



*Pat Taggart discusses the link between transport, environmental and procurement efficiencies, which was highlighted at Scotland's largest public sector fleet, waste and grounds services conference and exhibition in Aviemore*

'Environment' and 'procurement' were the words on everyone's lips at Scotland's largest public sector fleet, waste and grounds services event in Aviemore. And the event provided ideas about how to join up the two in order to deliver effective services and solutions locally.

Around 120 exhibitors and 350 visitors came together for the "Frontline Scotland: Efforts to tackle the environmental agenda" exhibition and seminar, organised by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). APSE, which works with over 300 councils across the UK helping them to deliver frontline council services, has now been running the event for sixteen years. This year's sun-filled three-day event attracted councillors, chief executives, heads of services and frontline managers from 30 of Scotland's 32 local authorities, plus a number of delegates from English councils, to the Hilton Coylumbridge Hotel in May.

Both the seminar speakers and exhibitors demonstrated the vital contribution that operational services are making in meeting national environmental targets. And a common theme of both the policy and management discussions that took place, and the products and services displayed, was the essential link between efficiency and sustainability.

Companies showcased a broad range of innovative solutions to help meet sustainable development, environmental improvement and efficiency goals. This included minibuses with newly introduced safety and wheelchair accessibility features, cost effective fleet management services, vehicle leasing options, software to help achieve best value and seating, storage, winter maintenance and lifting equipment. Advice in developing travel plans and conducting green fleet reviews was also on offer. Examples of latest technology to reduce landfill, increase recycling rates and cut carbon emissions were available. A recently developed range of commercial vehicles, designed to achieve maximum fuel economy, was on display.

Companies who sponsored spotlight conference events included: Vision Techniques; Verve Ltd; AVR (All Truck Vehicle Rental); Frank Guy Ltd; Applied Sweepers; Heil Europe; Terberg Matec Ltd; Irisbus (UK) Limited; Farid Municipal Vehicles Ltd; Northern Municipal Services; Johnston Sweepers.

As one exhibitor commented: *"The event provided the opportunity for our company to meet with our customers on an informal basis, continuously over the duration of the exhibition. The weather was fantastic which obviously helps with*

*the external exhibition. Factor 30 suntan lotion was the order of the day but this didn't put off attendance around the exhibition. Again a fantastic event and well organised by the APSE staff."*

The relationship between effective operational services in local government and sustainability was emphasised by all the seminar speakers. Scotland Excel proved a very interesting pull with both delegates and exhibitors filling the conference hall with standing room only available for the presentation. Owen Paterson provided an up to date position for their role in procurement with authorities. To complement this, John Killian from Glasgow City Council provided the attendees with an authorities perspective on planning fleet fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century needs.

As APSE's principal advisor for Scotland, I was accompanied by Anne Clayton, who is APSE's principal advisor on environmental issues, as we provided an overview of 10 ways to tackle environmental change – raising awareness about how local authorities can tackle these issues which affect each and every one of us. Gordon Archer from Carbon accountable asked the question "How is your footprint?" and the importance of improving community cohesion, the role of local authorities in combating climate change and the vision for the future

Another speaker who showed how effective management and environmental objectives can be joined successfully was Ian Murdoch, of the Energy Saving Trust, which offers free consultancy advice to councils conducting a 'green fleet review'. He pointed out the importance of reducing emissions within the transport sector and Mike Slinn from MVA Consultancy opened the delegates eyes as to alternative ways of transport by looking at freight and its use in business.

One visitor to the show, Dave Forsyth , from Aberdeen City Council, said he found the exhibition and exhibitors to be, '*very informative and well worth the trip to Aviemore.*'

Overall, the event was a huge success and the general feedback from both delegates and exhibitors was that it was well worth attending. Evaluation forms completed have rated the seminar excellent/good which is encouraging news for all involved in the conference!

APSE will now begin organising next year's event and continue to encourage councils to build upon the valuable contribution operational services can make to these on going issues. There are already a large number of bookings for the event next year which will be taking place from 5 – 8 May 2009.

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This article first appeared in FACTS magazine June 2008