



Briefing 08/27

May 2008

# Highways and street lighting workshop: making efficiencies & public value

This briefing provides a summary of the group discussion at the APSE roads, highways and street lighting seminar in March 2008. It is provided to local authority chief executives, council leaders, and all APSE highways and street lighting contacts.

## Key Issues

- The challenges and opportunities with making efficiencies in highways and street lighting services
- The role of these services in achieving public value
- Please email any good practice case studies on shared services to [djohns@apse.org.uk](mailto:djohns@apse.org.uk)

## 1. Introduction

At the APSE roads, highways and street lighting seminar in March 2008, there was a workshop on making efficiencies and public value. This briefing paper provides a summary of the discussion.

## 2. Making efficiencies

The Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 settlement of just one per cent overall, coupled with greater demands placed by efficiency savings targets, have left local authority services struggling to find innovative ways of delivering ever improving results for ever less cash. The workshop explored some of the opportunities and challenges associated with achieving efficiencies and these are summarised in the table below.

Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Shared services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other local authorities</li> <li>• Private organisations</li> </ul> <p>Sharing back office functions</p> <p>Reduce duplication &amp; removal of client/contractor split</p> <p>Increasing income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging</li> <li>• Work for private developers</li> </ul> <p>Asset management</p> <p>Smarter procurement</p> <p>Review of standards</p> <p>Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economies of scale</li> <li>• Buying power</li> </ul> <p>Space utilisation</p>	<p>Perceived threat to jobs</p> <p>Change management</p> <p>Having the required resources up front</p> <p>Shared services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political differences</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Thinking in silos</li> <li>• Self protection</li> <li>• Structural/systems</li> <li>• Performance frameworks</li> <li>• Common objectives?</li> <li>• Geographical</li> <li>• Winners &amp; losers?</li> </ul> <p>Skills shortages</p> <p>Legal issues</p> <p>Lack of clear expectations/targets/knowledge sharing/forward planning</p> <p>Not knowing the consequences</p>

### 3. Public value

High quality roads and street lighting and effective winter maintenance have a huge impact on public perception of their neighbourhood, public safety and on reducing crime and the fear of crime. The workshop discussed how highways and street lighting can contribute to public value and this included:

- Local economy
- Local supply chains
- Skills training and jobs
- Local environment
- Flexibility to respond to changing climate
- The role of neighbourhood managers and local area forums
- Setting standards for the community such as health and safety

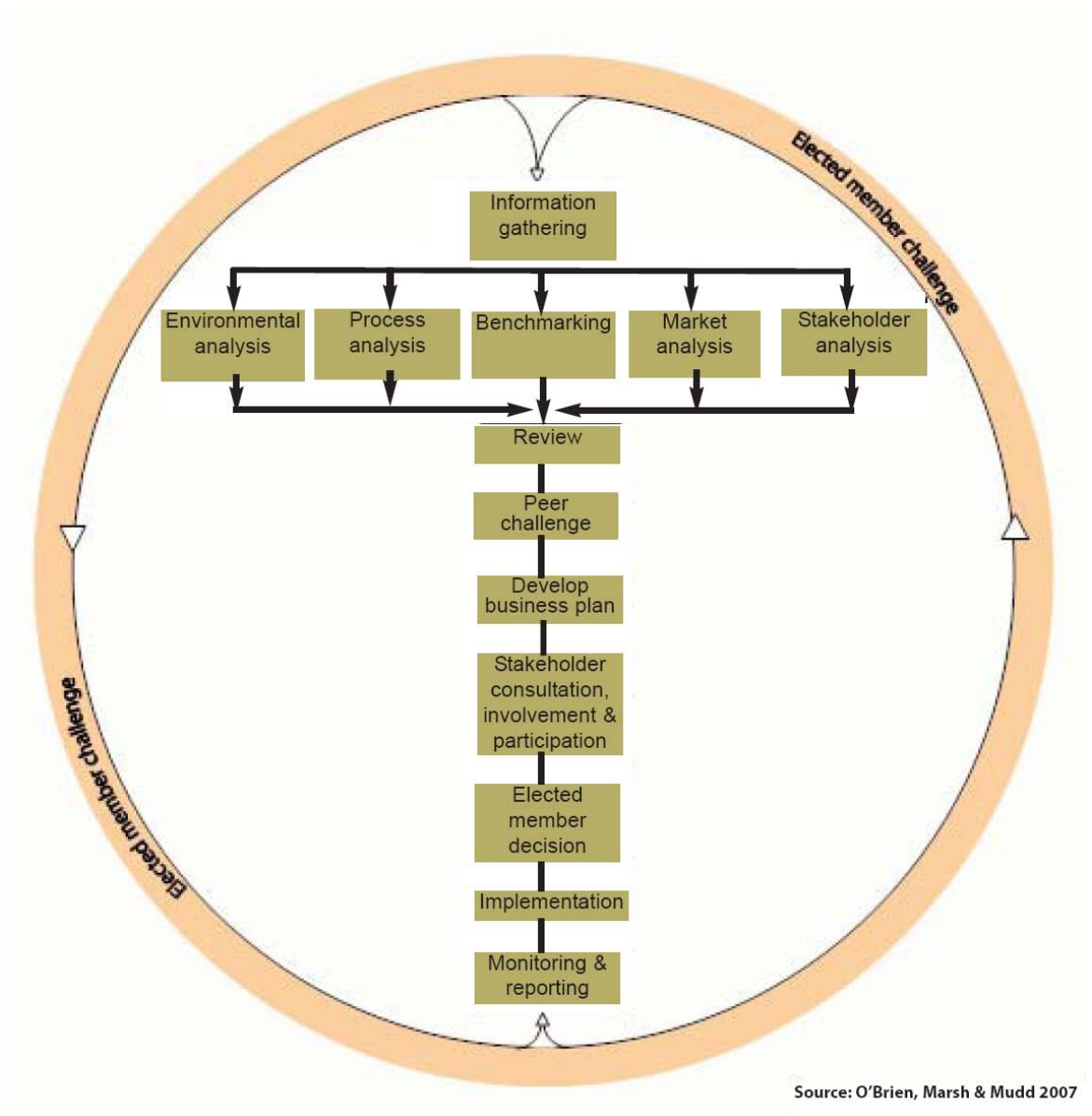
The group thought that communication with the public is key to perceptions, as is improving the effectiveness of services rather than simply focusing on cost savings.

### 4. APSE comment

It is APSE's view that when making efficiencies, that public value is not overlooked and the impact of front line services on the local economy, environment, jobs and supply chains is taken into account.

APSE has developed an improvement model for local authorities to use when testing the competitiveness of services:

### The APSE improvement model - A competitiveness continuum



Source: O'Brien, Marsh & Mudd 2007

This is part of the APSE publication, Competitive Continuum. The full publication is available from clicking on the following link: <http://www.apse.org.uk/membership/pdfs/e-publications/Competitiveness%20continuum-Aug07.pdf>

APSE will be producing an e-publication on shared services for highways and street lighting this summer and we are seeking good practice case studies from local authorities to include in the publication. Please contact Debbie Johns at the APSE office or email: [djohns@apse.org.uk](mailto:djohns@apse.org.uk) if you would like to be involved in this.

Debbie Johns  
Principal Advisor