



news update

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

The APSE approach to transport service consultancy

Transport is a key element in the delivery of most, if not all, Council services. For many it is a major cost element after staff (cleansing, building maintenance etc) and for a few, it is the major cost element (refuse collection). Efficient and effective fleet management and maintenance is therefore business critical to the authority.

An optimum approach to fleet management and maintenance is one that demonstrably delivers against criteria that reflect the required service outcomes. This can be expressed simply in terms of maximising the 'use-value' of transport vehicles and processes.

The principles that underpin efficient and effective working are very simple – what is difficult is creating a culture that values these principles. We believe that a bottom up approach to continual improvement is the way to get people on board. It is not difficult in most cases to write a credible service improvement plan without actually speaking to anybody but the plan will be far more likely to succeed if it is a genuine reflection of a change in thinking within the organisation rather than just a change in the official procedures as determined by the top management. Here APSE's experience in frontline service delivery is a significant advantage.



£11 million savings identified in APSE review

APSE has been working at a Council for the past few months on a wide ranging review. The Council requested assistance with the task of examining current service delivery arrangements with a view to testing their competitiveness against alternative arrangements including outsourcing. The approach used centred on the collection and comparative analysis of key performance and cost data across a full range of direct services including:

- Transport
- Home/school transport
- Building cleaning
- Catering
- Stores
- Education catering
- Building maintenance
- Technical services
- Bereavement services
- Printing

Diagnostic workshops were conducted for each service area by APSE consultants, including a service expert. Outputs included service specific reports by the relevant consultants and an overarching report by APSE Senior Consultant Gayle Gibson.

Following a final presentation by APSE to senior officers, three more

days were allocated in addition to the initial proposal for a supplementary report setting out the level of savings that the Council can expect to make if it implements the full recommendations set out in the main report. These savings estimates are derived from top performing APSE Performance Networks comparators and will be realised to the extent that the Council is able to move towards optimising its use of resources.

For some service areas this will require extensive service redesign. **In transport, a total of 27% savings have been identified from five days work.** The workshops established that there are opportunities to provide more efficient transport services and reduce fleet costs in excess of £100k through a variety of measures. Recommendations include merging two service functions, and ways to reduce the vehicle maintenance hourly rate cost. APSE also observed that fleet usage does not appear to be effectively monitored and managed and it is recommended that a comprehensive review of fleet utilisation be undertaken including all light plant items and, where appropriate, reduce the size of the fleet.

Co-located depot project

APSE is currently working with a number of partners within a geographical area to progress the idea of a single co-location project



for Council, police and fire authority vehicles alongside a private sector bus company.

The partners had already held preliminary discussions about the potential for co-location of their respective transport operations. These discussions identified scope for sharing facilities and services and the point had been reached where assistance is needed to develop a high level business case that can take the project forward. The purpose of a high level business case is to set out a vision for the project which is sufficiently detailed to allow each of the partners to commit formally to the early stages of the project.



APSE started by running an initial workshop session with senior representatives of each partner organisation. This consolidated the aims and outcomes desired by each of the partners. It identified site and facility sharing as a discrete and worthwhile aim that will lead to increasingly integrated service provision in the future, but which at this stage should be capable of standing alone in terms of benefit and viability.

The subsequent outline business case, written by Principal Consultant Andy Mudd, sets out how the shared facility project can work to the benefit of each of the partners to help them meet strategic, financial and commercial objectives. In this document the legal basis for the project is established and delivery options are considered in sufficient depth to enable partners to make an informed decision about moving to the next stage. Andy is

currently providing an estimation of the space requirements of the various vehicle types.

Transport department: best practice paper

APSE was engaged to write a paper to help the Council to define a target operating model, along with a performance management framework within transport. This will allow managers to implement and maintain a continual improvement approach to service delivery.

The paper is intended to explore best practice for fleet management and maintenance services with reference to top performers as evidenced through the Performance Networks benchmarking arrangement and APSE practitioner network.

Depot rationalisation

APSE has been commissioned by a Council to assist them with progressing the combination of the two existing depots. This resource rationalisation will look to achieve efficiencies in staffing and other operational costs.

After undertaking a baseline analysis and options appraisal APSE will set out the business case and recommendations in a final report. This should help the Council to inform decisions as to how to progress the project.

Street services review finds £800k potential efficiency savings

The Council commissioned APSE to undertake a study of the value for money offered by its Street Services, namely Waste Collections, Street Cleansing, and Transport. A separate value for money study was

commissioned covering the Council's Grounds Maintenance and Cemeteries & Crematorium services.

APSE has examined each service in detail, using an individual service technical study, comparing cost and quality of service performance against industry-wide and local government benchmarks and best practice. These technical studies have been augmented by management level reviews and a series of workshops involving representatives of a cross section of the workforce in each service. A final strategic overview report has brought together the individual reviews.



The reports detail an assessment of each service's current competitiveness, in terms of value for money offered, compared to other service providers nationally and regionally. Where appropriate, recommendations are made for future actions, aimed at ensuring competitiveness is sustained into the medium and longer term. Key actions arising from these recommendations are brought together in a Summary Action Plan.

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

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