hacking, APSE Principal Advisor attended the All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food in London. The agenda included updates from the School Food Alliance and LACA, and a presentation from Professor Gurminder Singh Lalli, University of Wolverhampton, on the School Meals Service: Past, Present and Future project. Cheff Russ, Pokesdown Community School and Susan Vuli, General Manager of Shire Services provided an overview of their winning submissions from the APPG Excellence in School Food Awards. Sodexo and the Oasis Trust also gave insight into the London Mayor's Universal Primary Free School Meals Scheme.

GovTech Show and Exhibition 2025

On 19 March, Abi Ademiluyi, APSE Principal Advisor, attended the GovTech Show and Exhibition: Public sector innovation and transformation at the Royal Society of Medicine in London. The event explored the use of new digital technologies to reimagine how the public sector operates and how improved efficiencies can lead to improved outcomes for the population. Speakers included Nadira Hussain, Chief Executive, Socitm; Dr Laura Gilbert CBE, Ellison Institute of Technology; Nathan Pierce, Chief Digital and Innovation Officer, Haringey Council; Lisa Allen, Director of Data Services, The Pension Regulator and many more.

Gen Z recruitment roundtable

On Tuesday 18 March, APSE and ADEPT held a special roundtable looking at how to attract Gen Z to the local government workforce. The session included an overview of ADEPT's 'find your path campaign', alongside insight from focus groups and examples of recruitment initiatives from across the UK. Speakers included Hannah Bartram, ADEPT Chief Executive; Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive; Julie Neilson, Head of Strategy, Eleven; Lindsay Airey, Head of Business Resources, APSE; Neil MacGregor, Team Manager, Fife Council; Maria Lloyd, Lead Employment Liaison Officer, Economic Development, Swansea Council. Find out more about the campaign on page 18.

Scotland

Celebrating apprentices

APSE's National Apprentice of the Year Awards took place on Thursday 6 March in Glasgow, at the APSE Building and Housing Seminar. The event incorporated a wide range of speakers including Scottish Government, Scottish Housing Regulator, SP Energy Networks as well as an excellent range of local authority case studies highlighting best practice and innovation from Dundee City Council, Moray Council, North Ayrshire Council and West Lothian Council. The seminar was kindly sponsored by Morgan Hunt, who also sponsored the Apprentice Awards. You can view the winners of the awards on page 20.

Wales

Delivering affordable housing

On Tuesday 4 February, APSE Wales held an online roundtable on delivering affordable housing units, discussing the challenges of building much-needed housing in Wales. The session was chaired by Cllr Steve Hunt, Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, with case studies presented by Jane Abbott, Senior Officer, Housing and Communities, Denbighshire Council, and Cllr Andrea Lewis, Deputy Leader, Swansea Council; and Housing Spokesperson for the WLGA. Presentations can be viewed on the APSE website [here](#).

Northern Ireland

NILGA Awards 2025

APSE is proud to be sponsoring the Service Innovation and Improvement Award at the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards 2025, taking place on 27 March at Game of Thrones Studio, Banbridge.

Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive, said: "Across local government, day-in and day-out, our unsung frontline heroes go above and beyond to deliver for their local communities. These Awards showcase their commitment to the goals of continuous improvement and the delivery of excellence in public services. From maintaining beautiful parks and managing waste collection to attracting businesses and promoting arts, culture, and leisure, it is a real honour to recognise the fantastic work local councils do at the frontline. Congratulations and best of luck to all those shortlisted!"



Cllr Richard Wright and APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey presenting at the Conservative Councillors' Association Conference.

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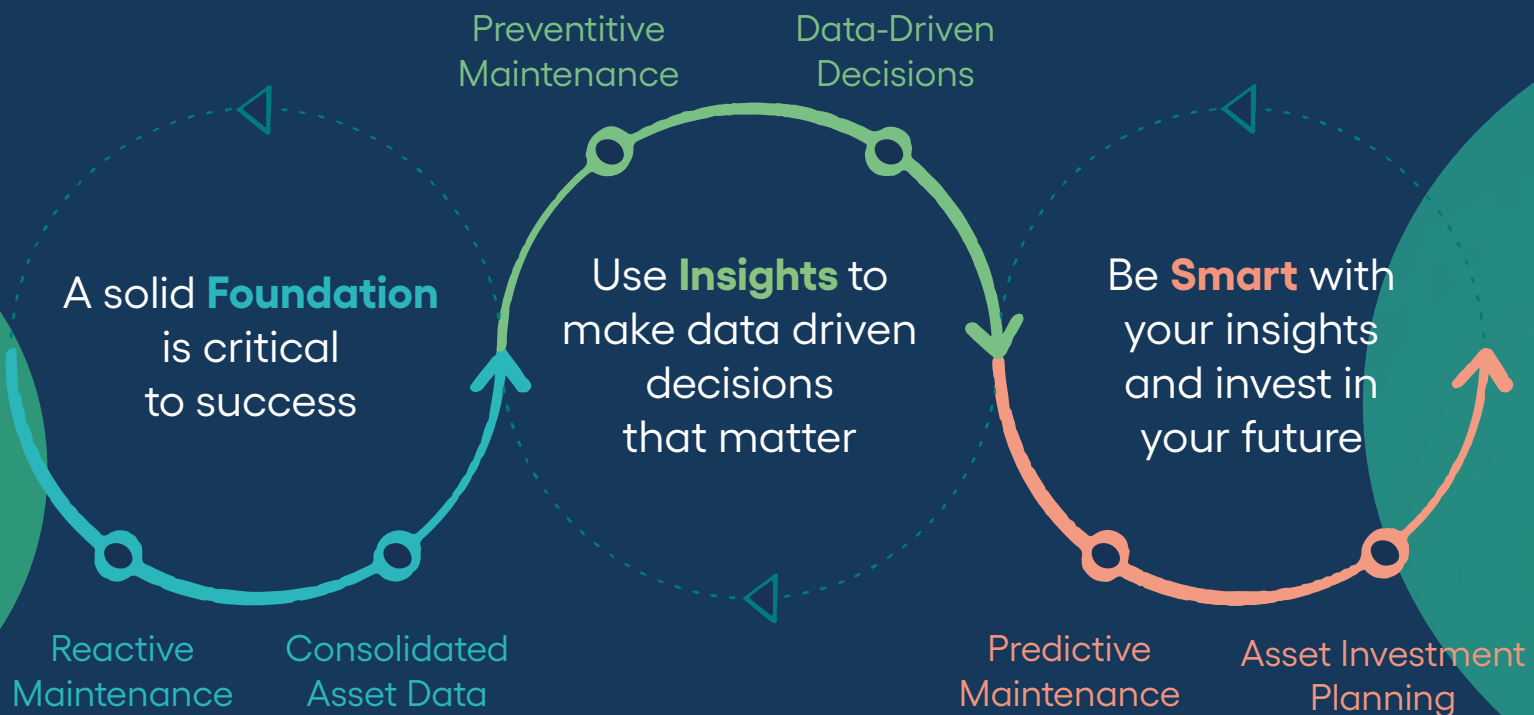
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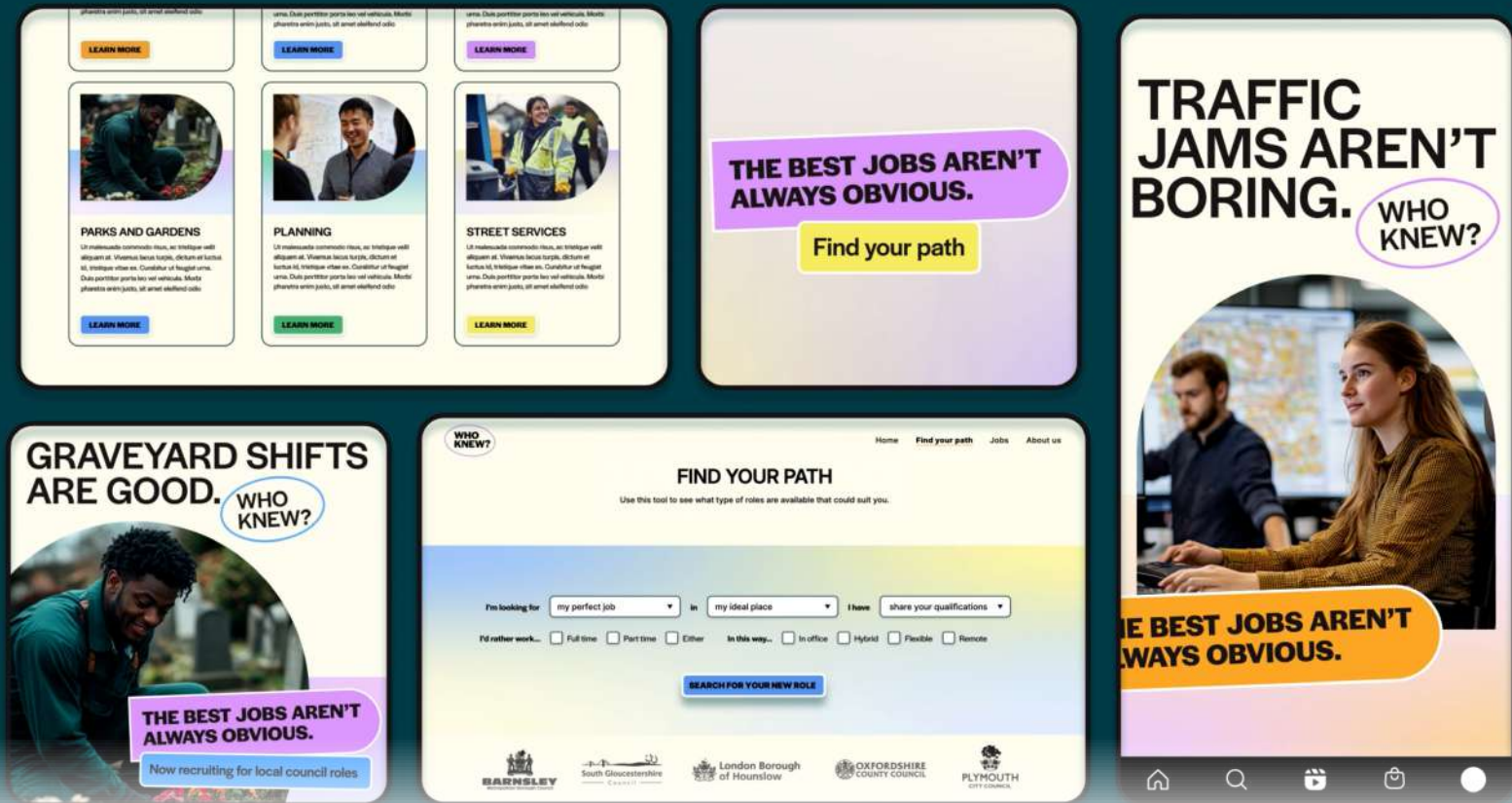
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Find Your Path: Innovative campaign launched to transform local government recruitment

A new targeted recruitment campaign has been launched, which aims to address critical workforce challenges in local authorities.

The Find Your Path campaign focuses on attracting young people aged between 18 and 27 to local authority roles, including those delivering the place services we all use such as local highways, waste and recycling, green space and access, as well as people based roles.

The initiative has been developed in partnership with the Department for Transport (DfT), the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT), along with Colas, APSE and the Midlands Highway Alliance Plus (MHA+).

The campaign, designed together with local authorities, will showcase the unique opportunities in the place sector of local government, highlighting the variety of jobs available.

Research by ADEPT's Future Highways Research Group (FHRG) revealed a stark workforce landscape, with only 11% of local authority staff aged 30 or younger, a lack of diversity, high

Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive, said: "APSE is proud to contribute to such an important campaign. As local authorities face increasing recruitment and retention challenges in frontline services, it's more crucial than ever that we attract young people into these roles.

"Research shows that younger generations value meaningful work that is fulfilling, impactful and driven by a sense of purpose, so there is no better time for councils to highlight the unique opportunities they offer. Local government has a direct and lasting impact on people's quality of life, from shaping the greenspaces they enjoy to maintaining the roads they travel and developing their communities.

"We are excited to see how this campaign inspires the next generation of local authority workers."

Ann Carruthers, President of ADEPT, said: "The place sector is facing a critical workforce challenge that threatens our ability to deliver essential services and drive innovation.

"Young people are crucial to the future of local government: without attracting young and diverse talent, we risk being unable to develop sustainable solutions for our communities, implement new technologies and meet the complex environmental challenges of the future.

"This campaign is our proactive response which aims to showcase the exciting, impactful careers on offer, that many don't even know exist."

Future of Roads Minister, Lilian Greenwood, said: "Young people are key to securing the future of our highways sector.

"We're supporting ADEPT's recruitment campaign, to help the next generation of young people access careers in this important field of work.

"A skilled workforce is key to ensuring everyone can benefit from smooth and safe local roads - with the right people we can make the most of the extra £1.6bn boost to highways maintenance funding."

Donna Hitchcock, Executive Director, Colas Ltd said: "Colas is delighted to have been involved from the very inception in this groundbreaking campaign which from the outset has been focused on solutions and finding a tangible step to solving the problem.

"We listened to young people through a series of focus groups, which highlighted that their values and interest could be well aligned with careers in local authorities, but that they were unaware of these options. Attracting young people to the sector is critical in securing the future delivery of services that we all rely on, it is an issue faced by private sector organisations working with the local public sector too.

"This campaign highlights the breadth of career opportunities available in pathways that many young people have not even considered as possibilities for themselves, and will bridge the gap between the public and private sector, opening up exciting opportunities for young people to find fulfilling employment."

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Karen Notman, Midlands Highway Alliance Plus (MHA+) Manager said: "MHA+ is delighted to sponsor the Find Your Path campaign to help local authorities reach young people and raise their awareness of the many exciting and varied place-based roles and careers on offer. Our hope is that the initiative will help local authorities attract and secure the talent and skills needed to make the positive difference our communities need now and into the future."

The recruitment initiative is part of ADEPT's broader strategy to address workforce challenges, ensuring local authorities can continue delivering essential services effectively. The website is available [here](https://findyourpath.uk). APSE held a roundtable with ADEPT on Tuesday 18 March, you can view the presentations [here](https://findyourpath.uk).

ADEPT

Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

MHA+

Midlands Highway Alliance Plus



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JCB is committed to supporting municipalities achieve their sustainable goals. We offer a pioneering range of machines that are 100% electric with zero emissions, without compromise on performance, leading the way to a sustainable future. Whilst the first JCB machines powered by a hydrogen combustion engine were recently out with customers for testing, paving the way for net-zero worksites of the future.

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[For more details, visit JCB's Municipality Page here](#)



New ash dieback guidance for local authorities launched

The toolkit draws on APSE's previous ash dieback survey.

The second edition of the Action Plan Toolkit for local authorities designed to assist land managers to meet new challenges of dealing with ash dieback - a highly destructive fungal disease affecting ash trees - was launched by The Tree Council and Defra at the APSE Parks Seminar 2025.

Five years on from the toolkit's original publication, there is now a valuable opportunity to learn from new research and benefit from the practical experience gained by local authorities and other key organisations. The Tree Council compiled an updated version of the toolkit, bringing together the latest evidence and sharing up-to-date case studies. It is designed to help local authorities meet new challenges and work through different considerations as they shift from the planning and awareness phases, to action and recovery.

Jon Stokes, The Tree Council's Director of Trees, Science and Research, launched the new guidance to an audience of over 100 local authority representatives operating across the UK, at the APSE Parks Seminar 2025, hosted at Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester.

Jon Stokes said: "The roadmap set out five years ago was to proceed with careful thought, vision and proactive intervention. Many local authorities have risen to their ash dieback challenges and found effective, practical solutions to address the additional risks, significant cost and practicalities of management and the loss of biodiversity in their communities. This updated toolkit presents approaches generously shared by local authorities at the forefront of taking action. We hope that these practical insights will help others facing similar challenges."

Matt Ellis, Principal Advisor at APSE, said: "Local authorities across the UK have shown remarkable dedication and resilience in tackling the challenges of ash dieback, developing innovative and proactive strategies to manage its impact. This updated toolkit captures and shares the wealth of knowledge gained over the years, ensuring that councils can continue to protect our treescapes. By learning from each other's successes, we can build a more resilient landscape for future generations."

The Tree Council led research into the early responses and coping strategies of public landowners to this widespread disease, since it was first discovered in the UK in 2012. Ash is the third most common broadleaved tree in Britain and there are an estimated 60 million ash trees outside woodlands in the UK. Now widespread across England, Wales and Scotland, ash dieback causes leaf loss and canopy decline, and in many cases leads to the death of the tree.

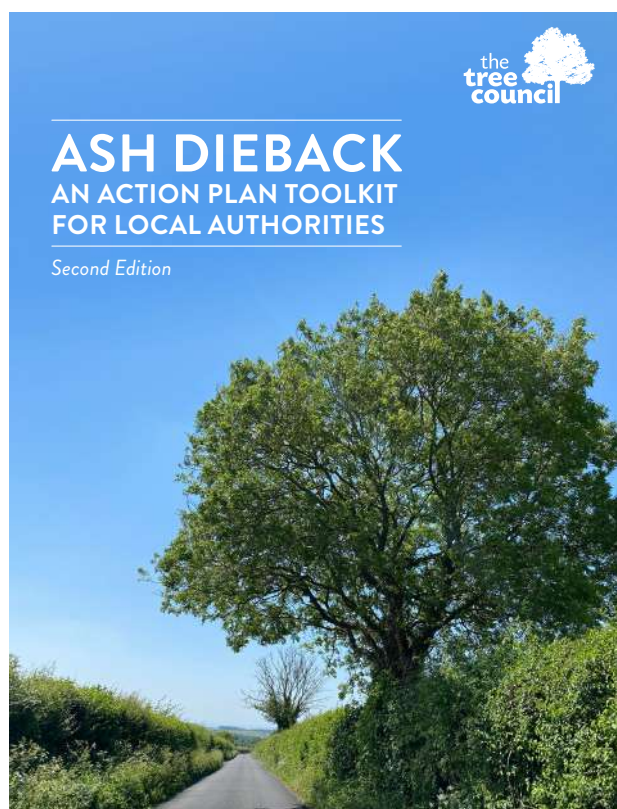
To access the Action Plan Toolkit for Local Authorities Second Edition, [click here](#).



Jon Stokes, Director of Trees, Science and Research at The Tree Council, presenting at the APSE Parks Seminar on 13 March.

About The Tree Council

The Tree Council is a national charity (number 279000) and membership organisation which brings everyone together with a shared mission to care for trees and our planet's future. We inspire and empower organisations, government, communities and individuals with the knowledge and tools to create positive, lasting change at a national and local level. We are helped in our work by thousands of volunteer Tree Wardens and a growing force of Young Tree Champions. For more information about The Tree Council, please visit www.treecouncil.org.uk.



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Supporting employability in South Ayrshire

The Town Centre Environmental and Employability Programme was developed in 2021 to support individuals in South Ayrshire facing significant barriers to entering or re-entering the labour market.

The programme sought to establish a routine structure for participants, giving them a greater purpose in their lives and experience to help them apply for future roles in the street cleansing sector. It also supported the cleansing of town centres and localities across South Ayrshire, having been initially established in Ayr where the waste management team were receiving a number of complaints about cleanliness and litter.

“The idea originally came from the employability team as a way to engage and work with our hardest-to-reach clients”, said Chelene O'Donnell, Team Leader for Thriving Communities in South Ayrshire Council.

She explained how the Thriving Communities team collaborated with the Waste Management team to gain the correct guidance regarding what equipment and training were required for the programme to deliver the best impact for participants - and have since developed a “really strong” partnership.

“We found that a lot of the harder to reach clients had an interest in working outdoors. We had the option of the greenspace teams, but they were already quite saturated with our modern apprentices and people having placements prior to modern apprentices, so we looked at other areas. We were aware that the

town centre needed some enhancement and tlc, so we thought why not try to tackle both issues at the same time?”, Caroline said.

From an early stage, the programme was focused on breaking down barriers to employment for those involved. Participants were each allocated a key worker, with two full-time town centre supervisors employed to support them throughout their employment journey. Thriving Communities Employability officers provide wrap around support to signpost any clients that may have barriers to employment to other services such as Information and Advice Hub or mental health professionals.

The programme also offers a range of opportunities including targeted skills and training support via workshops and engagement events, collaborating with a number of local businesses and authorities.

“What we offer is very person-centred, what suits one participant might not suit another – so we're all about being flexible and adapting things when needed. A key priority was making the programme as inclusive as possible, so we made sure that there was a dedicated day for clients who had additional support needs. We worked with the supervisors and worked with them to make sure that certain tasks could be adapted, we made sure that risk assessments were in place”, explained Caroline Hainey, Programme Officer for Thriving Communities in South Ayrshire Council.

The success of the initial employability programme led to the development of the Town Centre Pathway, a progression route for participants into seasonal vacancies within the waste management and grounds maintenance team, supporting gaps in the local authority workforce. This was further expanded to cover four other localities within South Ayrshire, allowing participants to access this resource within their own communities and foster a sense of civic pride.

“Following Covid, we saw a lot of clients develop anxiety and have their social skills impacted as a result – creating even more barriers to work and education. Through the programme, some of them now undertake a regular work placement where they interact with others, including members of the public who will stop them in the street and tell them that they're doing a great job and comment on the difference they have seen in that area – the participants are just beaming with pride”, said Chelene.

For some, the experience of the programme gave them the confidence and willingness to re-engage with education, returning to school and progressing onto college.

"Being able to get somebody to return to a classroom environment when having previously completely disengaged is so significant and it's something the team is really proud of", she added.

Since 2022, the Town Centre Programme has supported 144 participants, with over 50 moving onto modern apprenticeships, employment and further education. Others have continued to engage with the programme, receiving accredited training, as well as support through the programme's aftercare offer.

Councillor Bob Pollock, South Ayrshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Economic Development said: "The Town Centre programme has been an incredible success, not just by improving the cleanliness of our communities, but by providing real, lasting opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment. By combining practical work experience with tailored support, we've helped participants build confidence, develop valuable skills, and ultimately move towards employment, education, and a brighter future. We're proud of the positive impact this programme has had, and we remain committed to supporting our residents on their journey to success."

Caroline Hainey presented on the Town Centre Environmental and Employability programme at the APSE Street Cleansing Seminar on 6 February 2025 at the National Motorcycle Museum in Solihull. The presentation can be viewed [here](#). She can be reached at caroline.hainey@south-ayrshire.gov.uk



"As long as you make the effort, you turn up and you work hard. Thriving Communities will help you achieve your goals." – Nathan Birt

Regeneration and local economies: Councils contributing to good growth

Agenda:

Plenary Session 1

Knowsley's Ambitious Approach to Regeneration and Local Economies

- Dale Milburn, Executive Director, Regeneration & Economic Development
- Cllr Tony Brennan, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development

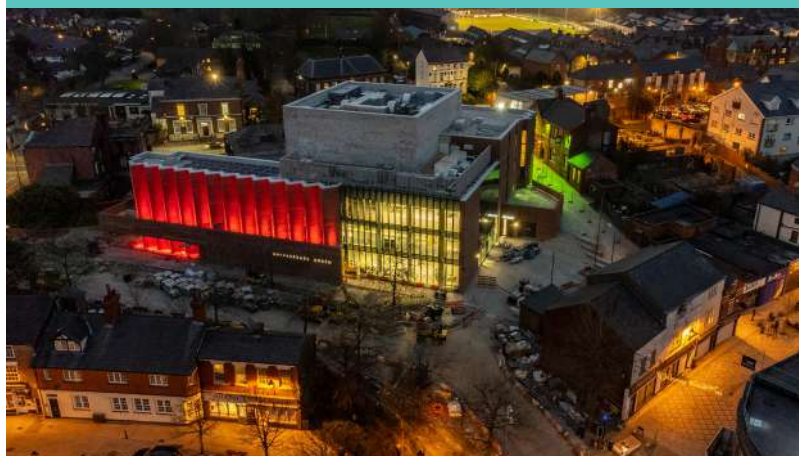
Plenary Session 2

The Case for Public Investment to Generate Economic Growth

- Chair: Anita Brown, APSE Northern Region Secretary
- Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive and Visting Professor, University of Staffordshire
- Chris Renahan, Assistant Director, Inclusive Growth and Development, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Plenary Session 3: What does good look like?

- Speaker: Andy Dunbobbin, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales



Wednesday 9 April 2025

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Red Campion and Cow Parsley on a roadside in Lincolnshire - Credit: Plantlife

No Mow May

Plantlife's #NoMowMay campaign returns for another season... registration for projects large and small now open for local authorities!

With a flush of new spring growth in our urban green spaces, and on our roadsides, our wildflowers are powering up to provide colour and vital resources for the rest of our wildlife in towns and cities across the UK. Fifty-six councils registered for #NoMowMay last year including over 30% new participants – but why has this perennial campaign caught on, and what keeps it going from strength to strength?

Positive case studies are adding up across the UK, whether small scale trials or ambitious larger projects. Biodiversity Duties and 2050 Net Zero targets place big demands on public bodies, but every green space success empowers the transition of front-line service delivery for our public parks, green spaces and highway verges towards nature-based solutions versus the climate and biodiversity crises.

Limestone meadows in the heart of Lincoln, a 'Green Grid' in Gwent, cut-and-collect cost savings in Dorset and verdant verges in the Middle Marches of Shropshire – these are just a few of the initiatives blossoming across Britain which are showing how our grassland wildlife in the public realm can coexist with us and flourish with a range of benefits for people, climate and wildlife. Efforts like these hope to provide the case studies to encourage other local authorities to undertake their own feasibility trials and manageable wildlife-friendly projects for green spaces and verges.



Bulbous Buttercup in Carlton Scroop Churchyard, Lincolnshire

"Grassland is an undervalued, underrated and unsung habitat that can support so much more life than we allow it to. It was wild when wild animals could graze our landscape, but now it relies on us to maintain it as a niche for sun-loving wildlife. We have to remind ourselves that short turf all year round, everywhere in every case is not as good as it gets," says Mark Schofield, Plantlife's advisor for green spaces and road verges.

The State of Nature Report in 2023 warned us that more than half of our flowering plants have decreased in range in the last 50 years. Following a tragic 97% loss of lowland wildflower-rich grassland since the 1930s, grasslands are amongst the most threatened habitats in Britain. It is thought that this is a significant factor behind the worrying 78% decline in the UK's flying insect population over the last 20 years estimated by citizen science.

Opportunities for our grassland wildlife are often hidden in plain sight:

- Just a 10m margin around a standard football pitch is an area larger than half of the pitch and could provide a circular walk for all ages encouraging exercise beyond just sport – especially when a grass path is mown through wildflowers.

- Decommissioned areas of churchyards can host scarce wildflowers and fungi that have been spared the plough for centuries.
- Away from the road edge, where it's safe to mow less frequently, the verges of our roads host 700 species of wildflower, 86 of which have been found to be at risk of extinction. Linear green infrastructure can act as wildlife corridors if managed for nature.

Plantlife has listened to feedback, and we know we need to give local authorities a longer run-up to #NoMowMay. It's not just about May, it's about planning and preparing beforehand, and it's about managing green spaces through the rest of the year to maintain a diversity of species and grassland structure in ways that will enrich the user experience. We have also learned how important it is to engage and involve local people as early as possible in any proposed changes to their local landscape, so communications plans and digital resources for positive and timely communications are vital.

Registration for #NoMowMay 2025 is already open for local authorities (the campaign starts later for the public each year). Whether you are trialling a small plot or rolling out a larger change, local authorities are encouraged to sign up using the link below so that Plantlife can connect you to downloadable resources, case studies and best practice guidance. Registration numbers help to build the case for a positive, managed change in our public green spaces and we will be able to stay in touch to provide you with helpful advice to support your transition.

For more information, visit [here](#).

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. Plantlife presented at APSE's Best in Grass seminar on Thursday 13 March - slides are available to download [here](#).



Plantlife
The global voice for
wild plants and fungi

Celebrating apprentice excellence in Glasgow

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who submitted an application to this year's awards, with over 50 entries! The winners were announced Thursday 6 March 2025 in Glasgow at the APSE Building and Housing Seminar.

The Awards scheme is open to all recognised apprenticeships within the areas of Building and Housing including Trade and non-trade/professional and to apprentices from all stages of training (1st year to 4th year). The aim of the awards is not only to give recognition to our future tradespersons, but also to the local authorities who continue to invest in the future workforce, providing first-class training and employment initiatives via modern apprenticeship and trainee schemes.

Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive said: "The Apprentice Awards underline just how important apprenticeships are to ensuring excellence in the delivery of frontline services. They remain a highly rewarding and mutually beneficial investment for local authorities. It gives me huge confidence in the future to see such talented and ambitious apprentices here in Glasgow. The finalists' councils and local communities ought to be enormously proud."



1st year apprentice winner

Callum Dawson, Stonemason,
Fife Council



2nd year apprentice winner

Gillian Furey, Electrician, East
Ayrshire Council

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3rd year apprentice winner

Lauren Hooks, Joiner, South Lanarkshire Council



4th year apprentice winner

Isaac Fabb, Carpenter, Swansea Council



Non trade / professional apprentice winner

Brooke Chomyn, Business Administration, Unitas Stoke on Trent Ltd



Grassland management - A guide for local councils

Wayne Priestley, APSE Associate, and report author, provides an overview of APSE's grassland management guide, as well as his recommendations.

APSE member councils have been concerned for some time about the need to effectively manage their grassland areas to meet the needs of both climate change and biodiversity. The guide has been produced following increasing discussions amongst APSE member councils about how to approach the issue of grassland management sensibly and with sensitivity to the views of residents and communities.

Grasslands have a huge potential for locking up carbon. How we manage them, from large open spaces to roadside verges and even our lawns and gardens, is vital to both reduce the impact of climate and increase biodiversity.

Despite being at nearly 40% land coverage - much of the UK's grasslands are in a poor state, having been highly modified through agricultural practices and the widespread use of chemicals and fertilisers. Only 100,000 out of 4.5 million hectares of grassland are 'unimproved' - having not been fertilised, drained or reseeded and therefore support a high level of native wildflowers, alongside a wide variety of insects, pollinators and small mammals.

The responsibility for conserving and protecting grasslands must be more than just the sole responsibility of farmers. We all have a role to play and none more so than local authorities. Often as much as a third of the area of a town or city can be made up of greenspace, primarily grassland. This may seem high but, surprisingly, 47% of Greater London is made up of greenspaces.

Most greenspaces in towns and cities are managed as closely mown amenity grass used mainly for recreation and comprise of very few grass species. These have, in turn, regularly fertilised and chemically sprayed thus further keeping species diversity low.

As well as the potential for improving biodiversity, the idea of changing how we manage local amenity grasslands may also be economically attractive given the high costs associated with the traditional intensive management techniques used by councils. As such the idea of reduced mowing, less fertilising and chemical spraying may well be sensible from a financial viewpoint as well as from a biodiversity perspective.

Allowing some grassland areas to 'naturalise' can also have other benefits, such as allowing schools and communities to become involved in the sowing of seeds and maintenance of these

sites including identifying the different species as they appear. With the appearance of wildflowers and associated insects and pollinators, residents will see nature coming into their area which has been proved medically beneficial to health and wellbeing.

10 - point guide to grassland management

1. Make a plan: Develop a grassland management strategy

2. Communicate: Tell your residents and your workforce why you are changing and get a councillor grasslands champion to support your endeavours.

3. Develop a sense of community ownership: Involve local residents at the earliest opportunity – direct community input such as choosing seeds, maintaining sites and involving schools will help to demonstrate the value of the strategy, increase understanding, and head off pushback.

4. Secure staff buy-in: Some members of greenspace staff may also have doubts and concerns regarding a grassland strategy based on restoration, having previously delivered grass cutting the same way for years. Frontline staff are crucial stakeholders, and the reasoning behind changes must be clearly communicated.



5. Provide training: Identify and deliver appropriate training to all staff to ensure the success of the strategy.

6. Monitoring: Grassland areas subject to the new strategy must be continually monitored to ensure that the aims of the strategies are being met, and to allow for any improvements and changes to be made.

7. Tie into wider strategies: From carbon sequestration to providing a home for plants, animals, insects, and fungi, grasslands are closely tied to biodiversity and climate targets. Creative approaches to grassland management can provide a cost-effective way of contributing to wider strategies across the local authority.

8. Consider 'light-touch' maintenance: Signs of ongoing maintenance and care, such as edge mowing, desire lines and annual wildflower planting will help to mitigate criticism by framing any restoration as 'managed', as opposed to appearing abandoned and uncared for.

9. Looking to the future: Needs may change and therefore have in place systems of review and improvements; ensure your strategy is dynamic enough to recognise changing needs and allow the flexibility to respond to change.

10. Ensure that your grassland strategy reflects any new housing or industrial developments. Introducing effective grassland management at the start of schemes prevents the reintroduction of traditional maintenance regimes and embeds best practice at the start.

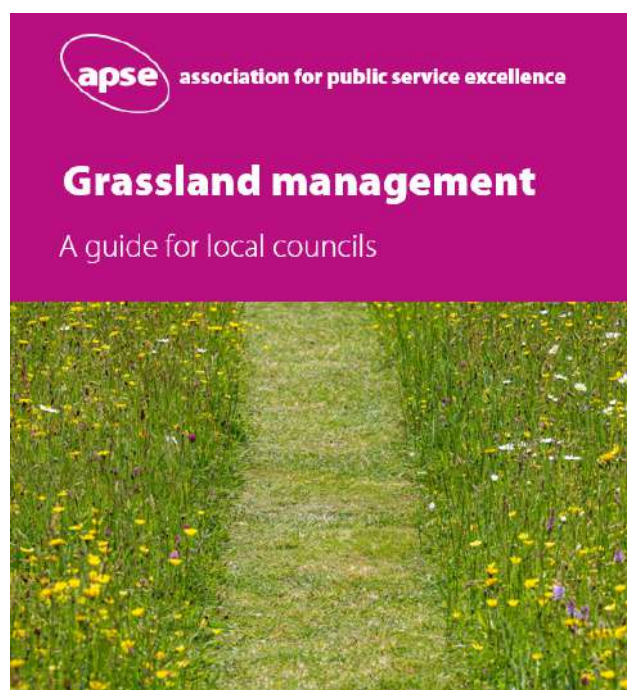
Some local authorities have already taken up the mantle with regards to improving the quality of their grasslands to address biodiversity decline and reduce the amount of carbon being emitted by storing it in the soil under their grasslands. The motivation to do this lies in not only meeting environmental responsibilities, but also as a way to address budgetary pressures which are increasing year on year. These moves are often despite initial public opposition to their proposals.

However, as the guide demonstrates, there is an increasing groundswell from government, agriculture, private landowners - as well as a growing number of the public themselves to improve the way we manage, protect and conserve our grasslands.

Grasslands have been in existence long before the appearance of humans and have provided habitats, food and shelter for all forms of life in that time. We have failed to understand the many benefits they can bestow and have simply manipulated them for our own means. Now, with greater understanding, we may be able to more sustainably manage them, or even allow them to naturalise, thereby offering greater biodiversity opportunities for which they were initially intended.

Again, we must overcome this belief that nature is there merely to provide a service to humankind. Perhaps in relation to grasslands it would be useful to remember that they were some of the first types of vegetation to colonise the land, and unless we accept our place in the natural world rather than constantly trying to control and tame it, grasses may well be some of the last forms of life to stand.

The full guide can be downloaded on the APSE website [here](#).



Just another brick in the Walsall

Discover Walsall's award winning local energy advice programme, the local schools partnership that won APSE Energy's inaugural 'supporting innovation' award.

Walsall Council, in partnership with 'Achieve Your Goals CIC' has been delivering an innovative project in Walsall, principally in the catchment area of Hillary Primary School.

A package of learning has been created that incorporates literacy, numeracy, and reading through core subjects to allow pupils to fully understand the road to net zero.

The programme allows children to learn about actionable climate changes.

During the course of the programme, Walsall Council has carried out a targeted engagement project with the children's parents which has enabled them to access the following support and advice:

- Energy Efficiency Advice
- Energy Efficiency Tariff Advice
- Energy Efficiency Measure Advice
- Energy Efficiency Measures Installed

The programme has a four-step approach process to enable delivery of a full turnkey approach to reducing fuel poverty and reducing the impact of carbon emissions.

Step 1: Prepare – Installation of monitoring equipment at the school to explore the energy consumption of the building. This helps the children start to understand kWh and how much energy is used per square metre.

Step 2: Explore - Innovative, bespoke learning packages to provide a full understanding of sustainability and prepare pupils to leave a legacy.

Step 3: Community - Engagement with the wider community to give cost saving tips and advice on energy efficiency, while assessing the residents' suitability for funding to install energy efficiency measures.

Step 4: Deliver - Schools can make informed decisions and take steps to reduce their environmental impact. They can also look at how new technologies can be implemented.

Approach

Through the programme and with support from a number of funding streams, Walsall Council offered energy efficiency measures to 128 residents within the catchment area of the school. These measures comprised of 60 External Wall Insulation, 9 Loft Insulation, and 59 Solar PV systems installed.

Prince Street in Walsall received extensive External Wall Insulation to a number of properties. Due to planning restrictions on the street, houses were required to have brick slip feature to the front elevation of the properties.

Outcomes

The total value of works completed in the WS2 postcode area was in the region of £1.5 million and the average property received £12,500 of funding with total annual energy savings of £78,500. The properties completed within the WS2 area have had an average EPC increase from band E (pre EPC) to band C (post EPC)

Testimonial from school staff

"We have been working with Walsall Council and 'Achieve Your Goals' for a year now and have seen a real impact for our pupils. The project has many strands and has benefited the local community as well as our children. It is fully funded and hasn't cost us a penny."

Future planning

Walsall Council is planning to extend its sustainability programme to a further three schools at the start of the next academic year.





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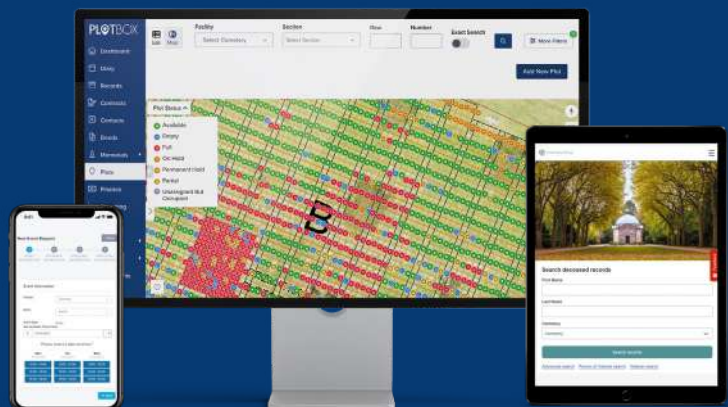
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A majority of local parks professionals expect decreases in both revenue and capital funding



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

state of local authority parks and
greenspace services.

APSE has released its annual State of the Market report on local authority parks and greenspaces, painting a concerning picture of the sector's future. The report, based on a survey of councils across the UK, highlights budget cuts, workforce reductions, and declining service standards, despite the growing importance of parks for public health, biodiversity and community cohesion.

Key findings:



Budget Cuts and Funding Challenges - the report reveals that 58% of local authorities expect a decrease in both revenue and capital budgets for parks and greenspaces over the next year. A staggering 10% anticipate funding cuts of more than 20% in the next five years. This comes as councils continue to prioritise statutory services, such as social care, over discretionary services like parks, which are often seen as "soft targets" for cuts.



Workforce Reductions - workforce challenges are also mounting, with 45% of councils implementing recruitment freezes in the past year, the highest figure ever recorded by APSE. Additionally, 73% of councils do not plan to recruit apprentices in 2025-26, raising concerns about the future pipeline of skilled workers in the sector.



Declining Service Standards - the report highlights a worrying trend of declining service standards, with 75% of councils expecting to reduce maintenance of grounds and 64% anticipating a reduction in service quality.



Squeeze on maintenance - the report highlights a widespread squeeze on maintenance across all areas. It indicates that 84% of respondents agree that funding cuts have led to the withdrawal of maintenance from certain lands, resulting in an increase in unmaintained areas. Despite budget limitations, the report also notes that the growing emphasis on biodiversity and rewilding in public green spaces is contributing to reduced maintenance efforts. Local councils across the UK are increasingly shifting their focus toward more sustainable and low-maintenance landscaping practices.



Biodiversity and Community Engagement - councils are increasingly prioritising biodiversity initiatives, with 85% making specific provisions for promoting biodiversity in parks. Community involvement is also on the rise, with 57% of councils expecting growth in community engagement over the next year. However, the report warns that without adequate funding, these positive trends may be difficult to sustain.

APSE's call to action:

APSE emphasises the need for "dual buy-in" from both council leadership and residents to secure the future of parks and greenspaces. By aligning parks initiatives with council priorities, such as climate change and public health strategies, local authorities can demonstrate the value of greenspaces and advocate for continued investment.

Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor for Parks, said:

"Parks and greenspaces are vital community assets that contribute to public health, biodiversity, and social cohesion. However, the ongoing financial pressures on local authorities are putting these services at risk. It is crucial that we make a compelling case for continued investment in parks, both to council leaders and residents, to ensure they remain accessible and well-maintained for future generations."

How APSE can help:

APSE offers a range of resources to support local authorities, including training, benchmarking, and networking opportunities. These resources are designed to help parks professionals navigate the challenges of funding cuts, workforce reductions, and service quality maintenance.

[The full APSE State of the Market Report on Parks and Greenspaces 2025 is available to download here.](#)

For more information about the report, or how you can get involved with the APSE Greenspace Network, please email Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor, on mellis@apse.org.uk



The Big Energy Summit 2025

James Jefferson, Principal Advisor for APSE Energy, reports back from one of the biggest events in the local authority energy calendar.



The main conference hall packed with delegates

On the 26 and 27 February, we welcomed 350 delegates, speakers, exhibitors and partners to the BIG Energy Summit in Birmingham. The summit provided a great opportunity for local authority officers and members from across the UK to come together to share ideas and examples of best practice, connect with colleagues and gain inspiration for future projects and with over 350 in the room over the two-day event, this year's summit was by far the biggest yet.

The Summit also marked the first APSE Energy Awards. The awards, sponsored by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, were designed to showcase the achievements of local authorities and across 3 categories, we received 39 extremely strong submissions, each of which highlighted inspiring work being undertaken.

The winners of each category were as follows:

- Supporting Innovation - Walsall Council.
- Accessing and Managing Finance - Bedford Borough Council.
- Working in Collaboration - North Yorkshire Council and York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.



Matt Ralfe, Innovation and Change Manager, Nottingham City Council, presenting a case study on fleet electrification.

This year's agenda was jam-packed with presentations, workshops and discussion sessions, covering a wide range of topics and projects, and it would be impossible to cover these in a short article, however a number of key themes stood out over the two-day summit. The decarbonisation of heat in buildings remains high on the agenda, with issues surrounding finance also attracting a lot of attention. Workshop sessions on community energy, Local Area Energy Plans, and Community Energy gained large crowds, whilst we also heard from speakers on more specific topics such as using miniature wind turbines and solar to power street lighting, an interactive immersive learning experience to raise awareness of a range of climate issues and a retrofit show home.

The determination of local authorities to work towards their net zero targets was clear to see across all presentations, and with 2030 edging ever closer, it was great to see the progress being made and the plans in the pipeline. All slides from APSE's Big Energy Summit can be found on our website [here](#).

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, [click here](#).

Alternatively, contact the Head of APSE Energy, Phil Brennan at pbrennan@apse.org.uk, or James Jefferson, APSE Energy Principal Advisor, at jjefferson@apse.org.uk

Upcoming APSE Energy Events

These events are **free** for APSE Energy members

Bringing policy into action

Thursday 1 May 2025

Broadway House, Westminster, London
SW1H 9NQ

Agenda:

Local delivery of a just transition

- Joshua Deru, Just Transition Lead and Sandra Bogelein, Lead Analyst, People and Net Zero, Climate Change Committee

Transforming our waste and recycling centre to be gas free

- Andrew Walker, Head of Energy, London Borough of Islington

Co-creating a regional approach to domestic retrofit

- Helen BurrIDGE, HCCSP Manager, Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership

Heat network regulation – implications for local authorities

- Steve Gummer, Partner & Head of Net Zero, Sharpe Pritchard

Cross-pavement solutions for charging

- Isaac Sidney, Senior Policy Advisor, Office for Zero Emission Vehicles

Charging ahead: EV gully charging in Oxfordshire

- Elizabeth Bohun, Lead Technologist – Zero Emission Vehicles & Energy Integration Team, Oxfordshire County Council

[**Book here**](#)

APSE Energy - Warrington

Wednesday 28 May 2025

Walton Hall, Warrington, WA4 6SN

Warrington Borough Council has done a lot of great work to drive forward the energy, climate change and sustainability agenda. In this seminar, they will share their experiences of net zero implementation - covering opportunities and challenges they have faced.

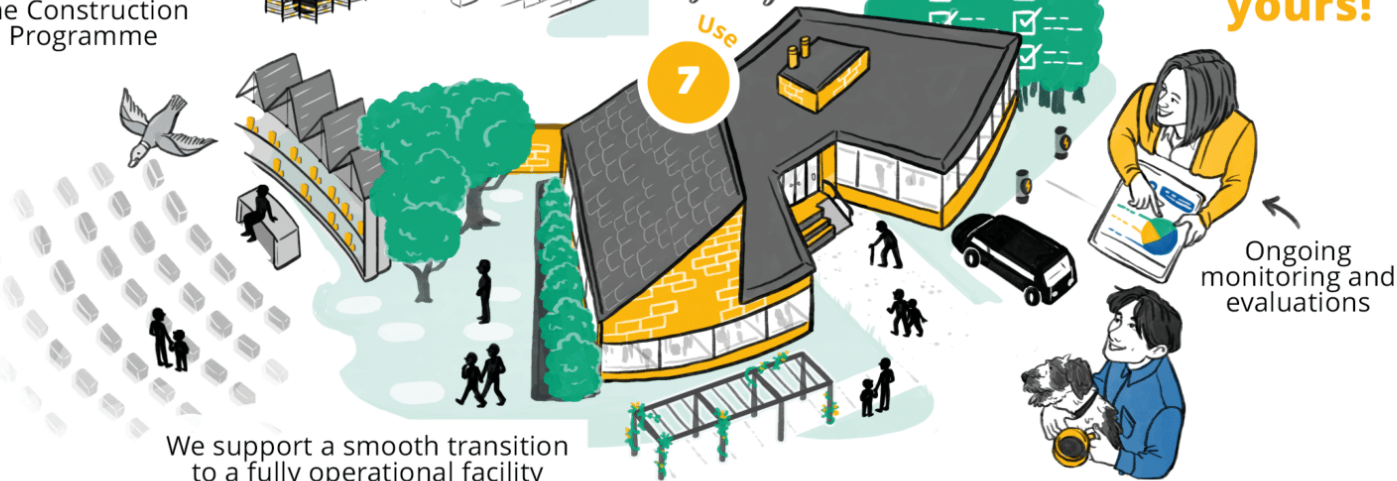
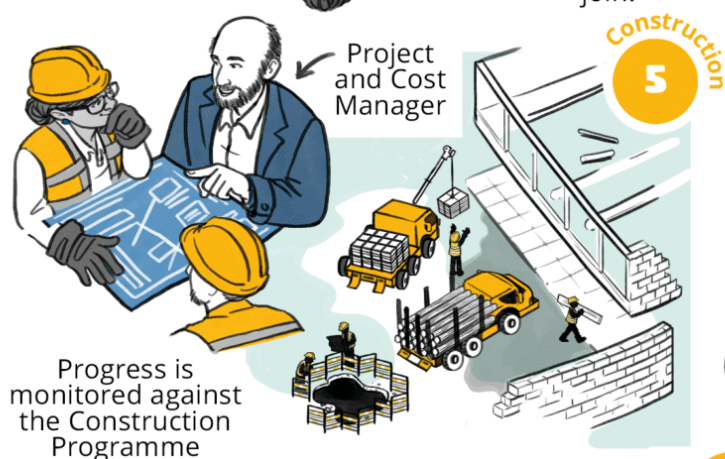
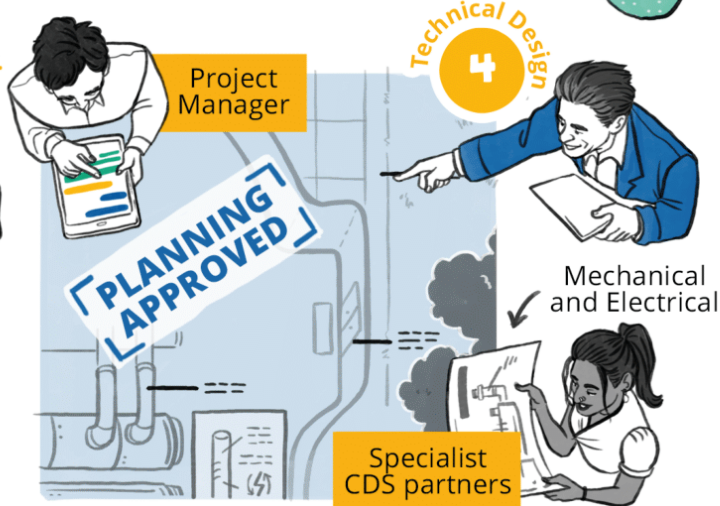
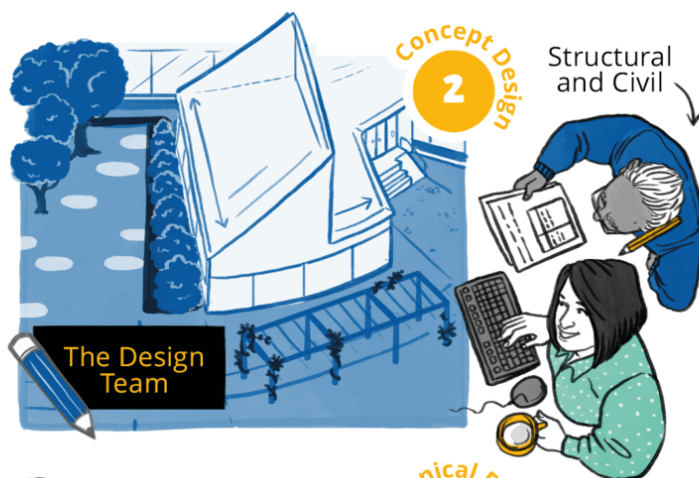
Delegates will hear from Warrington about their range of net zero projects, including culture change, electrifying public transport, and the use of ground source heat pumps. Representatives from other local authorities will also be presenting on their projects.

Agenda includes:

- **Local Area Energy Plans - Lancaster City Council**
- **EnerPHit standards and retrofit- Westmorland and Furness Council**
- **Delivering warmer homes - Northumberland Council**
- **Using biochar - Lancashire County Council**

With more speakers to be confirmed!

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- 2 Concept Design**
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- 3 Detailed Design**
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- 4 Technical Design**
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- 5 Construction**
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- 6 Handover**
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Scotland Excel was established as the Centre of Procurement Expertise for the local government sector in 2008. We're a leading non-profit organisation serving Scotland's 32 local authorities and over 100 associate members from across the public and third sector.

We have a portfolio of contracts in place that are ready to be used by the sector, to help them source the wide range of goods and services they need, in order to deliver services to communities. Our mission is to make the most of our expertise and experience by leading and collaborating on solutions that support local and national aims for fairer, wealthier and greener communities.

Through our experience, expertise, innovation and collaboration, we create and deliver solutions which provide value to our members across key strategic areas:

- Journey towards a net zero Scotland.
- Drive for efficiency to support the financial sustainability of local public services.
- Community wellbeing with equal access to services, economic development and fair work.
- Resilient supply chains that maximise opportunities for Scottish businesses and the third sector.
- Advancement of skills to deliver Scotland's economic transformation.

Our services are designed to help councils meet the twin challenges of reducing budgets at a time of growing demand. Collaborative procurement increases efficiency and by working together through Scotland Excel, councils can realise a host of social, economic and environmental benefits from their spend.

We value the role sustainable procurement can play in minimising environmental impacts throughout the supply chain. There are two key documents that details Scotland Excel's plans in this area – our Net Zero Strategy and our Sustainable Procurement Policy.

The Net Zero Strategy has been written against a continuing need to provide Scotland Excel's members with best value contracts that support their aspirations to achieve net zero carbon emissions and tackle climate change, while also maximising the benefits of collaborative purchasing.

We work hard to achieve this by:

- Broadening the type of support we offer member councils, including additional sustainability driven tender considerations, focused contract and supplier management and flexible provision of contracts, with options aligned to net zero ambitions.
- Developing cross sector value propositions within the public sector to participate in and inform future contract opportunities.
- Gathering good market intelligence for development of tendering and contract management that clearly demonstrate the benefits of joint procurement.
- Recognising the potential significance of future contracts to the wider Scottish economy and increasing input from other stakeholders.

- Identifying and pursuing innovation and collaboration across the wider portfolio of contract category areas.

- Enabling the development of relevant skills and expertise. Sustainable procurement policy is embedded in our corporate strategy and in the goals set for each year. This means there's always a strong focus on the delivery of innovative, collaborative solutions to members.

Ensuring public contracts return social value has always been important to Scotland Excel. Our portfolio of frameworks has delivered more than 450 apprenticeships, c. 2300 new jobs, over 11,000 hours of volunteering and work placements, 97,000 hours of work experience and training and delivered a variety of other community benefits to a value of £5 million. This has been delivered alongside a demonstrated year-on-year increase of awarded suppliers paying the Real Living Wage. This went up from 79% in 2019/20 to 89% in 2023/24.

Since the introduction of community benefits within public procurement, this has continuously evolved to improve the economic, social, or environmental wellbeing of communities throughout the country.

Scotland Excel continually strives to be innovative in its approach to community benefits because we recognise that community benefits have a considerable social, environmental, and economic impact within local communities.

Our approach to community commitments has been developed to take supplier commitments further and to facilitate a robust process for evaluating this. Being informed by full and comprehensive data is important, so a revised collection process for this was developed and rolled out to simplify the process and ensure we're keeping our members fully up to date on community benefits.

The Müller Milk & Ingredients ASSISTFM Scholarship was an innovative community benefits program developed by the ASSISTFM group. It combined in-person and online learning to equip participants with leadership, resilience, and mental wellness skills. Aimed at improving management abilities and team well-being, the fully funded opportunity was offered to one participant from each Scottish council that is a Müller customer.

The ASSISTFM Cleaning Scholarship was developed using a similar community benefits approach as the Müller Milk & Ingredients ASSISTFM Scholarship. Created in collaboration with suppliers on the Scotland Excel Janitorial Frameworks, this initiative aimed to support members through training and development. The opening session was hosted by Scotland Excel in our Paisley offices, reinforcing our commitment to community benefits and professional growth.

These scholarships are excellent examples of how suppliers are bringing community benefits to life, delivering real social value through public contracts. By investing in professional development and well-being, initiatives like the Müller Milk & Ingredients ASSISTFM Scholarship and the ASSISTFM Cleaning Scholarship demonstrate the positive impact of collaborative procurement.

Laura Muir, Strategic Procurement Manager, Scotland Excel, spoke at the APSE Facilities, Catering and Cleaning Management Seminar on Thursday 30 January. Her presentation can be viewed [here](#).

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Cozenton Park Sports Centre: A Beacon of Modern Leisure and Sustainability

In the heart of Rainham, Kent, the Cozenton Park Sports Centre stands as a testament to modern architectural design, sustainability, and community-focused leisure.

Officially opened on 17 July 2024, this £23.65 million facility replaces the former Splashes Leisure Centre, offering residents and visitors a state-of-the-art environment for fitness and recreation.

Genesis of the Project

The journey to Cozenton Park's inauguration began with the closure and subsequent demolition of the Splashes Leisure Centre in 2022. Recognising the community's need for a contemporary leisure facility, Medway Council embarked on an ambitious project to create a centre that would cater to diverse age groups and fitness levels. The vision was clear: to develop a hub that promotes health, well-being, and social interaction.

Design and Construction

Medway Council collaborated with renowned architectural firm Space and Place and construction company Willmott Dixon to bring the vision to life. Commissioned by Medway Council in late 2021, SPACE&PLACE (S&P), through open tender bidding, were selected to provide Project Management, Quantity Surveyor and Integrated Design Team services for the new Cozenton Park Sports Centre in Rainham, Medway.

Appointed to undertake RIBA stages 1 to 4a up to tender and then subsequently to provide Project Management, Employers Agent (JCT D&B) and Technical Advisor service from stages 4B onwards, S&P were tasked with designing and delivering a replacement facility for the structurally defective Splashes Leisure Centre, occupying the same site. Capital investment was made to ensure continued provision of swimming and leisure opportunities to the local community as provided by the much-loved former Splashes Sports Centre, to improve the economic and social value of the sports centre, enhance

sustainable credentials, improve energy efficiency and reduce operating costs.

Working with internal council services, our project team designers worked with the local leisure team to understand the demographic requirements, acknowledge the community benefits of the existing site and determine the environmental factors that required improvement so as to present a scheme that met local need and served changing market conditions.

Sustainability

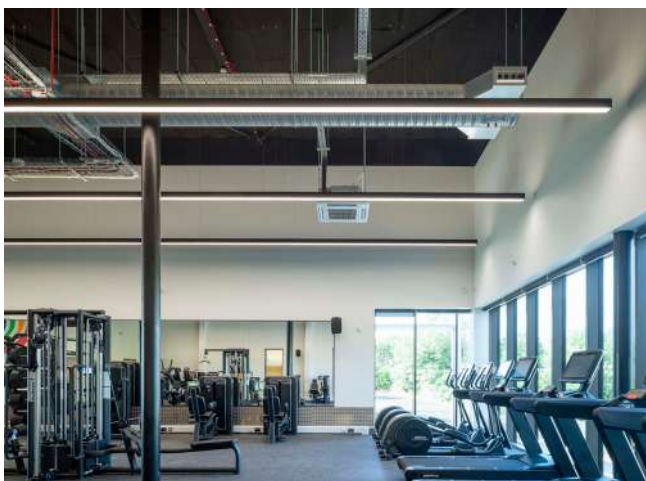
The design emphasizes sustainability and accessibility. As specialists in sustainable building design and the team behind the world's first multi-zonal Passivhaus leisure centre, St. Sidwell's Point in Exeter, the S&P team appointed to this project were delighted to utilise their knowledge, skill and experience to enhance the environmental benefits of Cozenton Park Sports Centre.

Super insulated external fabric, thermal zoning, heat recovery systems, LED lighting and pool orientation were all used to achieve high energy efficiency and replicate some of the key principles outlined by the Passivhaus Institute, all enhanced by extensive arrays of solar panels on the roof. The use of generous ceiling heights and ample glazing throughout seeks to blend the external natural parkland environment with the internal design providing a calm, light and airy atmosphere. Notably, the innovative 'wave ball' technology creates waves in the pool, consuming less than 10% of the energy used by traditional wave machines.

Facilities and Features

Cozenton Park Sports Centre boasts a comprehensive range of amenities:

- **Swimming Pools:** A 25-meter lane pool caters to serious swimmers, while a leisure pool equipped with a flume, wave ball pool, and beach area provides fun for families and children.



- **Fitness Suite:** The state-of-the-art gym is illuminated by natural light from panoramic windows and features top-tier equipment, including treadmills with 18.5-inch Bluetooth and internet-enabled screens, elite bikes, rowers, Stepmills, and cross trainers. Premier members benefit from the Tanita machine, offering detailed body composition analysis.
- **Studios and Community Spaces:** A multi-purpose fitness studio accommodates dance and fitness classes, while additional spaces are available for community events and children's parties.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

A cornerstone of the centre's design is its commitment to accessibility. Features include two hi-tech pool lifts, wide entrances,

a Changing Places room, and accessible lockers, toilets, and showers. These elements ensure that individuals with disabilities can comfortably and safely enjoy the facilities.

Community Reception and Impact

In order to minimise the loss of service for the local communities, Medway Council committed to an accelerated programme to deliver the replacement facility. Working with a team of consultants, suppliers and partners including Quantity Surveyors, STACE and contractor WILLMOTT DIXON, the final project was delivered on time and on budget, with additional value added as a result of a robust value engineering process, improving sustainability initiatives and achieving additional client enhancements.

Taking advantage of existing infrastructure and working directly with council intelligence teams, supported a speedy and cost-effective programme, resulting in zero scope creep.



The opening ceremony was attended by notable figures, including the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Col Peter Gilbert QVRM TD DL VR; the Mayor of Medway, Marian Nestorov; MP for Gillingham and Rainham, Naushabah Khan; and Medway Council Leader, Cllr Vince Maple. The centre, opened in Summer of 2024, has been lauded as a significant asset for Medway, offering residents a modern facility that promotes health and well-being.

Tom Blakeley, Business Engagement Manager at Swim England, remarked, "We are thrilled to see the long-awaited opening of the new leisure facility at Cozenton Park, which includes a fantastic 25m lane pool, as well as a leisure pool with a flume. The new Cozenton Park Sports Centre is a great asset for the people of Medway."

Looking Ahead

Cozenton Park Sports Centre exemplifies how thoughtful design and community engagement can result in a facility that not only meets but exceeds the expectations of its users. As a hub for fitness, leisure, and social interaction, it is poised to serve the Medway community for decades to come, fostering a culture of health, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility.

At SPACE & PLACE we believe in creating 'Architecture for Human Experience'; it's our mantra, it's why we do what we do. We help make a real difference to every person and their flourishing communities by re-thinking how we design buildings, inspiring spaces and places that enhance social values, improve economics, save our environment, and ambitiously put a smile on your face.





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Electrifying the streets: The sustainable revolution of Bucher Municipal's street sweepers

In the global pursuit of sustainability, every sector must play its part in reducing environmental impact and embracing eco-friendly alternatives.

While much attention has been focused on electrifying passenger vehicles, the commercial and municipal sectors have also been making significant strides towards greener solutions. One such area of innovation is the electrification of street sweepers, with companies like Bucher Municipal leading the charge. In this piece, we delve into the benefits of electrifying street sweepers, with a spotlight on Bucher Municipal's, CityCat V20e, CityCat VR50e and MaxPowa V65e vehicles.

Bucher Municipal, a global leader in municipal vehicles and solutions, has recognized the urgent need to transition towards sustainable transportation. Leveraging their expertise in engineering and manufacturing, the company has unveiled a range of electric vehicles tailored to meet the unique demands of urban environments. From compact street sweepers to robust sewer cleaners, or winter salt spreaders, Bucher Municipal's electric fleet encompasses a diverse array of applications, heralding a new era of clean, efficient mobility.

The conventional image of a street sweeper conjures thoughts of noisy, diesel-belching machines trundling along urban streets. Machines that emit harmful pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM), contributing to air pollution and adversely impacting public health.

However, the advent of electric street sweepers is challenging this perception, offering a cleaner, quieter, and more sustainable alternative, representing a significant leap forward in environmental stewardship and urban sustainability. Electric street sweepers, like Bucher Municipal's CityCat V20e, CityCat VR50e, and MaxPowa V65e, produce zero tailpipe emissions, thereby reducing the carbon footprint and improving air quality in urban areas. This shift towards cleaner, greener technologies aligns with global efforts to combat climate change and create healthier, more liveable cities.

One of the standout features of Bucher Municipal's electric street sweepers is their versatility and adaptability to diverse



urban environments. The CityCat V20e, with its compact size and manoeuvrability, is ideally suited for navigating pedestrian areas, narrow streets and congested urban thoroughfares, where space is limited. Equipped with advanced battery technology, the CityCat V20e delivers reliable performance while minimizing environmental impact, making it a valuable asset for municipalities striving to enhance cleanliness and sustainability in urban centres.

Similarly, the CityCat VR50e electric street sweeper offers a versatile solution for mid-sized municipalities and urban districts. With its innovative design and efficient operation, the CityCat VR50e combines the benefits of electric propulsion with the performance and reliability expected from Bucher Municipal's renowned street sweeping equipment. Equipped with state-of-the-art features such as 70kW DC charging and energy-efficient systems, the CityCat VR50e maximizes productivity while minimizing energy consumption, ensuring cost-effective and environmentally responsible cleaning operations.

At the forefront of Bucher Municipal's electric street sweeper lineup is the MaxPowa V65e, a powerful and efficient machine designed for

large-scale cleaning tasks in metropolitan areas and industrial zones. With its robust construction and high-capacity waste collection system, the MaxPowa V65e delivers unparalleled performance and productivity, capable of tackling even the most demanding cleaning challenges with ease. By electrifying their flagship street sweeper model, Bucher Municipal demonstrates a commitment to sustainability and innovation, setting a new standard for urban cleaning equipment in the 21st century.

In addition to environmental benefits, electrified street sweepers offer compelling advantages in terms of operational efficiency and cost savings. Electric propulsion systems, characterized by instant torque and smooth acceleration, provide superior performance and manoeuvrability compared to traditional diesel engines. This translates into increased productivity and reduced cleaning times, enabling municipalities to achieve higher levels of cleanliness while optimizing resource utilization.

Moreover, the lower operating costs of electric street sweepers contribute to long-term savings for municipalities and fleet operators. With fewer moving parts and reduced maintenance requirements, electric vehicles offer significant advantages in terms of reliability and uptime. The absence of complex internal combustion engines also eliminates the need for costly fuel and exhaust aftertreatment systems, further reducing operating expenses and enhancing overall fleet efficiency.

Another key benefit of electrified vehicles is their noise output. When operating in a densely populated urban or residential environment, this allows the municipalities to extend their operating hours and ensures quieter operations with less disruption to residents when sweeping out of hours.

Furthermore, the electrification of street sweepers aligns with broader trends towards sustainable urban mobility and smart city development. By integrating electric vehicles into municipal fleets, cities can reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and promote the use of renewable energy sources. Advanced telematics and connectivity features through the customer designed Bucher Connect enable real-time monitoring and optimization of street sweeping operations, allowing municipalities to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in managing their cleaning activities.

In conclusion, the electrification of street sweepers represents a transformative shift towards cleaner, more sustainable urban environments. Bucher Municipal's CityCat V20e, CityCat VR50e and MaxPowa V65e vehicles exemplify the innovative spirit driving this change, offering municipalities a range of versatile and efficient solutions for urban cleaning.

With zero emissions, lower operating costs, and superior performance, electrified street sweepers are paving the way towards a greener future, where cities can thrive in harmony with nature. As we continue to embrace the benefits of electric mobility, let us not overlook the humble street sweeper, whose silent revolution is helping to build a cleaner, healthier world for generations to come.

Bucher are an APSE Approved Partner, for more info about how your organisation can get front-of-mind with decision makers in local government, contact Matt Paton at Spacehouse on 01625 666 389 or m.paton@spacehouse.co.uk

BUCHER municipal

APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2025

A look ahead to APSE Scotland's Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2025

APSE Scotland is delighted to be returning to the MacDonald 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](#)

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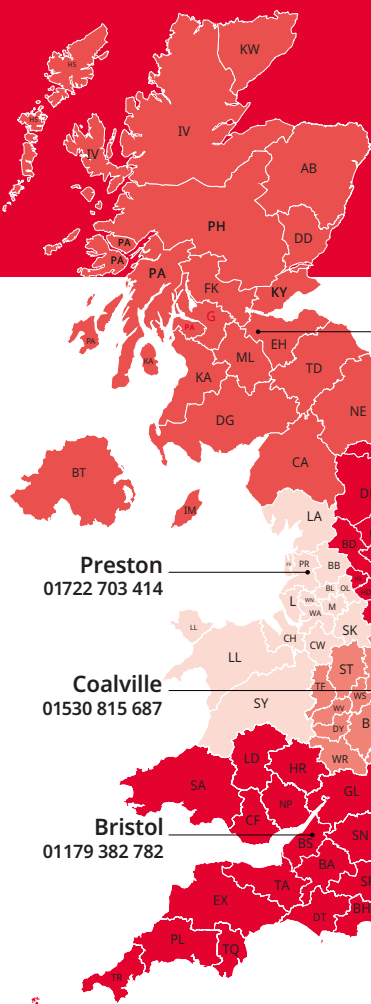


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