

Local Government best placed to make lasting changes, says APSE chief executive

Sir Michael Lyons recognition, that Local Government should be at the heart of convening local public services, was welcomed by APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien. APSE, the representative body of front line local government services, however suggested that for real changes to take place the Inquiry and Government ought to recognise that those best placed to make lasting change are councils who have the ability to respond with flexible local services and multi-skilled staffing teams. Mr O'Brien stated **"Many councils have already put in place service improvement plans using local flexibility to adjust services in response to community needs. Local Government is of course best placed to deliver the vision of integrated public services within the community precisely because they have the capacity to deliver rapid change in frontline services without the restrictions of complex contractual arrangements with third parties. The capacity within local government should be exploited to the benefit of all public services.**

- In working with over 300 local authorities throughout the UK APSE has also encouraged the use of the Power of Well Being under S 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (England and Wales) to promote new powers for councils to take action to benefit communities in innovative ways.
- APSE has also promoted the extensive use of new powers to trade and charge across the public sector to facilitate better and more efficient services which allows local authorities to undertake work on behalf of other local authorities and other public sector bodies.
- Local councils in England are able to rely upon the Local Authority (Goods and Services) Act 1972 to undertake a variety of functions for other bodies.

Mr O'Brien added **" Local Government is already on target to exceed its efficiency gains demonstrating that it has the capacity to deliver rapid changes and enhance the efficiency of local government. If we are to genuinely embrace the exciting opportunities of truly localised public services local government needs to exploit the new range of powers at its disposal; Whether that is through sharing services with other bodies, such as the NHS, as well as other local authorities, or setting up action plans for older people, that includes everything from social care to window cleaning local government ought to be the gateway to truly localised and responsive public services"** adding **"We have the opportunity to expand the role of local government and make all public services axiomatic upon the one area of local services that is truly democratically accountable."**

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Notes to Editor

1. APSE is The Association for Public Service Excellence
2. APSE is a not for profit organisation working with over 300 local authorities throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
3. APSE issues advice on a range of council services to its member authorities including the fields of employee relations, parks, leisure, refuse collection and grounds maintenance service areas
4. Media interviews by arrangements with Mark Roden or Mo Baines on 0161 772 1810 / 07971 843515