



## **Study of local democracy and service delivery launched at Conservative Councillors Association Conference**

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) launched a new research initiative mapping out connections between governance and delivery of services at local neighbourhood level at the Conservative Councillors' Association Local Government Conference 2008.

Cllr Paul Bettison, Leader of Bracknell Forest and chairman of the LGA environment board welcomed the research and said **"Whilst we want to see individual citizens exercising personal responsibility within their neighbourhoods it is down to local councillors to ensure that we support them. How we as local councils organise local services is fundamental to helping citizens achieve clean, safe and green local neighbourhoods"** adding **" We should make the best use of existing town and parish councils and councillors at a neighbourhood level to ensure that we deliver both strategic and operational objectives"**

APSE has commissioned the study, which explores models for providing efficient and accountable services at neighbourhood level, as the second phase of its research programme with the Institute for Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES).

Dr Steve Griggs of INLOGOV, said: **"The 'neighbourhood' has seemingly become a Government panacea to a whole range of social and economic problems. From anti-social behaviour, deprivation, substance-misuse or the need for civic renewal. I would say that whilst neighbourhoods can't do everything different models of governance and service delivery can influence how we can respond at a neighbourhood level to what are often very complex issues."**

Mark Bramah, Assistant Chief Executive of APSE, said: **"Local councillors provide a vital link to what their constituents need at a local level. Due governance over service delivery is a vital piece of the jigsaw in designing local services. Equally the front-line staff that clean the streets, empty the bins and care for elderly people in their homes are the eyes and ears of the community. That day to day contact with citizens should be fed back into service design as much as possible."**

*Governance, Neighbourhoods and Service Delivery* suggests that maintaining an operational core of services provided by directly employed staff helps local government meet key objectives such as tackling climate change and involving local people in decisions about services under the Local Government Act.

The full research report *Governance, Neighbourhoods and Service Delivery* will be available in mid-March.

### **Notes for editors**

1) APSE (The Association for Public Service Excellence) has over 250 member local authorities who provide front-line services in councils across the UK helping local councils develop excellence in front line service delivery, advocating a programme of continuous service improvement.

2) APSE has established a joint research programme with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) which is a think tank specialising in economic development and regeneration and the Institute for Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) which spans the boundaries between authoritative research and effective local governance and service provision.

3) The first phase of the programme resulted in the publication of the report '*Towards a Future for Public Employment*' which demonstrated the vital contribution direct employment makes to achieving public value through its role in delivering effective services, enhancing democratic accountability and shaping local places

4) The second phase of the programme explores '*Governance, Neighbourhoods and Service Delivery*'. The research was outlined in a pamphlet launched at the Conservative Councillors' Association in Warwickshire on 29 February 2008. The full report will be published in mid-March.

5) Direct public employment is where employees are engaged directly by public sector employers as opposed to employees working on public sector work through contractual or outsourcing arrangements.

6) For further details, a copy of the research pamphlet or to arrange for interview please call Mo Baines at APSE on 0161 772 1810 or mobile 07971 843515 or email [mbaines@apse.org.uk](mailto:mbaines@apse.org.uk)