



membership resources

## State of the Market Survey 2008

### Local Authority Transport Services



**Briefing 08/65  
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# Local Authority Transport Services

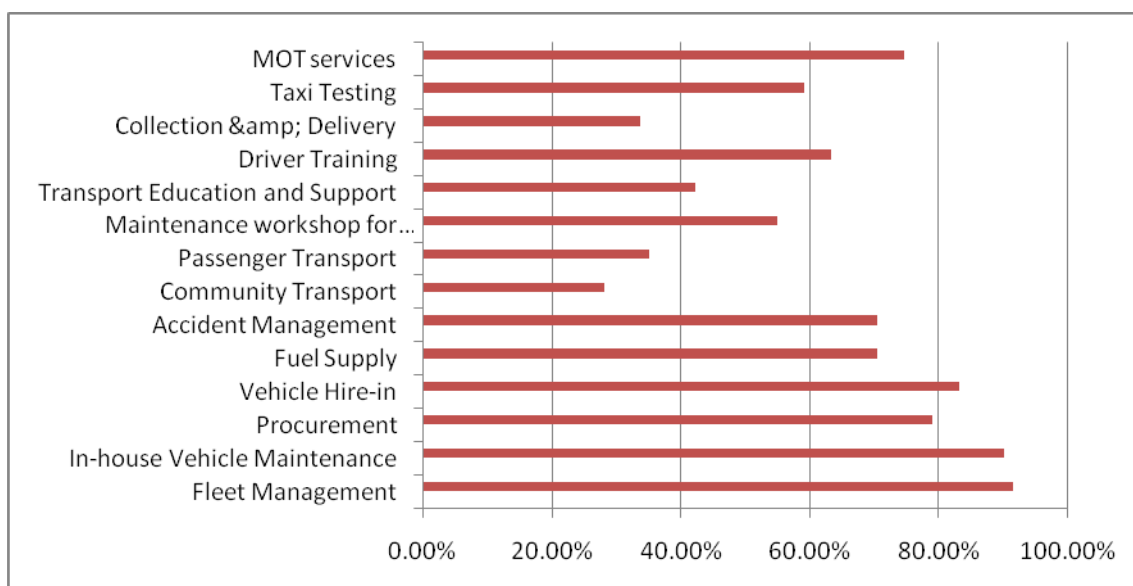
## State of the Market 2008

APSE conducted an on-line survey during November 2008. A series of questions were asked covering attitudes to the issues currently facing transport and vehicle maintenance services, the operation of these services and challenges for the future. Over 70 responses were received from local authorities throughout the UK. This report identifies the key findings of the survey.

### Results from the survey

#### 1) Provision of transport services

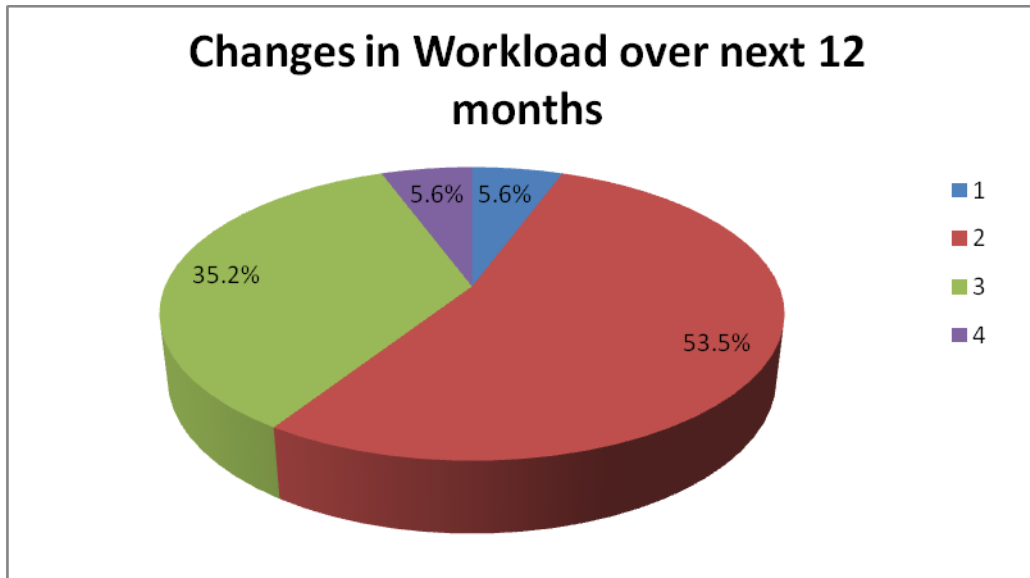
Members were asked which of the following services were provided by the local authority transport department:



As shown above, most authorities provide a fleet management service, 91.5%, and an in-house vehicle maintenance service, 90.1%. 78.9% of sections were responsible for procurement of vehicles and 83.1% for a vehicle hire in service. Only 28.2% of the authorities responding had responsibility for community transport within the local authority area and 35.2% responsibility for passenger transport. A number of authorities are also providing additional services such as compliance to legislation, fleet enforcement and driver assessments.

## 2) Workloads within the service

The following pie chart shows how the members view the workload of the transport service developing in 2009.



**1= Increase significantly 2= Increase 3= Stay the same 4= Decrease**

The majority of respondents – 59.1% - expect the workload for the service to increase but only 5.6% expect this to be a significant increase. The areas where workloads are expected to increase include policy and compliance, increased recycling fleet, carbon reduction requirements. Another perceived cause of increased workload is larger fleet sizes due to local government reorganisation and one authority is currently investigating the possibility of managing the fleet of a local housing association. 5.6% of respondents expect the workload to decrease, but not by a significant margin. The remainder, 35.2%, expect the workload to remain static.

However, none of the respondents expected their personal workload to decrease at all and only 21.2% expected it to remain at the same level. Some of the reasons for the increase in personal workloads are procurement and asset management, increases in fleet sizes and issues relating to concessionary travel, sustainable bus services and the development of community transport.

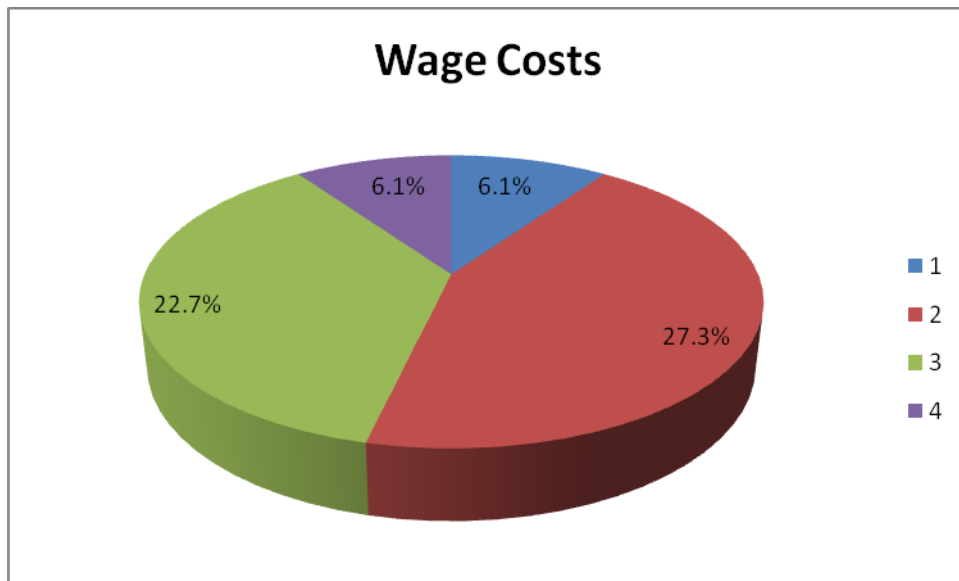
## 3) Financing Local Authority Transport

74.2% of transport services included in the survey purchased fleet items from revenue. Where this was not possible and leasing arrangements were applicable 47% use operating leases and 37.9% use finance leasing. Almost half of the respondents, 45.5% expect the transport budget to remain static over the next 12 months with 33.3% expecting an increased budget and 21.2% anticipating a budget reduction.

#### 4) Job evaluation

- 66.7% have completed job evaluation and wage costs have been affected as follows:-
  - 6.1% Increased significantly
  - 27.3% Increased
  - 22.7% stayed the same
  - 6.1% decreased

None of the responding authorities reported a significant decrease in wage costs.



**1= Increased significantly 2= Increased 3= Stayed the same 4= Decreased**

#### 5) Staffing

Members were asked whether they were experiencing problems recruiting and retaining staff and the results were extremely balanced. 49.2% of respondents responded yes with 50.8% not having any recruitment and retention problems.:

The majority of respondents, 70.8% reported acceptable levels of staff absence. Some thought this was due to the introduction of improved absence management systems. Those with high levels of sickness absence attributed this to the effects of long term sickness within a small, ageing workforce.

66.2% are now running apprenticeship schemes with most authorities having between 1 and 4 apprentices. However, one respondent currently has 10 apprentices and another is looking to establish an apprenticeship scheme over the next 12 months.

## **6) Service provision**

90.9% expect the transport service to remain in-house over the next 12 months. The remaining respondents reported that some services are already outsourced or are currently under review or are about to be market tested.

56.9% currently selling services outside the local authority, such as MOT testing for the public and limited repair services on HGV's and minibuses, but the majority of external work is on a small scale. 3.1% are not expecting this to continue on a long-term basis. Only 18.5% of respondents do not currently sell services outside the authority and are not considering it or expect to do so in the near future.

The main areas of growth for transport and fleet maintenance service providers were perceived to be waste and recycling, driver training and shared services/partnerships. Other possible areas include supported and community transport, fleet management and maintenance, policy and compliance, warranty work and MOT services.

Many of the respondents saw a possible service reduction due to a general reduction in Council services, reduction in fleet sizes and a decreasing procurement role. Other areas where work may decrease are Highway maintenance, vehicle maintenance and external work.

## The Association for Public Service Excellence

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular advisory groups, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The advisory groups are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Advisory groups are a free service included as part of your authorities membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE advisory group meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area please email [enquiries@apse.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@apse.org.uk).

Our national advisory groups include:-

- Efficiencies, procurement and service transformation
- Building cleaning
- Citizen engagement
- Local authority, police and fire authority partnerships
- Community safety and security
- Housing management, construction and building maintenance
- Parks, horticultural and ground maintenance
- Roads, highways and street lighting
- Social care
- Leisure management and community venues
- Vehicle maintenance and transport operations
- Waste management, refuse collection and street cleansing
- Workforce strategy and employee relations