



# news update

*Welcome to the eleventh edition of the best value consultancy news update, a quarterly news sheet to keep clients and associate consultants informed of what we are undertaking and also our future projects.*

## Shared Legal Services

APSE and partner organisation Eversheds solicitors have been appointed to investigate the options for a shared approach to legal services between the district and borough authorities of a midland county. Provision ranges from a single legal executive and monitoring officer through to a fully operational legal department offering considerable scope for developing shared specialist legal support to the benefit of all councils.

## School meals - parents get their say

APSE best value consultancy is currently reviewing the school meals service for a large metropolitan authority. It is a normal aspect of the Consultancy that head-teachers are asked their views on the service, however this time surveys have extended to 5000 primary school parents and heads of governors. In addition focus groups have been held with school councils providing a detailed insight, not just into satisfaction with the current meal service but also into the various cultural attitudes towards food preparation.

This piece of survey work is an example of how surveying expertise built up over the last 18 months can add value to the consultancy work APSE carries out. As a stand alone exercise or as part of a wider review, an APSE survey utilising a range of methodologies from interviews to on-line surveys, can provide valuable information about end user perception and satisfaction. Survey work is surprisingly affordable and provides real time information from the people whose views really matter - the public.

## Building maintenance across the UK

APSE best value consultancy has recently secured 3 commissions to assist in reviews of building maintenance. These include a Scottish fire authority a Welsh housing service and an English County corporate buildings service. Covering the entire UK, the Consultancy is able to cover a diverse range of circumstances and deliver tailor made analysis specific to whichever region. In all cases, demonstrable value for money is a key requirement and our ability to provide defensible benchmarking enables any assessment to withstand the rigour of an external audit.

## Interim solutions continues to grow

APSE interim solutions has recently placed managers for catering, highways maintenance, waste services and building maintenance.

With over 100 interim managers now registered with APSE interim solutions from across the UK, we are able to deliver interim support across most services and to all locations.

## Working in partnership for service excellence

APSE best value consultancy is working with a leading software company to deliver optimisation management software for environmental services. Street cleansing and refuse collection both benefit from close control of the vehicle resource and combined with loading data allow for significant service improvements within existing budgets. The consultancy is keen to feedback the views of practitioners to its partner to try to ensure that software development accurately reflects the real needs of service providers and to move away from the tendency for big software companies to drive the agenda.

This is just one example of how the best value consultancy identifies and forges relationships with specialist providers to add value to the work it carries out and in turn to promote service improvement. Other examples include partnerships with organisations ranging from some of the UKs leading legal practices through specialist dining room and kitchen designers to providers of temporary staff.

## Job Evaluation - exploding the myths

Many local authorities are belatedly seeking to complete job evaluation and it has not been an easy exercise for many. Recent case law has moved the goalposts for some and created uncertainty as to what options are available in agreeing a settlement with employees. APSE best value consultancy has provided several authorities with workshop sessions to allow them to review their work, close off 'dead-ends' and focus the remaining exercise. As one happy client put it *"I'm delighted to say that everyone found it a most useful event"*.

To find out more about how the consultancy can help you, contact:

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# news update

Welcome to lifelong learning and development news update, a quarterly news sheet to keep our contacts informed.

Are you aware of all the issues in Waste Management that local authorities need to consider?

## New masterclass on Waste Management Issues, 17 March 2008 in Leeds

APSE and Walker Morris responded to the demands from local authorities by delivering no less than **24 Masterclasses** on the Clean Neighbourhoods Act.

Well, we are at it again!.....

.....currently developing a new Masterclass on the issues that authorities will need to consider on Waste Management such as:

- ♦ Waste Strategy 2007
- ♦ Direct and Variable charging for household and residual waste
- ♦ Waste Minimisation
- ♦ Joint Waste authorities
- ♦ Regulations on food waste, composting and animal bi-products
- ♦ Compulsory recycling of Waste and enforcement
- ♦ Emerging new technologies
- ♦ Health and Safety in the Waste industry

**APSE welcomes any case studies or information that authorities may want to provide and share with delegates. Please forward to [jmazzone@apse.org.uk](mailto:jmazzone@apse.org.uk)**

## Lessons Learned from Equal Pay Public course

We advised you what you needed to do - so what did you do?

Hot on the trail of our Masterclasses on Equal Pay, APSE is examining what steps local authorities have taken (and why), and looking at what has worked and what hasn't as a result.

We will be holding sessions discussing collated information from authorities on their preparation in response to the new legislation.

**18/1/08 Manchester is the next available date**

All those who participate will be given a copy of the survey results and analysis

## Managing Positive Attendance Public Course

Are you spending a significant amount of time on managing non attendance, preparing reports, dealing with Appeals internally and at Employment Tribunals?

**Did you know?.....**

Despite various government initiatives to get people back to work, the 2007 CIPD Absence Survey indicates that absence is on the rise for the first time in two years.

The specific figures for the Public Sector show:

- ♦ an increase of 0.2% on the previous year
- ♦ 10.3 days lost per employee
- ♦ the cost of absence at £732 per annum per employee.

## Next chance to attend "Delivering Efficiencies through Improved Attendance" is 11 January 2008 Manchester

.....and more member development

## What is on offer for elected members?

APSE has also designed a comprehensive range of skills workshops offering elected members a choice of personal development in the following areas:

- ♦ The Role of the Elected member and Frontline Councillor
- ♦ Chairing Committees
- ♦ Leadership
- ♦ Developing a Media Strategy
- ♦ Performance Management
- ♦ Shaping and Influencing Policy
- ♦ The Role of Scrutiny

Any of the sessions detailed for Elected Members can be delivered on a full day, morning, afternoon or evening session. APSE also provides on-going coaching and mentoring for elected members.

If you are interested in any of the courses mentioned in this newsletter of you require further information please e-mail [jmazzone@apse.org.uk](mailto:jmazzone@apse.org.uk) or [ebarrow@apse.org.uk](mailto:ebarrow@apse.org.uk) telephone 0161 772 1810, fax 0161 772 1811



# Forthcoming training courses

## Masterclasses:

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### Employment Issues and Legislation

20/11/07 Leeds            16/01/08 London

### Construction Design and Management Regulations (CDM) 2007

14/11/07 Newcastle      22/11/07 Cardiff  
25/01/08 Manchester    22/02/08 Birmingham  
10/03/08 Dundee

### New Waste Management Issues

17/03/08 Leeds

## Public course programme:

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### Project Management in Local Government

13/11/07 Newcastle      21/11/07 Cardiff

### Aspects of Leadership - Managing and Communicating Change

09/11/07 Perth            17/01/08 Manchester  
21/01/08 Belfast

### Service Level Agreements

19/11/07 Powys            26/11/07 Belfast  
03/12/07 Manchester    15/01/08 Perth  
31/01/08 London

### Marketing your Service Area

23/01/08 Birmingham

### Lessons Learned from Equal Pay

26/11/07 FULL            18/01/08 Manchester

### Managing Positive Attendance

30/11/07 FULL            11/01/08 Manchester

