



news update

Welcome to the special refuse and street cleansing edition of the consultancy newsletter. This deals with projects which APSE is currently undertaking, or has recently completed

Street cleansing review saving £485,000

APSE is currently undertaking a range of service reviews, including street cleansing, for a member authority to assess the value for money status of the Council's services. The street cleansing review focused upon the following key aspects of the street cleansing services:

- Competitiveness
- Cleansing standards and quality performance
- Working methodology
- Resource deployment

From the operational review and by comparing performance data, APSE found that the Council's in-house cleansing services section is delivering a very high standard of cleansing throughout the borough and is receiving a high level of customer satisfaction. However, the overall value for money status of the service is being offset by above average operational costs

APSE has identified various areas for significant savings. For example, current policy indicates that all areas outside of the town centre should have fortnightly separate mechanical and manual cleanses. APSE would challenge the need for all areas outside the town centre to be subject to this regime, perhaps changing to an alternate fortnightly manual /mechanical cleanse. Furthermore, some areas were actually being cleaned more regularly than the policy required.

This represents an opportunity for the Council to make efficiency savings within the cleansing service.

It is estimated that the resource rationalisation, which also includes a reduction in the number of vehicles and mechanical sweepers could result in cost savings of some £485,000.



Interim refuse manager

For the past few months an APSE interim manager has been providing an operational lead to an authority's refuse collection service. To this end he was based in the depot, implementing new procedures to achieve best practice. This project has been successful, and the authority are now seconding an internal officer to take over this operational position.

With the knowledge which the interim has gained about the authority over the past few months, and the strong working relationships he has built with senior officers, he is now going to work alongside the Head of Service to look at redesigning the collection routes and work patterns. Here APSE can provide real value and support to the interim through our extensive experience and knowledge of what works across the UK.

Street scene diagnostic workshop

APSE undertook a diagnostic workshop for a member authority's street scene service which was attended by the full management team of the service. The purpose of the workshop was to identify, target and refine areas where the service could benefit in their quest for continual service improvement and their search for financial efficiencies. This could lead to the development of a robust and deliverable service improvement plan to meet the Council's wider efficiency objectives.

The workshop introduced the management team to lean tools to give them a better understanding of the processes and how best to use them. In the workshop, staff were involved in both mapping and re-designing processes, utilising lean methodology. Skills are consequently transferred to the Council team through the experience of 'doing' and this is key to the team's learning.

From the day's workshop, APSE identified areas for improvement, and provided a snapshot of service provision and areas for priority. For example, there are currently three different contracts in place with different maintenance regimes. It will be essential to the authority that these contracts are harmonised and that a holistic Borough wide specification is adopted.

APSE analysed the Performance



best value consultancy

Networks data for the authority and identified that whilst the grounds maintenance sickness level is low, the level of sickness for street cleansing is higher than average. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible with an aim to it achieving an upper quartile performance.

Diagnostic workshops allow staff the opportunity to give their opinions on how to improve the service, generate income and also achieve efficiencies. For example, the group recognised that there is an aging workforce and that no apprentice training was being undertaken. This will eventually lead to the loss of key skills amongst front line staff over the next few years. It is therefore essential to introduce some form of training/apprenticeship scheme to ensure these key skills are retained.

Interim project director for large shared service procurement

The three Council waste partnership, to which APSE is providing a project director, has selected and announced the preferred bidder in principle for the contract to develop a facility to treat residual household waste. The APSE interim is working hard to bring the project to financial close, working closely with all three Councils and the preferred bidder to achieve a successful outcome.

Interim waste manager

An APSE interim has just concluded a successful 10 month project in waste management. This has included a wide range of tasks within the assignment, including heading the winter maintenance review after the snow in 2010. The Council are now going to follow the

report's recommendations and invest in snow shoes, winter tyres and alternative working arrangements. He has also thoroughly examined the budget and rerationalised the codes to make the budget easier to understand. This has led to a £210K saving.



Economic footprint

APSE is working with a member authority who have requested consultancy support to assess the local economic footprint of their street care service, incorporating highways, street lighting, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and transport. In particular the research will look to drill down to focus on the highways aspect of this service.

The local economic footprint will be calculated to cover both the Council's own geographical boundaries and the sub-region. This work will enable the Council to demonstrate how and where it spends its resources and the benefits to the local economy. This pioneering research has delivered some remarkable results in other authorities and demonstrates the vital role played by local public services in helping to anchor the local economy against external shocks brought about by global economic forces, financial crises and

Special refuse and street cleansing issue

recession.

APSE, along with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) has pioneered this approach to measuring the local economic multiplier effect of council front-line services in terms of both procurement and employment spend.

Operational review

An operational review is currently underway to assess the efficiency of existing methods of work and resource deployment of the Council's Street Cleansing Services. This will use APSE Performance Networks data to provide a benchmark to assess the Council's efficiency. Relevant APSE performance indicators include cost of street cleansing service per household (including CEC), and per head of the population.



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