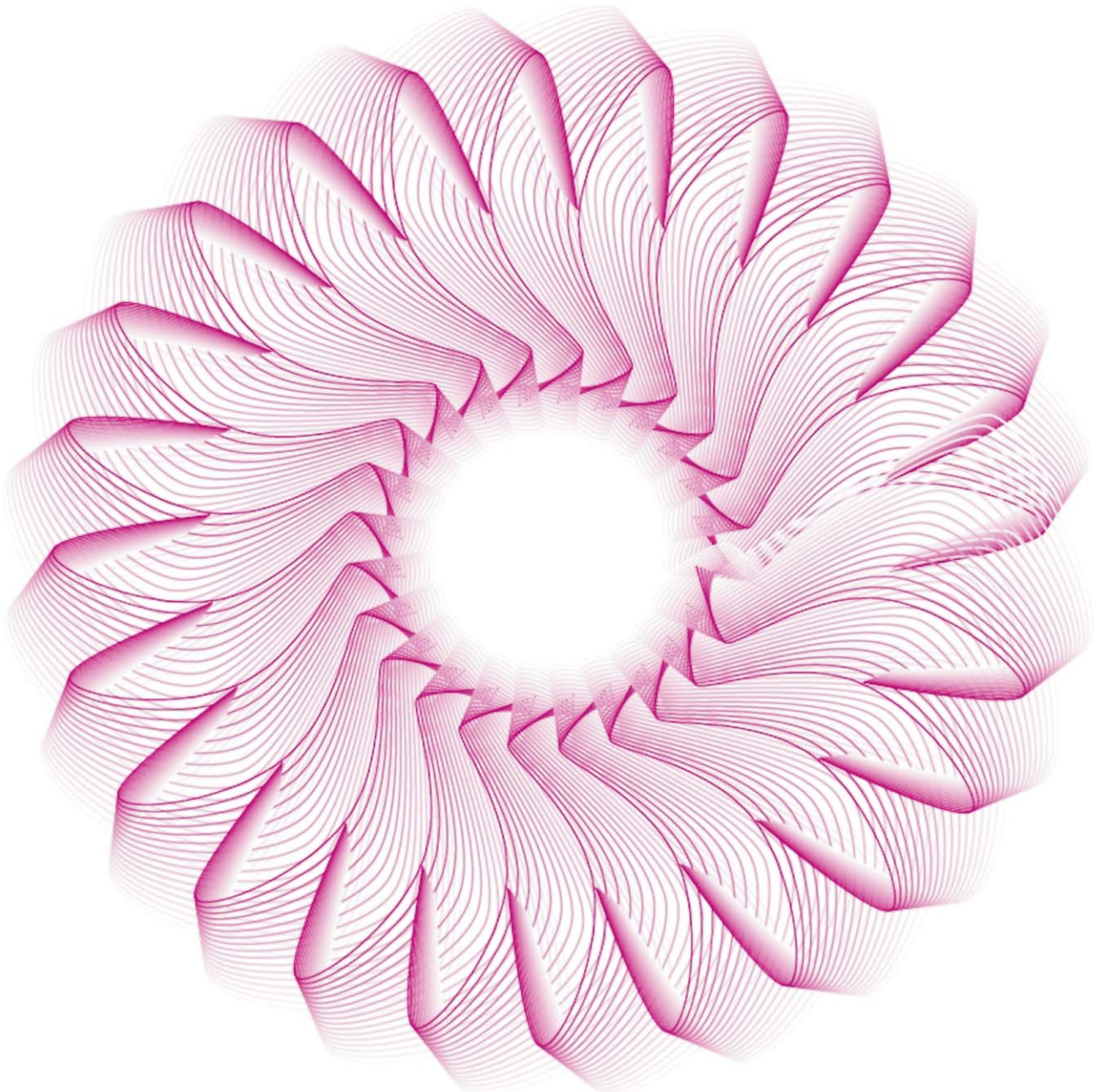


# Best practice case studies 2012

Best and most improved performer award finalists 2012



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## **Building Cleaning**

### **Most improved performer finalist, Inverclyde Council**

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#### **Overview**

Inverclyde Council Facilities Management currently provide cleaning services in approx. 76 buildings and employ approximately 250 cleaning operatives. These properties include nursery schools, primary and secondary schools and various office buildings. We also have one external client, Strathclyde Police. We also provide catering and janitorial services in most properties but certainly all education establishments. The current financial constraints on Local Government have forced a full review on all aspects of service provision which has brought about changes to various parts of the business. These have led to improvements in performance.

#### **Improvements and Good Performance**

With savings targeted across most budgets it was vital that Facilities Management responded in a way that achieved these savings but minimised the effects on service provision and customer/client experience at site. Having met with client representatives it was agreed to look critically at cleaning specifications and frequencies and agree actions that were agreed with individual head teachers/building managers. This allowed for a more specific service tailored to clients' individual requirements and at the same time achieve a reduction in costs through staff natural wastage. With the customer, we agreed to reduce the specification in areas not fully utilised and concentrate more on those areas identified by clients as their priorities. We backed this up by encouraging building users to identify their own issues through use of the site record book. This allowed Facilities Management a window of 48 hours to respond to these. We have recently carried out a full customer satisfaction survey and achieved 98% satisfaction showing the changes made have been received well and that clients prefer their service to be tailored to their individual needs and not provided on a "blanket" basis.

We also now have "Attendance Management Champions" for each department. This ensures ALL attendance matters are highlighted at the earliest opportunity and followed through each time. Staff at site are clear on the emphasis being placed on attendance and we have experienced a sharp fall in absence rates as a result. Our Human Resources department are fully involved and provide support

and advice to Attendance Champions on an ongoing basis. Various triggers have been agreed that kick start managerial action. Managing attendance will always be a priority and although the aforementioned has yielded success, this will be an ongoing matter for discussion and hopefully more improved attendance levels in the future.

### **Future Areas of Focus**

The current economic situation will mean a continued effort in trimming costs. Having achieved so much in this regard in relation to staff numbers (attendance etc) the intention is to widen the scope of service reviews to include such things as new technology, cleaning methods and working times etc. More focus will be placed on individual agreements at site and involving clients in all areas of the service. Variations to contract will be focused on in an effort to reduce these dramatically. Inverclyde Council are determined to not only achieve the required savings but to do this in a way that has a minimal impact on frontline staff and actually improves customer experience. In other words ensure these services are fit for the future and beyond.

## **Building Maintenance**

### **Best performer finalist; Broxtowe Council**

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#### **Overview**

Broxtowe Borough Council is a retained stock organisation having approximately 4500 properties of varying ages.

Being responsible for reactive and planned repairs to dwellings only, the repairs service is managed in-house and has an in-house workforce of 21 operatives. Specialist sub-contractors and partners also assist in the provision of service delivery.

#### **Improvements made and good performance**

Following a best value service review in 2006, we actively engaged in trying to move the service forward despite the inevitable resource restrictions of providing an in-house service within a retained stock organisation.

To enable us to make the desired improvements, the following initiatives were implemented over a phased programme:

- The repairs team were integrated with the rest of the Housing Directorate in 2010 resulting in more joined up working and an improved resolution of Housing issues.
- Operatives to start and finish works on site – this resulted in greater productivity rates, better customer satisfaction rates, reduced mileage and more flexibility.
- All customers requesting a service for minor repairs, right to repair jobs or inspections are offered an appointment at the first point of call.
- Those customers requesting non-urgent or planned works are advised of the proposed target date for the repairs and then offered an appointment by our Works Planner closer to the target date.
- Mobile working for officers and operatives was introduced in 2008 and has provided us with more flexibility and more extensive performance management information to drive forward future improvements.

- A drive to reduce emergency repairs and increase non-urgent repairs following in-house training of customer services staff.
- The provision of a winter contingency plan resulted in us being able to deal with the effects of the cold winter period more effectively resulting in improved productivity and less emergencies. Being able to plan for inevitable frozen pipes and breakdowns of heating systems ensured we had sufficient resources available to ensure customers did not see a reduction in service delivery during this period.
- During a local authority Job Evaluation exercise, operational staff were re-trained and applied for new roles as multi-skilled operatives. This resulted in 15 out of the 21 operatives becoming multi-skilled. This has provided us with the flexibility required when employing a small workforce to provide a more effective service. Rather than sending multiple operative to complete repairs, most are now completed by sending 1 operative.
- All new initiatives were discussed and approved by our resident involvement group which has been merged with our Modernisations Team to create a "Homes Service Review Group".

### **Future areas of focus**

Now the majority of past improvement plans have been put in place, it is now time to take the next steps in our improvement plans. The following initiatives will be implemented over the next couple of years:

- A full review of the in-house stores provision to determine whether materials procurement can be sourced more effectively and efficiently externally.
- Recruitment of 3 in-house Apprentices on a Multi-skilled operations training course will enable us to provide a future in-house team which has been trained internally having the skills and knowledge to provide the levels of service required by the authority.
- Implementation of a vehicle tracking system to enable us to monitor fuel usage, speed and routes of vehicles. This will provide us with an essential tool for managing this important resource and ensuring we comply with our environmental obligations.
- Supervision of in-house operations is to be reviewed to ensure we are obtaining optimum efficiencies and effectiveness of the in-house team. This will be achieved through the completion of comprehensive 121's where the aims and objectives of the Housing Directorate will be reinforced and steps taken to ensure staff are supported to ensure they are achieved.
- Reduced inspections through the training of our in-house team to undertake the inspection and repairs during the same visit. 3 Operatives are to be trained to carry out condensation and damp inspections. Their vehicles are then to be stocked with the necessary equipment to enable them to undertake minor remedial works at the same time as their visit involving repointing, insulation upgrades, repairing pipe-leaks, removing grounded plaster, reducing high ground levels, cleaning mould growth etc

- Extension of the mobile working initiatives to include minor works sub-contractors. This initiative will ensure the provision of accurate, timely information regarding repairs appointments for specialist minor repairs to create consistency across the service.
- How we obtain customer satisfaction is going to be the subject of a Housing review. The aims of this review are to ensure the collection of satisfaction information across the Housing Directorate is consistent, customers are not sent duplicate surveys for different parts of the service and whether telephone surveys provide better information and value for money.
- The Homes Service Review Group are to embark on an ambitious project to generate a "Customer Care Charter" which will detail the levels of service expected from the repairs team. The Group will then undertake satisfaction surveys to ensure we are complying with this charter.

## **Most improved performer finalist; North Ayrshire Council**

### **Contact details:**

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### **Overview**

North Ayrshire Council owns over 13,000 social housing properties, and 450 public buildings with Building Services being the main contractor for all repairs, maintenance and improvement works carried out in these properties. The undernoted workstreams are carried out by Building Services in social housing:-

Responsive repairs, including standby, emergency, urgent, right to repair, routine and repairs by appointment. The average number of repairs carried out under this work-stream is approximately 45,000 per annum.

In addition, we undertake approximately 950 repairs to voids each year, ensuring the property meets NAC void standard, and undertaking any additional works as required by the Housing Service. Approximately 250 new kitchens and 200 new bathrooms are fitted when the property is void.

Major Works – Installation of kitchens, windows and bathrooms against a set programme of works as identified by the Client's Agent.

Building Services employs over 220 skilled and semi-skilled workers and 27 craft apprentices to carry out a range of works to the Council's housing stock. In addition, Building Services approximately 70 office-based staff, including 4 modern apprentices.

All of the Housing stock maintained by Building Services is within the North Ayrshire Council area. The depot is based within Portland Place, Stevenston and consists of office space, stores and a workshop. Operatives can gain access to the depot 24 hours, 7 days per week.

### **Improvements made and good performance**

In 2010, in consultation with the Tenants Working Group, urgent repairs target timescales were reduced from 5 to 3 days. Urgent repairs are repairs which do not necessarily pose a threat to the building / property, or health and wellbeing of its occupants, however, North Ayrshire Council would like to carry these repairs out within 3 days to reduce inconvenience to tenants.

For jobs which we require to sub-contract, we have established a dedicated team manage sub-contractor's performance more closely, resulting in improvements in their performance which has assisted us to meet and exceed our target timescales. Performance in completing urgent repairs within the target timescale of 3 days is currently 98.63%.

Our void turnaround timescale is excellent with the average total number of days keys are held by the contractor being 9. To achieve this week:-

- Streamline processes between Housing Services and Building Services
- Our contract supervisors and operatives take ownership of the complete process
- Prioritise void works by demand for the property
- Have a minimum letting standard in place
- Conduct a pre-termination inspection jointly with Housing Services
- Pre-allocations - This is a housing function which doesn't make us turn the void round quicker but allows them to allocate it quicker
- Accompanied viewing - Again a housing function which the housing officer goes along with the tenant to view the house
- Conduct regular monitoring meetings and have tight performance targets
- Conduct monthly performance reporting

Efficient void management maximises income by increasing the number of properties for which rent is being paid. By turning around void properties quickly we contribute to our client Housing Services performance in the following ways:

- Minimise the amount of rent lost due to properties lying empty
- Minimise costs arising through vandalism when properties are vacant
- Minimise the costs of securing properties
- Minimise the use of security screens, as they detract from the overall appearance of an area and detract from the quality of the environment
- Maximise the offer take-up rate by producing properties in a good state of repair and cleanliness

During 2010/11 our overall level of customer satisfaction was 99.79%. Customer satisfaction is embedded in the culture of our organisation and customer service training is provided to all staff on commencing work with Building Services. In addition, refresher training is provided on a 3-year rolling programme.

We actively seek customer feedback on completed jobs, and any issues are taken seriously and addressed promptly. We contact tenants by telephone to ask them to complete a short customer satisfaction questionnaire. Responses are fed into a database and regular reports are produced to enable analysis of the results. Results are discussed at team meetings with contract supervisors to ensure any issues are addressed with the relevant operatives / staff. Any trends are investigated and procedures / materials etc. are changed wherever required to prevent future recurrences.

Customer satisfaction remains high within Building Services year on year.

### **Future areas of focus**

To ensure continuous improvement, future areas of focus include:-

Creation of an Intelligent Co-ordination Centre (ICC) to encourage collaborative working and act as a single point of contact into Building Services. The concept is

to provide a single route into and through Building Services in order to assure better service delivery through smoother information flow, work assessment, resource planning and customer relations. Integral to this is the implementation of Lean processes across core activities e.g. collaborative planning, project management, sub-contractor management, stores, quality assurance and job closure. These new processes should minimise waste and add value to the customer experience. Within the ICC, a visual management system will be implemented in a central location to allow everyone to clearly see how we are performing and to encourage staff to identify ways to further improve performance.

A full review of the IT systems is being undertaken, which, after implementation of the ICC and the embedding of new processes, will help to identify the true system requirements to achieve an efficient flow of work and information through the organisation.

Dynamic scheduling and mobile working have been successfully implemented into our Responsive repairs business unit, the next step will be to implement this type of working into the Void works area of the business. Void management is complex with several different trades being required, often within a set sequence and often spanning multiple contractors. To drive efficiency, value for money, and improve our already excellent turnaround times, voids will be planned through the Opti Time Project Planner scheduling tool and the operatives will receive their job instructions remotely. It is anticipated that this new system of working will:-

- Reduce the use of paper ordering systems
- Streamline processes within the business
- Free up supervisors time to enable them to carry out core duties
- Have more visibility on the operatives workloads and see completions in real time

Introduction of multi-skilling within the workforce so that all craft operatives possess a range of skills, some of which will fall outside their primary trade. They will not necessarily have multiple trade qualifications, but training will consist of in-house modules, and result in our operatives being more effective and productive contributors to the work output of several traditional trades. This will benefit the organisation by creating a more flexible labour force able to meet challenges, improve project performance, reduce the number of visits to complete repairs, improve customer service and improve productivity.

Production of an updated information brochure for capital works for kitchens, bathrooms and windows, to provide tenants with information on the survey and installation processes along with timescales and any preparation they should take in advance of these works. Consultation with tenants has taken place to seek their views on what they consider to be important information to include. Once completed, the brochures will be issued to tenants as soon as they are notified their property is scheduled for these works.

## Education Catering

### Most Improved performer finalist; Sunderland City Council

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#### Overview

Sunderland City Council's school meals service currently employs approximately 400 staff across 94 school sites, covering:

- 74 primary schools (5 schools converted to academy status)
- 4 secondary schools (1 school converted to academy status)
- 7 special schools (2 schools converted to academy status)
- 9 nurseries

The main element of the business is the primary sector, where Consortium arrangements are in place. The Consortium represents a unique way of delivering services to schools in that it is essentially a schools partnership that is driven and controlled by schools (through the head teacher-led Consortium Board), with expert support and guidance provided by the Council.

The arrangements ensure there is a high quality and equitable / affordable service across all schools in the Consortium through the pooling of all school meals funding. The school meals service is paid an amount per meal based on a cost plus model, with any surplus or deficit taken or covered by the Consortium. In practice the arrangements limit the risk of financial exposure to the Council, whilst providing a trading reserve for schools that can be used for investment purposes or to offset future potential challenges e.g. Universal Credit.

The current Consortium agreement comes to an end in March 2014, but schools are in the process of signing up to an extension to March 2015, which will provide greater time to assess the impact of future challenges such as school funding reform and Universal Credit.

#### Improvements made and good performance

There has been an on-going trend of growth in school meal uptake in Sunderland in recent years, with performance above national averages, for example:

- Quartile 1 performance for paid and all meal uptake in secondary schools, quartile 1 performance for all meal uptake in primary secondary schools, and quartile 2 performance for paid meal uptake, in the 2011/12 Education Catering Performance Network
- A variance of + 9.7% (primary sector) over the national average in the 2011/12 SFT / LACA national school lunch survey

There are a range of factors that have contributed to the on-going trend of growth (e.g. menu development, staff training and closer working relationships with schools). However, it is felt that the service's theme day programme may have been the most significant reasons for improved performance, whether it be in relation to the development of theme days linked to the curriculum (e.g. Chinese New Year), or one-off events (e.g. the Jubilee), or fun ideas that the cooks are encouraged to promote (e.g. Valentine's Day / Halloween).

The service also performs well in terms of productivity, with Performance Network top quartile results in primary meals served per staff hour. This is in no small part due to the introduction of a staffing scale, which correlates the numbers of meals produced in a kitchen with the number of staffing hours on site, and uses a set scale to optimise productivity and reduce costs. Due to the removal of vacant posts there was actually a very limited number of staff who had to reduce hours. In addition, given the reasoning behind the staffing scale, there is an incentive for cooks to try and grow the business, and through the use of theme days there are also the tools to do so.

### **Future areas of focus**

Theme days were highlighted as one of the most popular elements of the service in the School Meals Investigators programme that was run in Sunderland's schools. This is a pupil-led consultation exercise that has enabled the capture of a rich seam of data in relation to how children and their parents would like to see their school meal provision developed. The information captured in each school has led to the implementation of actions in individual schools as a response to specific requests to improve the service, such as changing to plates and bowls instead of airline trays, installing Panini machines, painting dining halls and introducing music systems.

It has also led to some service-wide developments aimed at further increasing uptake, and which form the basis of the service improvement plans over the next year, including:

- Increasing the range of theme days and being able to respond to the needs of the curriculum and the wishes of schools and children. We are also getting schools to diary theme days in their school calendar from the start of term
- Giving frontline cooks more ownership as to theme day development and delivery
- Revising how we present our menus in dining halls i.e. we are investing in menu display boards with photographs of the meals
- Providing one-to-one training with cooks as to the presentation of meals through a professional chef. Photographs of the meals highlighting how they should be presented will also be given to each school cook as part of the menu development process

## **Parks**

### **Best Performer Finalist; Conwy CBC**

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#### **Overview**

Conwy's Parks section sits within the Street Scene section of Environment and Technical Services and has responsibility for the maintenance of the county's green open spaces including 8 Green Flag parks, play areas and sports fields.

The Parks Section also has responsibility for the in house nursery that provides the county with its bedding plant and shrub requirements.

Our Parks section first entered APSE Benchmarking in 2007 and since then as been shortlisted as a Most Improved Performer 3 times and in 2011/12 as a Best Performer.

#### **Improvements made and good performance**

##### **Community Engagement and Consultation**

The Parks Section prides itself on its excellent relationship with the community; we have regular meetings with the 15 community groups across the county who we support in applying for grant funding that may not be available to us an Authority.

The grant funding is used to fund projects that are entirely the community groups' vision for their local parks. Between April 2011 and March 2012 our community groups, with our support, were successful in obtaining a total of £179,737 of external grant funding for 6 separate projects around the county that included the installation of additional play and outdoor gym equipment.

Each year the APSE consultation survey is carried out by an independent agency over a 2 week period in the peak of the summer season. The consultation is undertaken in our major parks and is the perfect opportunity to encourage residents and visitors to feedback their views on Conwy's open spaces.

By focusing on the needs of our residents and visitors and from taking on board the feedback from the APSE consultation survey we have maintained a high level of satisfaction for the past 4 years.

##### **In Bloom**

Colwyn Bay and Llandudno, two of our major towns and tourist areas, are both entered into the regional Wales in Bloom competition each year. Colwyn Bay has been particularly successful winning gold in its class and the Large Town Trophy during 2012 and subsequently being entered into the national Britain in Bloom competition for 2013.

We receive numerous compliments from residents, tourists and town and county councillors on the high standard of bedding found in across the county every year. Having such a high standard of bedding enhances Conwy's reputation as a beautiful, tidy and safe place to live and visit.

### **People Management**

The Parks section is well structured and staff are invited to attend regular meetings encouraging a high level of staff morale and embedding a culture of team working. The section has maintained a low level of staff absence through ensuring that staff have been made aware of the robust Sickness Absence Policy through toolbox talks and lunch time workshops.

Every member of staff within the parks section receives an annual performance development review and over 25% of the staff members who work for the Parks sections are working towards NVQ level 2 or 3.

Our Departmental Team Brief, Environment News, has proven to be an excellent communication tool and allows important messages as well as interesting news stories from across Environment and Technical Services to be delivered to all levels of staff. Placing success stories from all the sections within the department into Environment News means that staff at all levels feel that their work is appreciated and recognised, encouraging an enhanced sense of pride and job satisfaction.

### **Future areas of focus**

- Continue to strive for improvement in the quality of the green spaces by increasing the number of Green Flag parks that we manage;
- Continue to work closely with all our community groups to apply for grant funding to deliver projects in the local communities;
- Seek to set up new Friends Groups in communities throughout Conwy.

## **Refuse**

### **Most Improved performer finalist; Oxford City Council**

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#### **Overview**

Oxford City Council employs over 1,200 people and aims to build a world class City for everyone. Oxford City Council employees support the City's communities with a range of services to promote and maintain Oxford's reputation as a world class City. Direct Services is a function of Oxford City Council and is responsible for the Council's front line services and employs over 550 people. Direct Services is responsible for Waste and Recycling, Street Cleansing, Building Maintenance, Motor Transport and Vehicle Maintenance and Highways and Engineering.

Direct Services Domestic Waste and Recycling service collects from the kerbside; refuse waste, commingled recycling, garden and food waste from 59,000 households. The service is provided through an in-house workforce, operating four day alternate weekly collections with food waste being collected weekly. The Waste and Recycling service also operates a five and a half day Commercial Waste and Recycling collection service.

The Domestic Waste and Recycling service employs over 65 front-line employees, which are supported by a management and support team of 6.

#### **Improvements made and good performance**

When measuring Direct Services Waste and Recycling improvements and performance, it is important to understand the unique collection features that are specific to Oxford City Council. The Waste and Recycling service covers 4,541 hectares of urban land, serves a population of 153,000, of which 39,780 (26.00%) are students and 59,000 households, of which 15,500 (26.27%) are flats.

Since the Fundamental Service Review (FSR) in 2009/10, which focused on reducing costs and improving customer satisfaction, the Waste and Recycling service successfully completed and adapted to a range of operational and service procedures in order to become efficient and more productive.

Since October 2010, the service has been implementing In-Cab-Technology and has altered the collection method of recyclable materials from kerbside sort to a kerbside commingled collection service. Not only did the service alteration enable the service to collect the recyclable materials from one container (a wheeled bin) and increase the number of materials available for collection, the service implementation also enabled the service to restructure and become more efficient and productive.

The service operates alternate weekly collections with the refuse and commingled services. Through route optimising collection rounds, the alternate weekly

collections are split into two sets of twenty rounds (North and South), with 5 rounds completed from each set of 20 rounds by the commingled recycling and refuse collection services over a 4 day working week. By operating the alternate weekly collection, the service was able to reduce overtime payments, the use of agency staff and operate the commingled recycling and refuse collection rounds with one driver and two loaders.

Since October 2010, the Waste and Recycling service increased its domestic Recycling and Composting rate from 41.78% to 46.34% (December 2012).

Together with altering the collection of recyclable materials, the FSR indicated that the Waste and Recycling services garden waste collections were inefficient. This was due to size of the rounds and low participation rates (25.45%). In May 2011, the service opted to introduce an annual £35 chargeable service for the collection of garden waste. The method of collection altered from 70 litre Hessian sacks, to either 180 litre to 240 litre wheeled bins or 240 litre eco sacks. The garden waste collection service operates 24 collection rounds, with 3 rounds completed each working day over a two week period of 8 working days. With over 12,000 subscriptions since May 2011, the service generates an income for the provided garden waste collection service.

Behind the operational scenes and as a result of the FSR, the waste and recycling service established separate budgets for the different domestic and commercial operations and educational activities. Through establishing separate budgets, the service is able to publish detailed monthly expenditure and budget cost reports, stimulating performance monitoring improvements.

In order to become more efficient, the 'No Side Waste Policy' was promoted to residents and the service worked successfully with the disposal end sites to reduce vehicle turnaround times. The service also replaced two 32 tonne RCV's, which were used as spare vehicles, with smaller weighted RCV's. The 32 tonne RCV's were replaced and not considered as suitable spare RCV's due to high operating costs and size, which caused limitations in terms of collection access. This change in fleet reduced costs and supported Oxford City Councils priority of reducing carbon footprint.

Underlying the service improvements and good performance engineered by the Waste and Recycling service, is an open and performance based culture. Since 2009/10, the service reviewed and restructured its key performance indicators and actively measures performance which shapes the waste and recycling services efficiency, productivity and overall performance. The service developed performance indicators for the following information:

- Tonnage of municipal waste sent to landfill
- Recycling and composting rate
- Kg of overall waste collected per population head
- Kg of residual waste collected per household
- Validated and justified missed domestic bins
- Number of compliments
- Number of complaints

**Future areas of focus**

Future areas of focus for the Waste and Recycling service are:

- Achieving a household Recycling and Composting rate of 50%.
- Increasing the rates of recycling from the waste the Street Cleansing service collects.
- Escalating the income generation by increasing the Commercial Waste and Recycling market share within Oxford and Oxfordshire.
- Reducing the amount of collected household waste that is sent to landfill.
- Together with the Mixed Recycling Facility operators, reduce the contamination rate within the collected commingled recycling.

## **Sports and Leisure**

### **Best and Most Improved Performer, Liverpool City Council**

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#### **Overview**

Lifestyles Garston is one of thirteen indoor sports facilities managed and financed by Liverpool City Councils Sport and Outdoor Recreation Service. The centre has continued to maximise revenue and member growth year on year. In the financial year 2011/2012 Lifestyle Garston attracted over 600,000 visits approx to the centre and generated a net income of £1.37 million.

The centre is situated in the south Liverpool area and located within a local community park in a residential area; it has a catchment area of 60,553 and is an integral part of the community, providing facilities and a range of activities to meet demographic demand.

The centre has a 25metre rectangular deck level swimming pool, interconnected with a learner pool and beach area. It also affords a 50 metre leisure flume, two water cannon features and Jacuzzi/bubble effect section. The pool hall is further complemented by a health suite – steam sauna and plunge pool.

On the dry side of the centre is located a 4 court sports hall, a 1 court multipurpose function hall for badminton, table tennis, exercise classes etc, a lifestyles fitness suite with over 90 techno gym resistance and cardio pieces of equipment offering the ultimate fitness experience, and a separate 20 piece women's fitness gym that promotes a dual use purpose in accommodating a busy GP referral, cardio rehab programme during off peak times and a women's fitness area outside these times.

The centre in addition has an X bike studio with 15 stations, which is transformed during off peak periods into a crèche area, whilst specific development activities aimed at target groups are delivered.

Outdoor facilities include 3x floodlit 5 a side synthetic pitches, and a remotely managed bowling green. A selection of vending machines, resale sports equipment, weighing machines, children's rides and a cafeteria is also provided inside the centre.

The Sport and Outdoor Recreation service maintains its high standard by using Sport England's quality Quest accreditation assessment, CIPFA to measure and maintain service quality, APSE KPI, Inclusive Fitness Mark accreditation and is a Royal Lifesaving approved training centre.

## **Improvements made and good performance**

The sport and recreation service under the mission statement of 'More People, More Active, More Often' have made the following improvements

- Re-launched Future Lifestyles with PCT funding for free swimming and low cost admission for other activities to fewer than 17s generating 32,600 additional visits to Lifestyles Garston. This has had a significant impact on 'active' juniors and plays a vital role in the community in improving health and fitness to all ages. This in turn has led to a greater emphasis on delivering and providing child based exercises and holiday schemes.
- Secured an agreement with Liverpool John Moors University offering free off peak access to its 28,000 students and staff. This has had an impact on all of the lifestyles facilities in terms of both income and usage
- In 2011/2012 Despite direct competition from the private sector (DW, David Lloyd, and Fit for Free –within 2 miles of lifestyles Garston) direct debit collections were maintained at 2773 member collections.
- A challenging Marketing strategy was implemented to both retain members and attract new ones in the form of refer a friend, summer sizzler, Liverpool school sports partnership and corporate membership deals.
- Increased community swimming lessons capacity by 66% from the previous year (from 4500 to 13,500 attendance visits) increasing income by 69%.
- School swimming provision at the pool helped the city achieve 86% KS2 standard of trends, swimming 25m in year 6.
- Capitalising on the current fitness trends of 2011/2012 in the form of zumba etc attracting 90,000 attendances to adult coaching classes per annum.
- Putting a bigger focus on partnership working with the local schools, youth service, neighbourhood teams, police and community organisations which ensures that we are in a position to assess and review the level of socio environmental issues such as anti-social behaviour, crime, youth annoyance, lack of opportunity and provision and put measures in place to address and achieve a positive solution. This has resulted in the centre maximising its potential, particularly with young people.
- Lifestyles Instructors and Gym Instructors have also carried out outreach work in local schools delivering sports taster sessions and supporting a buddy system to encourage the young people to visit the sports centre, having already met and being introduced to the staff team, this has resulted in hard to reach female groups frequenting the centre on a more regular basis.
- Fitness memberships are driven by all staff at the centre. All members are given a welcome pack, taken on a tour of the centre, providing us the opportunity to highlight the unique selling points in the facility. They will then embark on a service fitness plan – first appointment and induction, one to one, fitness updates and intervention to promote retention, we aim to interact with 100% of our new members in the initial stages of their fitness journey. We use the wellness system to enable us to identify those at high risk of becoming demotivated and customers can utilise their wellness keys to access the online training room facility - to track their fitness whilst at home or in the gym. Instructors deliver Express workouts in the gym three times per day – this assists if machines are busy, offers further variety to their programmes and enhances customer/instructor relationships.

- We identify staff training requirements by means of annual Performance and Personal development meeting. 80% of our Gym staff are NVQ Level 3 instructors, GP referral qualified and take fitness classes such as kettle bells, zumba, 50+ etc.

Staff are given free vocational training opportunities. This ensures that staff are able to cover in all areas of the centre and further their career. Qualifications include Fitness Instructor, Customer Service, Sales and Leisure management. The opportunity for staff to have dual roles predominately in delivering fitness classes promotes motivation and variety and this in turn has reduced sickness levels on site, as staff display a loyalty to their customers and their team colleagues and thus doesn't want to let them down.

Robust systems to monitor staff sickness are also in place with manager contact, electronic recording and back to work interviews alongside welfare follow ups.

- There is a strong commitment by the organisation to, place the customer at the heart of the organisation, we constantly monitor and evaluate customer complaints, comments and suggestions on site to help us drive organisational change, we hold Meet the Manager forums three times per year and feed back in the form of chart/graph data and inform them via 'you asked – we did' customer information boards . This helps us in gaining a deeper appreciation of our customers, their differing needs, concerns and requests and converting data into actionable knowledge.

### **Future areas of focus**

Service improvements for the future include:

- Expand facility of online membership transaction payments and booking process to drive efficiency and accessibility for customers and staff alike.
- Business development focusing on retention and attrition rates, identifying further opportunities that offer additional benefits to both new and existing members. Exploring all technology opportunities to further opportunities in social media and enhancing websites.
- Initiatives to increase income whilst reducing expenditure.
- Energy efficiency initiatives –guidance from carbon trust to reduce utility expenditure – solar panels, biomass boilers, recycling etc.
- Continuing to work with the PCT and increase clinical outputs and targets. The centre operates a successful and busy GP referral programme with 595 referrals 2011/2012 from its local population. Further additions to this programme in the form of weight management, cancer rehabilitation and additional exercise opportunities are a priority.
- Forge links with schools and assist in programming and managing their sports facilities for community use and meet demand for additional facility availability.
- Refurbishment of existing synthetic pitches with the assistance and guidance of NGBs and Sports England.

Liverpool Sport and Outdoor Recreation Service is committed to providing a value for money service which ensures that service is delivered as effectively and

efficiently as possible in a period in which funding is greatly reduced and non-statutory services are being scrutinised and reformed.

As an organisation we understand that the current economic climate will dictate that our services will need to change and adapt as a result.

We will inevitably need to drive success with fewer resources and actively manage risk rather than seeking to avoid it, thus a period of transformation in the next financial year is inevitable to ensure our service is fit for the future.

## **Street Cleansing**

### **Most Improved Performer Finalist – Wakefield MDC**

#### **Contact details**

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#### **Overview**

Grounds Maintenance within Wakefield Council is carried out in house by Street Scene Services. Street Scene Services are responsible for all aspects of Grounds Maintenance which includes Arboriculture/Forestry work within all public open spaces including parks, cemeteries, play areas, council playing fields, country parks and woodlands. Currently there is 109 FTE staff working within this service that is based in four operational units due to the districts large geographical area.

#### **Improvements made and good performance**

##### **Hectares maintained per FTE frontline employee and maintenance cost per household has improved**

The numbers of FTE staff were reduced as a result of the restructures in both 2009 and 2010. The two main reasons for the reduction in staff numbers were to achieve savings targets given against the service and the loss of a large contract. As a result of these factors employee numbers had to be reduced and dropped significantly from 133 to 108, in addition to this reduction of FTE's a further 19 Seasonal positions were also deleted. Therefore, a mini re-structure with Grounds Maintenance was undertaken and cutting rounds were looked at with a view to improve efficiencies.

##### **Percentage of staff absences**

During 2009 and 2010 sickness was not as proactively managed within the service due to a high level of management and supervisory tiers within the management structure, sickness was also an issue at the time within Waste Services so to combat the issue a 'shared' post was created to work within these two services (now combined as Street Scene) with a view to sickness absence management. During 2009/10 a Workforce Planning Officer was appointed with the remit to proactively work with Managers to develop and implement Council policies and procedures with regards to sickness management. These policies and procedures are now standardised across Street Scene, therefore other services within Street Scene have also seen a positive movement of the sickness levels.

##### **Human resources and people management, significant increase**

During 2010 the post of a Training Officer was generated; this position was also tasked to Champion IIP within the Service. Annual Individual Appraisals are carried out (including a 6 monthly review) and part of the Appraisal process is to establish Personal Development Plans. Level 2 NVQ's in Horticulture (plus mandatory and ILM training packages) are now delivered in-house and staff are actively encouraged to participate with this training initiative. Skills for Life (in Numeracy,

Literacy and IT) are also provided to compliment these training programmes. This falls in line with Training and Development within Street Scene.

### **Playgrounds per 1,000 children shows an increase**

Over the last 2 years Wakefield has installed a number of new play areas (predominantly as a result of the Playbuilder initiative); however, a further number of old play areas have been decommissioned keeping the total number (129 play areas 2011/12) close to the figure in 2009/10 (125 play areas).

### **Output specification has improved since 2009/10**

Through product availability and cost of the product, Wakefield has reduced the amount of pesticide application on Horticultural features; therefore the change in score is in line with new practices.

### **Community/customer surveys taken have improved since 2009/10**

2010 consultation satisfaction result responds to the following question in consultation for the Greenspace Strategy:

“How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of these types of Green Space:

- Country Parks and Nature Reserves
- Woodlands
- Green Corridors
- Public Parks
- Church Grounds
- Sports Fields
- Recreation Areas
- Amenity Areas
- Childrens Play Areas
- Allotments

For the record, in the 2010 survey there were 479 responses to a randomly distributed postal questionnaire.

In 2011/12 we completed the APSE Customer Satisfaction Survey (200 submissions returned to APSE HQ).

### **Sustainable Planting**

To assist with the financial restrictions facing public services, Wakefield Street Scene developed a programme whereby we replaced traditional seasonal bedding schemes with sustainable planting. To compliment this approach we have also promoting the ‘Incredible Edible’ initiative with partner organisations at appropriate sites throughout the district which has raised awareness on the benefits of community growing and sustainability. As part of this Street Scene were involved with the design, implementation and maintenance of two major projects within Wakefield City Centre this year; Jubilee and Coronation Gardens which are indeed the jewel in Wakefield Crown.

## **Ezytreev**

Street Scene has invested into a new risk based proactive surveying system for our Arboriculture and Forestry sections. The system stores comprehensive tree data, which has improved on our current systems, further added benefits are through integrations with MapInfo, Customer Relations Manager and Agresso (the Councils financial management system) which has made it a more flexible and more efficient method.

From a customer focus perspective this means our experienced Arboriculture and Forestry staff can deal with enquiries from members of the public, quickly and more efficiently, this has in turn increased customer satisfaction for the services they provide.

Street Scene continues to work with our Planning Department, sharing our systems and its benefits, which has assisted them with the collection of data relating to Tree Preservation Orders.

To complement this system the Urban Tree Policy (including Wakefield's Tree Risk Management Document) was drafted and approved and has now been successfully implemented, all Arboricultural Supervisors have successfully undertaken QTRA Training to support the management of the Urban Tree Policy in conjunction with the Ezytreev system placing safety first.

## **Playground Development Team**

Following budget reductions Street Scene Grounds Maintenance service faced the potential of 5 redundancies, Wakefield's Street Scene Service is committed to retaining employees and as an alternative to the 5 redundancies an income generation team was established (Playground Development Team). The 5 members of staff carry out hard and soft landscaping work throughout the district. This team was involved as a Sub Contractor in the successful Dunderdale Playarea in Airedale, where they received compliments from the ROSPA inspector who said; the installation is "... **as good if not better than the professional playground installers.**"

## **Future areas of focus**

### **Forestry/Woodland**

Wakefield has a woodland cover of approximately 700 hectares, our Forestry Team have recently been successful - yet again for the fourth consecutive year - in securing FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) accreditation, as a way of taking the service forward we will be looking into a number of various initiatives and are currently exploring the potential income streams held within this asset through;

- Sustainable Biomass Fuel Production for a District Heating Scheme within Wakefield's City Centre - we are working closely with the Wakefield Council's Asset Management Team and Co2 Sense with a feasibility study for this project
- Carbon Trading – carbon footprint reduction through woodland creation in conjunction with the Woodland Carbon Code (sub-

division of the Forestry Commission). We have submitted 2 sites as part of a pilot scheme and await outcome

- Small scale harvesting (Scandinavian approach using tractor mounted harvesting head) of Wakefield's woodland asset to support potential District Heating Scheme or alternatively sell timber into the open market

Street Scene Grounds Maintenance Section will be looking into the benefits of reducing the amount of gang mowing by converting grassland to woodland and initial meetings with the Woodland Trust have already taken place, such practice will improve operational efficiencies as well as positively contributing towards environmental improvements.

### **Community Growing**

The Council is aware of the large range of benefits linked to Community Growing (physical and mental well-being etc) and we are actively encouraging participation through provision of existing allotments, however, we are now at the early stages of working closely with our Family Services Children's Centres and Public Health installing timber planters (using timber from our sustainable woodland) as a means of encouraging young people to engage with community growing and use this as a vehicle to address the wider determinants of the district.

### **Grounds Maintenance Fleet**

Reviewing and renewing fleet items (Ride on Mowers etc.) to ensure current changes and any future changes to frequency of maintenance are achievable.

## **Street Cleansing**

### **Most Improved Performer Finalist – Oxford City Council**

#### **Contact details**

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#### **Overview**

Oxford City Council employs over 1,200 people and aims to build a world class City for everyone. Oxford City Council employees support the City's communities with a range of services to promote and maintain Oxford's reputation as a world class City. Direct Services is a function of Oxford City Council and is responsible for the Council's front line services and employs over 550 people. Direct Services is responsible for, Street Cleansing, Waste and Recycling, Building Maintenance, Motor Transport and Vehicle Maintenance and Highways and Engineering.

To keep Oxford City's environment clean and welcoming for residents and visitors, Direct Services Streetscene service is primarily responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of Oxford's city centre, streets and estates. The service is also responsible for the investigation and removal of abandoned vehicles, cleansing public conveniences, managing markets, cleansing street furniture, graffiti removal, highway verges and hedges maintenance, shrub beds, deep cleansing, sheltered and communal block cleansing and Oxford city environmental improvement programmes including landscaping and garden design.

The Streetscene service employs over 110 front-line employees, which are supported by a management and support team of 10.

#### **Improvements made and good performance**

When measuring Direct Services Streetscene improvements and performance, it is important to understand the unique features that are specific to Oxford City Council. The Streetscene service covers 4,541 hectares of urban land, serves a population of 153,000 and continues to operate successfully with an estimated 9.5 million visitors per year.

Since their Fundamental Service Reviews (FSR) in 2009/10 and 2011/12, which focused on reducing costs and scoping service improvements, the Streetscene service successfully completed and adapted to a range of operational and service procedures in order to become efficient and more productive.

Since 2009/10, the service experienced a management restructure and developed and optimised operational areas; Urban, Suburban and Grounds Maintenance. Dependent on the cleansing requirements and service frequency of an area, differing work schedules are in operation. These schedules are in operation to ensure that the environment is maintained to the standards imposed by the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (COPLA), the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) and the Clean Neighbourhood Act 2005.

In 2011, the service introduced contractual annualised hours. Annualised hours were introduced to improve efficiency by taking advantage of the increased daylight hours available during summer periods. Between April and September, front line employees are contracted to 43 hours and between October and March, front line employees are contracted to 31 hours. The annualised hours also enabled to the service to reduce overtime payments, reduce the use of agency staff and enhance the levels of statutory work completed within agreed timeframes.

As a result of the FSR indicating that the city centre operations could be reduced to avoid over cleansing, the service utilised resources and increased operations in areas with higher than average deprivation levels to avoid neglect.

Behind the operational scenes, the Streetscene service invested resources into education and training for all employees. Education and training resources were invested in tool box talk material, enforcement, health and safety, NVQ's, IIP, one-to-ones appraisals, ISO:14001 and project management. These investments increased staff morale, enabled front line employees to approach their objectives with empowerment and enhanced service efficiencies and productivity.

The service also invested in new operational machinery, PPE and uniforms. The service invested in new sweepers, a multipurpose tractor, wood chippers, chewing gum removal machines and everyday handheld equipment. The investments have created an atmosphere of behavioural change and helped improve service efficiencies and front line staff productivity.

In order to become more efficient and underlying the service improvements and good performance engineered by the Streetscene service, an open and performance based culture has been developed. The service has made full use of all Direct Services policies, such as the absenteeism and training policies to help improve productivity. Since 2009/10, the service reviewed and restructured its key performance indicators and continues to actively measure performance aligning their service standards. The service developed performance indicators for the following information:

- Percentage of Abandoned Vehicles Investigated within 24 Hours
- Percentage of Abandoned Vehicles Subsequently Removed within 24 Hours
- Percentage of Satisfaction with Street Cleansing
- Percentage of Streets meeting the National Quality Standard
- Percentage of Streets with Litter that Fall Below Grade B (NI195)
- Percentage of Streets with Detritus that Fall Below Grade B (NI195)
- Percentage of Streets with Graffiti that Fall Below Grade B (NI195)
- Percentage of Streets with Fly Posting that Fall Below Grade B (NI195)
- Percentage of Fly Tipping Incidents Cleared within 3 Days
- Percentage of Fly Posting Incidents Cleared within 2 Days.

#### **Future areas of focus**

- Install and monitor the performance of fifteen solar compacting bins.
- Install and work in partnership with local businesses regarding cigarette butt bins and their surrounding areas cleanliness.

- Wash streets and monitor the frequency of chewing gum disposal by the public in the suburban retail areas of Oxford.
- Introduce mobile handhelds and Incorporate and adapt the LEQs Pro Surveying System into current Direct Service reporting systems.
- Trial new, innovative and relevant methods of operating a Street Cleansing service.
- Purchase and install gritting and snow plough attachments for mechanical sweepers.
- Commence a three year project of gating HRA alley ways in order to reduce fly tipping, enhance alley way cleanliness and empower residents.

## **Transport Operations & Vehicle Maintenance**

### **Most improved performer finalist – Durham County Council**

#### **Contact details**

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#### **Overview**

Durham County Council was formed into a Unitary Authority in April 2009, merging seven districts. This has resulted in the Fleet/Transport department undergoing a number of structural and operational reviews to promote efficiency along with meeting the challenging austerity demands. The new Durham County Council has approx 18,800 employees and currently operates a fleet strength of approx 3,100 (Vehicles, Plant & Equipment), across three (3) Main Area based workshops throughout the County (North, South & East).

#### **Improvements made and good performance**

The County Council has focused upon continuous development of the former District Councils with respect to maintaining quality standards across the Fleet service including achieving ISO18001:2007 accreditation, sustaining Investors in People Accreditation and ISO9001:2008. Significant focus has been on overall whole fleet management, from procurement of assets with regard to standardisation of the fleet, through to service delivery whilst constantly reviewing and examining maintenance costs and working practices in pursuit of reduction of costs to our service users whilst maintaining vehicle safety and road worthiness standards.

Specifically emphasis has gone into whole fleet standardisation, across the variety range which includes: Ford Fiestas, Connects & Transit range, which is complimented by the Council obtaining a Ford Commercial Repair Agent status which has provided us with full in-house warranty capability reducing costs and downtime along with providing a saving on man hours and transportation costs as a result of not having to travel to & from a Ford dealership for warranty rectification work.

#### **PI 20 – Minibuses up to 17 Seater**

The contract hire maintenance charges have reduced by 58%, compared to that of the previous period which is as a result of standardisation of vehicle procurement, strict adherence to manufacturers maintenance intervals along with investing in training to facilitate the in house provision of specialised work such as air conditioning and LOLER/PUWER weight tests.

#### **PI 28 – Vans up to 3500kgs GVW.**

The Council has ensured that by standardisation of the vehicles within this fleet category along with ensuring that all maintenance is undertaken on the basis of manufacturers service intervals and the utilising manufacturers standard repair

times, all maintenance costs are strictly managed with a view to ensuring that workshop productivity is maximised.

PI 29 – Trucks & Tippers up to 3500kgs GVW.

Standardisation across the fleet range along with ensuring that uniform working practices across the authority are implemented along with the provision of fit for purpose base vehicles, manufacturers service intervals and manufacturers standard repair times have contributed to a reduction of costs.

PI 30 & PI 121 (Gp-04) – Vans, Trucks & Tippers 3501kgs to 7500kgs GVW.

Standardisation across the fleet range along with ensuring that uniform working practices across the authority are implemented along with the provision of fit for purpose base vehicles, manufactures service intervals and manufacturers standard repair times have contributed to a reduction of costs. In addition, across the wider Authority Area workshops, practices have been streamlined along with ensuring that product skill sets are fully embedded, including the provision of special tools & test equipment, with a view to ensuring that vehicles are based in workshops closest their operational locations, thus reducing environmental footprint, fuel and downtime.

NOTE: Annual maintenance cost per weighted vehicle, has been reduced also on average between PI-28 / PI-29 & PI-30 achieving 39% reduction in this reporting period.

PI 57 – Vans, Trucks & Tippers 7501kgs to 18000kgs GVW.

Standardisation across the fleet range along with ensuring that uniform working practices across the authority are implemented along with the provision of fit for purpose base vehicles, manufactures service intervals and manufacturers standard repair times have contributed to a reduction of costs. In addition, across the wider Authority Area workshops, practices have been streamlined along with ensuring that product skill sets are fully embedded, including the provision of special tools & test equipment, with a view to ensuring that vehicles are based in workshops closest their operational locations, thus reducing environmental footprint, fuel and downtime.

During the procurement process there is specific focus on ensuring that suppliers provide maintenance recommendations with regard to servicing and warranty including the provision of specific product training to assist in the full life cost evaluation process, thus ensuring that only cost effective vehicle are procured.

PI 59 – Minibuses up to 17 Seater

Standardisation across the fleet range, fit for purpose base vehicle comparisons and fuel efficient technology, have contributed to reducing the costs, including examining maintenance costs and working practices with a view to reduce overall running costs to the service users. In addition, across the wider Authority Area workshops, practices have been streamlined along with the synchronising of product skill sets, including provision of special tools & test equipment, with a view to basing vehicles in workshop areas closest the operational locations, thus reducing environmental footprint, fuel and downtime.

PI 68 – Number of days hire vehicles' used (per vehicle on fleet) to cover for vehicles in wksp.

With a view to promoting efficiency including workshop productivity and fleet availability, vehicle turn round within the workshops is strictly managed, however where issues do arise a small pool fleet of vans is made available for the user departments and therefore encourage the maximisation of fleet utilisation.

PI 74 – Percentage of Vehicles Serviced within 7 days of Schedule:

The Authority has a comprehensive maintenance and inspection regime for all its vehicles and plant. The basis of this is the Operators Licence requirements and manufacturers recommendations. A three trigger notification programme is in force, where each user department within the Authority receives notification of the maintenance plan for each of its asset for the forth coming year. In addition to the annual plan the user department receives a service notification three weeks prior to the actual maintenance or inspection date (at the same time the workshop is notified to facilitate workshop loading). This is followed up on a weekly basis prior to the actual appointment day.

PI 78 – Good Practice and Consultation:

All employees driving Council owned or hired vehicles must attend a Driver Induction Programme, which includes both a theory induction where they will receive a copy of the Driver & Operators Handbook Policy and undertake a practical driving assessment. In addition all drivers are required to present both parts of their driving licence to enable it to be checked with regard to category entitlements, following which, the Council performs Driver Licence authentication checks every six(6) months for ALL drivers. This process must be completed before any driver is permitted to drive Authority owned or hired vehicles, which includes Car & car-derived, Van, LGV, PCV and 4x4 vehicles. All drivers of Minibus & MPV must be MiDAS Standard & Accessible certificated, irrespective of licence category. The Driver Training Programme is managed and delivered independently through our Strategic Fleet Training Officer who in addition offers and similar and driver CPC courses to other Local Authority's under a partnership support regime.

The County Council operates a NIL Defect Reporting system across its full range of vehicles & plant, which is closely monitored by Strategic Fleet.

The Council operates with a Strategic Fleet Team who in association with the County & Area Fleet Managers ensures that all legislative, statutory and Operator Licence Regulations, including internal Policy & Procedures are complied with. These are continually monitored and frequently referenced throughout the year.

The Council maintains a documented Road Risk Policy (RRP) and Corporate Transport Policy (CTP), detailing its procedures relating to all Authority owned or hired vehicles, drivers and other users (including the procurement of vehicles).

The Strategic Fleet Team engage with all the Authority's stakeholders through meetings, quality circle forums and tool-box talks to operatives, with a view to deliver an efficient customer service and enhance their operating effectiveness. In addition, procurement meetings are orchestrated with the user groups, to confirm the technical specifications, tailored to their requirements and aligned with the

asset replacement programme, to ensure that the effective 'fit for purpose' acquisition of Vehicle, Plant & Equipment is achieved for the operator.

The Council actively promotes a sustaining, efficient and environmental friendly policy with a view to reducing the carbon footprint. The Council endeavours to pursue the use of fuel efficient engines Euro 5, (with focus towards Euro 6 late in 2013), investigate alternative fuels, Hybrid, LPG & Electric powered vehicles. This includes product demonstration visits on new and future technology designs and following order placement, mid-build production visits are undertaken to QC & design check throughout the build with specialist acquisitions, in association with our ISO 9001:2008 accreditation standards.

PI 115 – Number of parking tickets/notices per 100 council vehicles.

All drivers are informed of their responsibilities during their initial Driver & Vehicle Operating Policy training along with subsequent refresher training, that all driving offences whether (parking or speeding) will be the sole responsibility of the driver and furthermore will be rigorously investigated by the Strategic Fleet Management Team and where necessary disciplinary action taken.

#### Future Area of Focus

- Continuous focus on reducing Downtime of Vehicles as this will be critical to facilitating future fleet reductions
- Continuous focus on reducing Maintenance Costs by targeting none fair wear and tear issues specifically with respect to Insurance claims and avoidable damage
- Encourage the maximisation of fleet utilisation by services sharing vehicles.

## **Best performer finalist; Conwy County Borough Council**

### **Contact details**

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### **Overview**

Conwy County Borough Council's Fleet Services sits within Environment and Technical Services and is responsible for maintaining, repairing and servicing the authority's 350 vehicles and over 900 items of plant. Fleet Services has been involved with APSE for the last 4 years and have been shortlisted as a Most Improved Performer each year. Fleet Services strive for continuous improvement in data collection methods to ensure a comprehensive annual return to APSE and use the Performance Reports to identify areas for improvement.

### **Improvements made and good performance**

#### **Communication and servicing**

Fleet Services prides itself on its good relationship with the Authority's departments. Quarterly Transport User Group meetings known as CTUG are held between representatives from all relevant Council services and Fleet Services. CTUG enables any new legislation, procedures or updates to be communicated to the wider audience and gives the group an opportunity to raise and discuss any Fleet related issues or concerns.

The authority has a comprehensive planned maintenance and inspection regime for all vehicles according to the following schedule:

- HGV every 6 weeks
- Light vehicles up to 3.5 tonne every 13 weeks
- Minibuses every 9 weeks

The good communication between Fleet Services and other departments ensures that vehicles are brought into the workshop for inspections/services on time. The service schedule is emailed to managers alerting them to the date of an approaching service and they are given a time frame of 1 week to present the vehicle.

If a vehicle is not presented for servicing or inspections on time, their fuel key will be made void and the driver will not be able to obtain fuel from any of the 6 fuelling stations located throughout the County. Once the vehicle has been presented for service or inspection the fuel key is then revalidated. This method provides a further incentive to present vehicles on time for servicing and inspections.

### **Training and vehicle checks**

Fleet Services operate an in-house Training Centre which provides Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) courses and other courses such as; daily vehicle checking, road awareness and accident reporting, post-accident assessment and assessment drives. These courses make sure our drivers know how to drive efficiently, how to ensure their vehicles are roadworthy and how to report any defects.

Quarterly vehicle gate checks are carried out by an independent contractor accompanied by our Training and Enforcement Officer who inspect vehicle safety and vehicle log books to ensure daily vehicle checks are carried out.

Our dedication to taking a proactive approach to maintaining our Fleet and training our drivers to look after their vehicles has led to a reduction in our costs associated with damage and repairs and has meant that we have not been issued with any PG9 notices for the past 3 years.

### **Vehicle Monitoring Systems**

Fleet Services have recently been involved in the installation of vehicle monitoring system on some of the Authority's Fleet. Part of this has allowed our training centre to produce monthly Speed awareness and vehicle idling reports that are used by the relevant departments to identify areas for improvement.

### **Quality Assurance and Customer Service**

Fleet Services has retained ISO 9001 Quality Standard accreditation since May 2010 after implementing a robust Quality Management System that outlines how we deliver a professional service to all our customers. Environment and Technical Services have maintained the Customer Service Excellence standard since March 2011 again proving our dedication to a quality service delivery.

Our well-structured team and regular team meetings mean we have a high level of staff morale within Fleet Services this has helped us to maintain a low level of sickness absence for the past 4 years.

As well as APSE benchmarking completed annually allowing us to share best practice with Local Authorities across the UK. Fleet Services are also part of the All Wales Transport benchmarking group; this comprises all 22 Welsh local authorities.

### **Future areas of focus**

In 2013 Fleet Services will produce monthly data for the departments who use the service in order to help them manage their fleet in the most cost effective way.

Fleet Services intend to upgrade the current fuel management system to provide a more reliable system to ensure accurate data and to assist in achieving further fuel efficiency and savings.

Fleet Services will continue to promote the courses provided by the fully JAAPT and ROSPA accredited training centre.

## **Most improved performer finalist; East Dunbartonshire Council**

### **Contact details**

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### **Overview**

East Dunbartonshire Council is a small authority situated to the north of Glasgow. The fleet team has responsibility for the management of all Fleet related activity including Fleet Policy, Specification and Procurement, Maintenance, Hires, Insurance, Operator Licensing, Training, Social Transport Operations, Fuel, Communications & Telematics, and Financial Management of the Council's fleet business.

The Fleet team has worked tirelessly over the last 16 years to develop and deliver a fit for purpose efficient and professional range of services for customers. Through this time there have been many reviews and improvements made in a drive to deliver better services, reduce costs and improve efficiency across the fleet and front line services.

Work undertaken thorough this time has included but not exclusive to the following;

- o Development of Structures sufficient to meet the legal operation of a large commercial fleet
- o Review of working arrangements, Terms & conditions enabling recruitment and retention of quality staff
- o Investment in Infrastructure, Technology and associated Training
- o Introduction of in house Paint & Bodyshop facility
- o Implementation of an Asset Management Plan for all fleet assets
- o HAVS management & testing across the Council
- o Carbon reduction initiatives

In addition to the initiatives Identified, the Fleet team is engaged in partnership working, providing advice on Service reviews and Strategic working groups with plans to rationalise the Councils operational depots into one new site.

The Fleet Teams efforts were recently recognised with the Authority being awarded the "Transport News - Local Authority Fleet Operator of the Year for 2013" at a ceremony in Glasgow.

### **Improvements made and good performance**

Work undertaken in this field has included the following;

- o Introduction of the Council's own in house body repair shop including commercial paint oven. This has led to all but the most major crash damage being approved by the council's insurers and being undertaken in house. With significant cost savings and reduction in vehicle downtime.
- o Management of whole life costs, including end of life / Lease expiry and disposal process. This ensures the Council does not incur heavy penalties upon return, with remedial work undertaken through the vehicles life in

order to ensure vehicles remain in a good state of repair throughout their operational life.

- o Investment in equipment which has led to the Introduction of Heavy fabrication and body overhauls on Refuse trucks and Recycling vehicles. This work would previously have been carried out by third party specialist contractors, with the associated expensive hourly charge rates and lengthy periods of downtime.
- o Investment in vehicle diagnostics software and associated training for the benefit of fleet customers, significantly reducing downtime and costs.

#### Legal Operation of the Fleet

- o Restructure of the Fleet Team with the introduction of a Fleet Compliance Team responsible for:-
  1. Enforcement
  2. Driver Assessment & Training
  3. Bi annual Licence checking
  4. Tranman Fleet Management system
  5. Statutory Operator Licence compliance
  6. Digital Tachographs & Drivers Hours
  7. Vehicle Insurance & Accident Management
  8. Tyre Management
  9. Vehicle Telematics & Tracking reporting & Communications
- o Review of staff terms and conditions in order to meet the changing needs of customers, including extended shift working and incorporating public holiday working and 365 day call out rotas into employees' terms.
- o Revised pay & grading model in order to recruit and retain suitably qualified competent, quality technicians.
- o Introduction of a new Telematics system across the entire Council Fleet. All vehicles and large plant are now fitted with Telematics and come with Driver ID, immobilisation and a host of standard and exception reporting. The Council is in the best possible position to manage its resources, be it a vehicle, item of plant or Driver.

#### Fleet Replacement & Funding

- o In recent years there has been a revision of the Council's Fleet Replacement Programme and incorporation into an overall Fleet Asset Management Plan. The plan has led to a reduction in operating life for vehicles and plant in a drive to maximise efficiency and reduce overall operating costs.
- o The Council's vehicle and plant fleet is procured via operational leases in order to minimise the impact of funding council assets, minimise impact on service budgets.

#### Fleet Technology & Advances

The Council's fleet has a major impact on the environment whilst in operation. In recognition of this fact the Fleet Management service is continually investigating methods of mitigating and reducing the effects of the Vehicle & Plant fleet to minimise the impact on the Council's Carbon Footprint.

In recent years work undertaken in this field has included the following measures:-

1. Introduction of Stop Start Ecodynamics technology for cars and Hybrid Drive vans with a 10-15% reduction in emissions and associated Fuel savings in partnership with Transport Scotland.
2. Introduction of small SUV (on demand 4x4) vehicles replacing existing 2wd cars previously substituted with Short term hire large 4X4 vehicles through the winter months for Social Services.
3. Introduction of Electric Pool cars and charging points in conjunction with Transport Scotland, to minimise the use of Grey Fleet in operational areas.
4. Restriction on vehicle mileages to prevent unauthorised journeys and use – with all but essential callout and emergency response vehicles being parked at Council sites out with working hours.
5. Annual Fleet Replacement programme in operation to maximise the opportunity to refresh the fleet and keep up to date with advances in technology, legislation and industry best practise.
6. Replacement multi - functional Gritting Fleet – benefiting from Exhaust Gas Recirculation whilst others benefit from SCR again Euro 5 & EEV Technologically compliant. These vehicles deliver a reduction in NOx & PMs emitted into the atmosphere of between 60 – 80% based on previous vehicle specifications.
7. On-going replacement of Refuse Trucks and recycling fleet in addition to Social Transport & Education buses and minibuses fitted with Euro 5 and EEV technologically compliant engines.

#### Partnership at work

The Fleet Service plays a major supporting role, in improvement of the Council's front line services. In recent years the fleet team has worked in partnership, advising on service reviews in relation to fleet configuration, specification enhancements, legislation and operational best practise in order to maximise efficiency and overall fleet performance.

#### Work in Progress

With the introduction of the Strategic Waste Review and associated best practise the fleet team has been working in partnership with internal colleagues, Zero Waste Scotland and Resource Futures In an effort to shape the Waste Service to deliver the necessary changes required. It is anticipated that the work undertaken will future proof the operation for the next seven to ten years.

The entire waste & recycling fleet is scheduled for replacement with deliveries anticipated in March and April of 2013. This will represent a significant on-going investment for the Council's Waste Services fleet.

#### Managing the Risks

Health & Safety of our employees is of paramount importance to the Council. In recent years there has been a major drive to better manage and address the impact of Vibration at Work for employees engaged in the use of hand held plant & tools.

Given that within East Dunbartonshire Council, Fleet Management has full responsibility for the procurement, maintenance and management of all fleet assets, the responsibility for developing a suitable solution fell within the Fleet teams remit.

Following a lengthy consultation process with fleet customers and an unsuccessful trial utilising an external service provider, the decision was taken to procure the specialist measuring equipment and undertake all measurement, tagging and calibrations in house.

The Fleet service has recently procured REACTEC HAVmeters and associated software in order to allow a full range of electronic recording and exposure reports negating the need for volumes of paper based manual records to be maintained.

The Council has also taken additional steps to minimise the risk associated with large vehicles reversing with the introduction of a range of measures including a three yearly refresher programme for Banksman Training, revision of all Tool Box Talks, Risk Assessments and Safe Working Practices, and the standard fitment of reverse radar detection systems across the Waste, Recycling, Roads & Bus Fleet in addition to Reverse Cameras.

#### Fleet Related Training

Training is a key measure of any successful Transport operation, and none more so than that of a complex organisation such as a Local Authority.

East Dunbartonshire's Fleet section provides a mix of both in house and external training and instruction in order to ensure the Council's drivers are kept up to date with Legislation, industry best practise and remain competent in undertaking their day to day business.

The Council has been working in conjunction with Glasgow Training group for around two years, running weekly in house Drivers Certificate of Professional Competence Courses in the Council's own training suite. The Council is ahead of schedule for meeting the deadline of September 2014.

#### Fuel Infrastructure Review

As with any large fleet operator one of the major concerns is the management and costs associated with fuelling the fleet. The focus tends to be around reducing the Carbon Footprint, maximising MPG and efficiencies, and embracing technology in order to squeeze the last drop out of each tank.

Like any fleet the Council looks to minimise idling, cutting out abortive mileage though smarter routing of trucks etc however an area that is often taken for granted is the resilience of stocks and deliveries should the worst actually happen. East Dunbartonshire like other businesses, found themselves in this position two years ago following an exceptionally long period of poor weather, where fuel stocks ran dangerously low.

Thankfully the Council got the deliveries prior to having to ration or suspend non-essential services however the decision was taken to undertake a review to address this concern.

In 2011 an additional 30,000 Litre combination tank was installed at the Council's Hilton Depot, giving sufficient stocks to last around four weeks without the need to restock should the situation arise again.

#### On-going Investment in Vehicle and plant fleet

At a time where a significant number of businesses have taken the decision to sweat fleets and squeeze further years beyond their economic life, often to the detriment of reliability and disregard for whole life costs, East Dunbartonshire Council continues to progress with its Fleet Replacement Policy & programme.

In total, over the past eighteen months the Council has replaced 155 vehicles and items of plant with a capital cost of 4.174 million pounds excluding VAT.

The vehicles are traditionally funded via Operational leases however two million pounds has been set aside to offset this spend. The entire vehicle & plant fleet is maintained in house.

#### **Future areas of focus**

Having concluded the recent Waste Service review, the Fleet Management service is currently working in conjunction with the Council's Assets and Property Services Team as part of an overall Depot rationalisation exercise and move to a smarter way of working for the future.

It is anticipated that when complete the Council will save significantly through rationalisation and centralisation of a large number of smaller Council depots and buildings.

The Council is in the process of procuring a new site and embarking on an exercise to rationalise and relocate to a new purpose built state of the art super depot.

This is a major commitment to the front line services provided and is in recognition of the quality work done by the relevant teams.

The new site when completed, will house the Council's entire front line fleet of vehicles and plant as well as the construction of a purpose built vehicle, plant, fabrication and paint & bodyshop facility, in addition to a large fuel site and bespoke vehicle wash and steam cleaning area.