



**APSE Parks Grounds and Street Services
Advisory Group – Wednesday 24
November 2010**

State of the Market for Parks

**Demonstrating Value for Money through
performance data**

A new era?



- Spending Review 2010
- Cost cutting & competing for resources
- Demonstrating value for money
- Unit costs and self-assessment
- Evidence, evidence, evidence

More Grounds For Concern?



“Declining real resources and CCT have in combination fragmented the management and maintenance of our parks, led to falling standards of maintaining the green environment, undermined efforts to provide extra cash for the parks service and damaged employment and training in the industry.”

March 1997



More Grounds For Concern - Key findings



- Fragmentation of the Parks Service as a result of CCT.
- Better specification of services but poorer quality and lower standards.
- Significant annual savings some in excess of £100k per annum.
- Decline in parks funding impacted on grounds maintenance budgets disproportionately.
- Parks service unable to compete effectively for scarce resources at a time of severe restrictions on local authority spending.
- Numbers employed in the parks service had been dramatically reduced as a result of CCT.
- Reductions in the number of site based staff – Park Keepers.
- Deskilling of the horticultural industry.
- Poor security and reduction in informal policing/presence in parks and rising vandalism.
- Few parks strategies and little knowledge of usage patterns.

State of the Market 2010



- 86% thought the squeeze on public sector resources will affect parks disproportionately
- 98% expect their parks budgets to decrease or decrease substantially next year
- 42% expect the number of parks to decrease
- 88% think that the public should get free access to all parks
- Climate change will mean more grass cutting (59%), increased emphasis on water conservation (59%), and a change in staff skills (55%)

Declining areas



- Reduced maintenance or frequency of maintenance of grounds
- Deterioration in service and standards
- Floral displays, regional shows, ornamental grass cutting, bowling greens and high amenity areas
- Landscaping and country parks
- Fewer parks and facilities
- Sports provision
- Schools & housing grounds maintenance
- Parks-specific community engagement
- New developments and capital investment
- Ranger and inspection services (playgrounds)

Growth areas

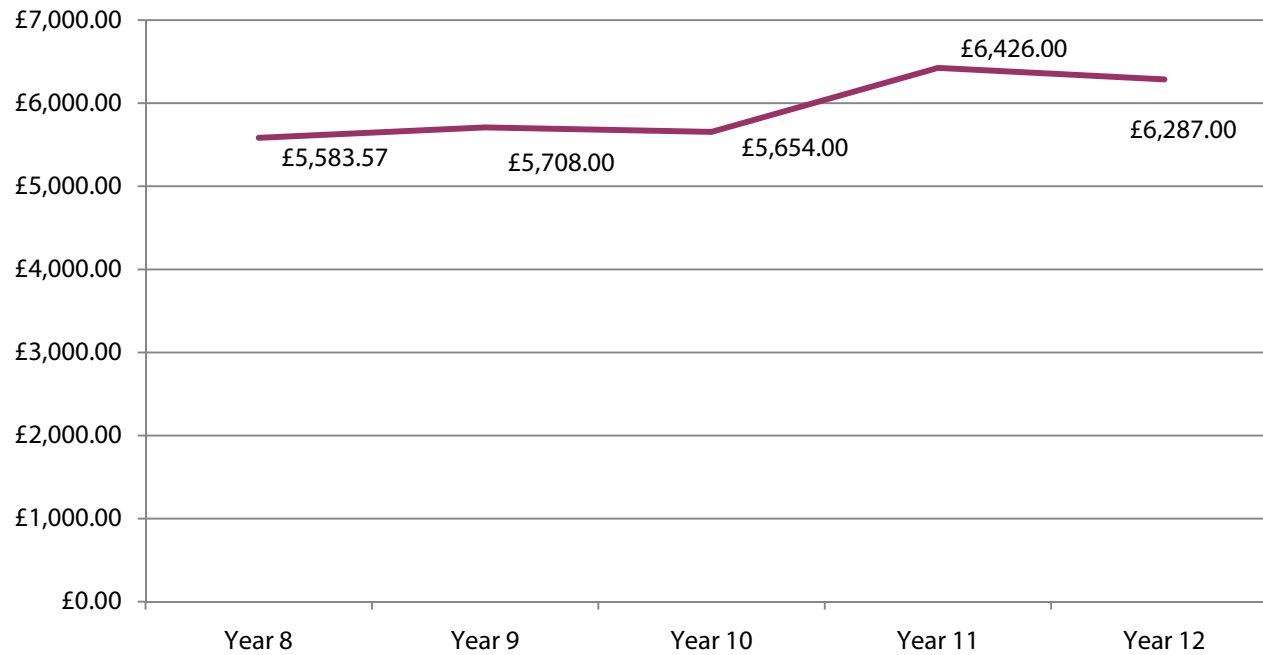


- Amalgamating services with other local authorities
- Specialist services to other local authorities
- Partnership work with community groups and other public bodies (e.g. agencies, housing associations, probation services)
- Volunteering
- Working for external organisations e.g. local landowners and sports clubs
- Parks events
- Conservation and management of climate change
- Allotments/community gardens
- Nursery production

What the evidence says



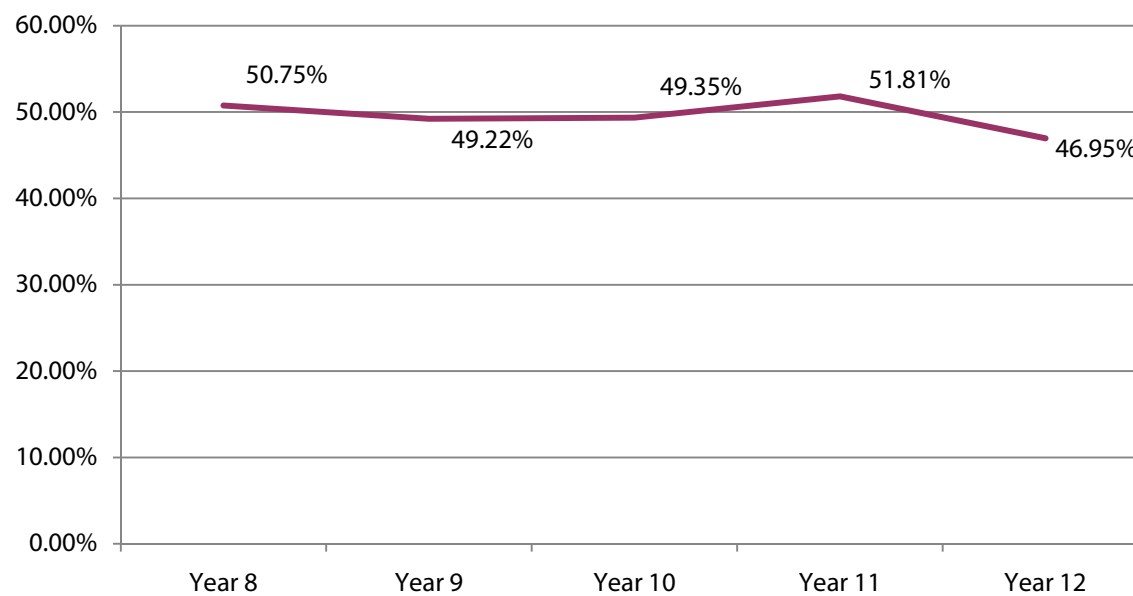
PI 02 - Cost per hectare of maintained land



Quality



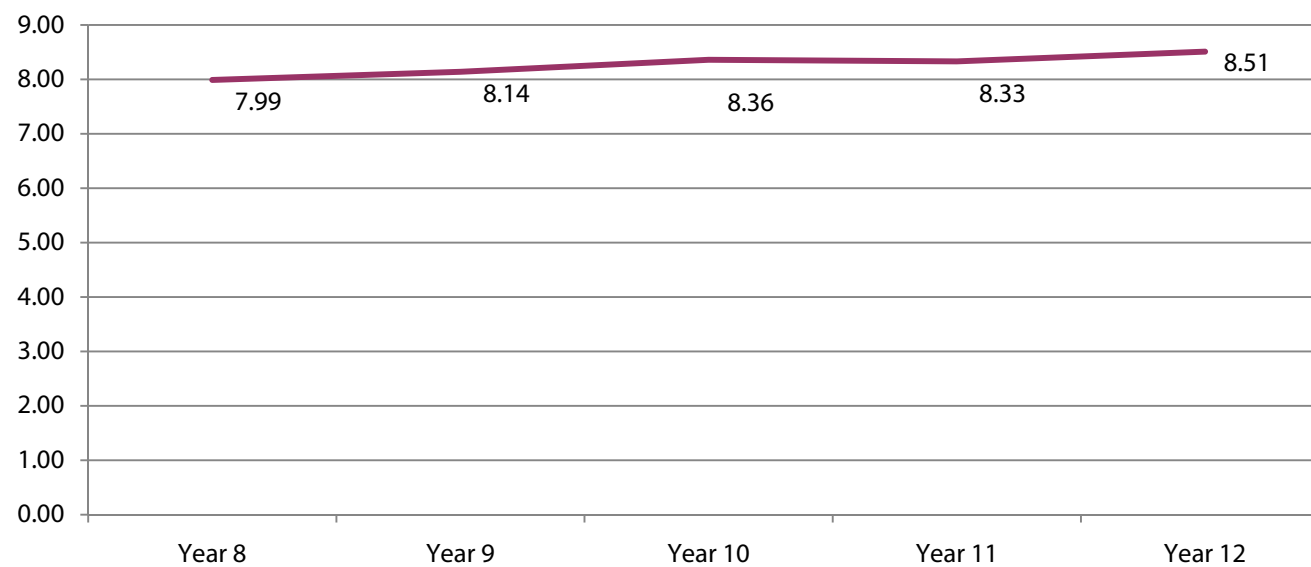
PI 23 Output specification



Productivity



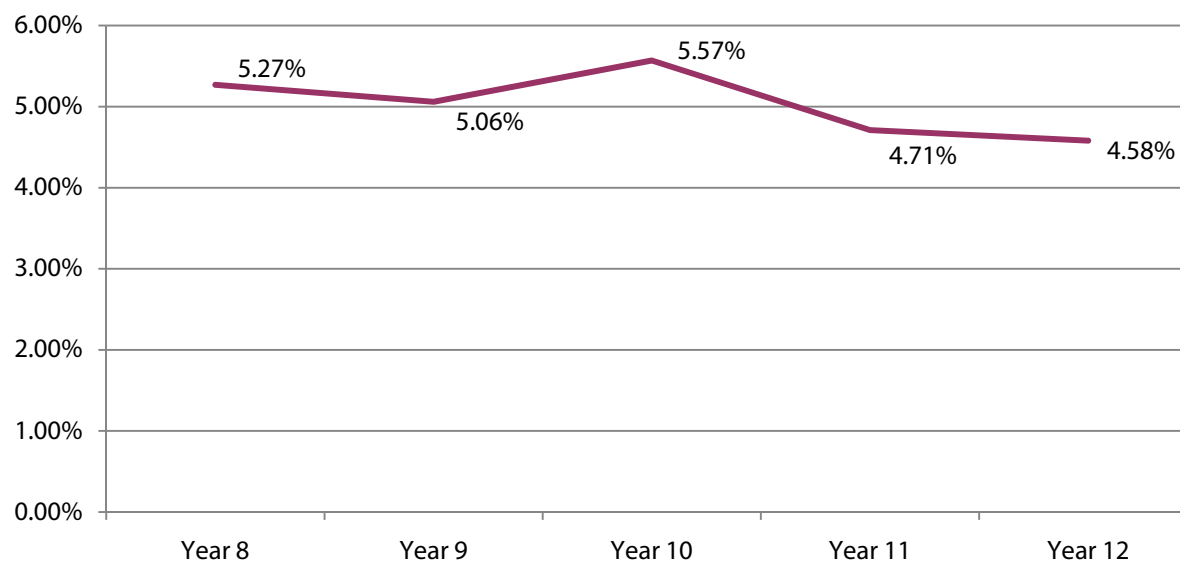
PI 12 Number of hectares maintained per FTE front line employee



Staff absence



PI 13 Percentage staff absence



10 Do's



- Do rework number of hours (productivity)
- Do eradicate overtime – plan against actual demand
- Do review utilisation of machinery and downtime
- Do research income generation
- Do examine the green agenda
- Do tackle staff absence
- Do demand bigger discounts from suppliers
- Do set appropriate ratios for supervision
- Do strip out wasteful activity (Lean)
- Do imagine you are the competition – what would they be doing?

10 Don'ts



- Don't forget how much the public value parks
- Don't lose your skill base
- Don't assume defeat
- Don't dismiss 'green' opportunities
- Don't rely on big IT solutions to save anyone
- Don't be afraid to challenge Central Establishment Charges
- Don't assume there is a pain free solution
- Don't lose your evidence
- Don't stop benchmarking (shield)
- Don't forget you have friends to call upon

Case studies



Demonstrating value for money in an external review

Reprogramming of seasonalised working hour arrangements

Review of vehicle utilisation

Recycling leaf waste for compost

Shared services

Income from events and sponsorship

Process benchmarking

Sale of firewood

Securing external funding

Using lean principles to services

Renewable energy projects

Key points



- Parks and open spaces are an important public and community resource and need to be safeguarded.
- Parks services are relatively efficient in terms of costs, outputs and productivity– cuts would jeopardise gains made over the past decade.
- Evidence, knowledge and outcomes
- Be ahead of the game
 1. Be able to demonstrate cost effectiveness and quality
 2. Have Member support
 3. Have Senior Management support
 4. Have support of colleagues in other Divisions
 5. Have strong support from the local community
 6. Have evidence to back up your claims

Horticulture Week 25 June 2010 – “Parks Investment pays”



“We believe there are enough strong voices in the sector at a national and local level prepared to speak up collectively and we have qualitative and quantitative evidence of the wider benefits of investing in our parks and open spaces to make a compelling case for the future. We must not allow those voices to be drowned out by the cacophony that is the current consensus on the need for deep cuts in public spending. There is a rich municipal parks heritage to advocate and an important legacy to leave to future generations.”

Mark Bramah and Debbie Johns



Contact details

Andrew Spowart, Principal Advisor

Email: ASpowart@apse.org.uk

T: 01698459051

MOB: 07794287026



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APSE UPDATE



National Issues

- UK/Scottish Spending Review
- Scottish Spending Review
- Workforce issues
- Council Tax Freeze
- Revenue and Capital Reductions
- Housing and Regeneration Reductions
- 3% Efficiency Target
- Commission on Future Public Service Delivery
- Scotland Bill – Enact Calman



Local Authority Strategic Responses

Short Term Responses

- Corporate and Service Restructuring
- Recruitment Freeze
- Pay Freeze/Reductions
- Increase Fees/Charges - Politically Sensitive
- Service Review/Service Redesign
- New Target Operational Models



Medium Term Responses

- Procurement Reform – Procurement Scotland/Scotland Excel
- Collaborative Reviews with Partners
- Back Office Efficiency – Transactions
- Sharing Services
- Alternative Business Models/Creeping Outsourcing



Longer Term

- Personalized/Better Targeting of Resources
- Preventative Intervention Programmes



Responses

- Influenced by Managerial Complexity, Political Sensitivity/Difficulty and Time
- Tools which can be used now to realise savings – need for quick release
- Tools which can be used over the medium/longer term... Take time and are complex and sensitive
- Issue is Time!



Recent Briefings

- Outcomes of a Round Table Event into Shaping Responses in a Climate of Austerity (10/62)
- Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 – Implications for LA's (10/60)
- Income Generation – Using Charging and Trading Powers (10/59)
- Workforce/Staff Absence: Maximising Efficiency (10/57)
- In House Service Improvement Plans (10/56)
- Audit Scotland BV Toolkits (10/50)
- Independent Budget Review (10/46)



- Housing Fresh Thinking New Ideas (10/45)
- Financial Capacity of RSLs/LA's to Build Houseing (Scottish Government Research)
- Round of Briefings Covering Efficiency Related Issues
- Scottish Government Spending Plans and Draft Budget For 2011/2012



Research Reports

- One Size Does Not Fit All – Attitudes and Opinions Towards Service Transformation
- Exploring Economic Footprint of West Lothian Operational Services



Seminars/Conferences

- Performance Networks – Blackpool 2-3 December 2010
- APSE Building & Housing Seminar – Peebles 16-17 February 2011
 - Building & Housing Accolades
 - Apprentice of the Year Awards
 - Deadline End of November 2010
- National Conference – Hampden Park 25 February 2011



Work Programme for Group

- Advisory Groups Need to Add Value
- Sharing Learning/Good Practice
- Develop an agreed work programme for group which is structured and dynamic



Proposed Survey of ASPE Membership in Scotland

- Considering a survey in order to improve APSE offering to Member Councils
- Looking to Pilot in two groups



Andrew Spowart, Principal Advisor

ASpowart@apse.org.uk

01698 459051

07734287026

www.apse.org.uk