

2030 Vision

A new decade brings fresh challenges for local government. How should the sector respond?



Public trust in councils on the rise
Survation

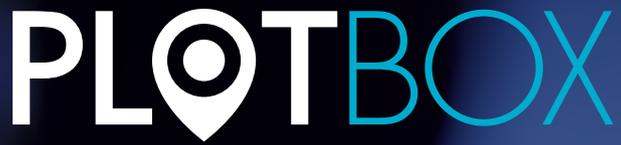
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Stats Rock!
Reporting back from the
Performance Networks Seminar 2019

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Working to end rough sleeping
City of Wolverhampton Council

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Editorial



Cllr. Mark Pengelly
APSE National Chair

Shop local in 2020

As I write this we are yet to know the outcome of the General Election 2019. Regardless of this we are of course entering a New Year. Already two decades into a new century and the same battles over the relationships between central and local government continue. However an area increasingly uniting local councils of all political persuasions is the climate emergency we are facing.

APSE has widely predicted that whilst the last decade in local government has been marked by austerity, this new decade will be distinguished by climate change. It is clear that local councils are at the heart of local communities and whilst we all recognise the need for global change and collaboration, it is also vital that we make changes at a local level which are both visible and effective within our local communities.

It strikes me that one area where we could all do better is to 'shop local'. With out of town developments and hypermarkets, shopping has become a carbon intensive exercise; yet the value of local shops and high streets can't be underestimated. From a climate change perspective local shops and high streets are often walkable, bringing much

needed local spend and ensuring the value of the local pound is maximised in the local economy, whilst taking fossil fuel miles off our roads. Vibrant high streets are also an anchor point for investing in good public realm – not just clean streets but places where innovative councils are increasingly using space to grow food for community projects or where planting schemes can encourage biodiversity and returning bee-friendly plants and insects for ecological balance.

On a more technological approach the public infrastructure in our local high streets and town centres can be a catalyst for positive changes. Whether using our street lighting columns as residential charging points for electric vehicles – more than a third of the UK does not have access to driveway parking – using our parks and public realm as carbon sinks with tree planting schemes or creating floodable spaces to tackle rising levels of rain fall, local councils and our local areas are part of the solution to the impact of climate change. So we can all do our bit in a New Year's resolution that should be easier to keep than that yearly promise of gym membership and kale smoothies for breakfast – it is a very simple one that we can keep together. Shop Local in 2020!

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Report Back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events



APSE survey with Suration hits the headlines

On 5 December, the findings from APSE and Suration's latest public opinion survey made the front page of the MJ. The report finds that whilst trust in Government has crashed trust in local councils is on the rise and at its highest level since 2016. The findings were also published on the Public Finance website. You can find out more about the findings on page 7.

APSE Climate Change and Renewable Energy Network

We have recently updated our APSE national Advisory Group to reflect even more features and topics on climate change; the updated Network will now consider a whole range of topics to support councils in the practical, operational and strategic implementation of actions to tackle climate change issues alongside support and advice on developing renewable energy through municipal schemes. The inaugural meeting of the Network was held at APSE's headquarters in Old Trafford Manchester on 26 November 2019. It was FREE to attend and lunch and refreshments were provided. You can download presentations from the meeting or register for the group by visiting the APSE website.

Parks Action Group

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien attended a Parks Action Group meeting in London on Wednesday 23 October. The meeting considered a draft business case for parks that has been developed as a submission to Government on funding requirements for the next Comprehensive Spending Review. The meeting also saw

Paul, as Chair of PAG's Knowledge and Skills workstream, push hard for a commitment to resourcing of a 'greenprint' on skills for parks management for the next decade. For more information on relevant briefings, research, seminars and APSE's role in PAG, visit APSE's online parks hub.

The Road to Success

APSE's Principal Advisory for Highways, Rob Bailey, has been a guest presenter at several highways related conferences, speaking about the local authority view of roads, street-lighting and winter maintenance. These included LCRIG (Local Council Roads Improvement Group) conference in Blackpool on 11 September at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool followed by AMX partner day on 6th November in Tamworth Snowdome and RSMA (Road Safety Markings Association) conference on 21 November at the Radisson Blu, East Midlands.

Scottish National Party Conference

On 14 October, APSE hosted a fringe event on the topic of the Climate Emergency at the SNP conference in Aberdeen. The fringe explored both the policy aspects of climate change alongside practical issues which local authorities could adopt to respond. This covered issues such as financial planning, frontline services, energy efficiency, renewables, low emission zones, sustainable travel and air quality. The event was chaired by Chair of APSE Scotland Cllr. Les Sharp, and included: APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien; Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People; Cllr. Natalie Don, Renfrewshire Council; and Cllr. Mark Flynn, Dundee City Council.



APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien; Cllr. Natalie Don, Renfrewshire Council; Cllr. Les Sharp, Clackmannanshire Council; Cllr. Mark Flynn, Dundee City Council; and Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Children and Young People at the SNP Conference in Aberdeen on 14 October

Have your say in the future of local government

The call for evidence was initially scheduled to close on 16 December 2019 but given the unexpected General Election the Commission is accepting submissions into early January.

Over ten years of austerity across public services have left their mark on local communities. Councils face a number of wicked policy issues, be it growing inequalities and child poverty, lack of affordable housing, climate justice or the crisis of public health. Yet, there is a new municipalism that is emerging, one that advances new forms of political leadership and local action, inhouse services, municipal entrepreneurship and stewardship of place. Local authority housing companies have mushroomed within councils, while novel forms of income-generation, community wealth building and social value production have taken hold as councils have looked to keep the public spend in localities and forge new ways of working with communities.

Now is the time to take stock of these innovations and transformations and to put in place the pillars of a sustainable local government for the future. As it happens, the APSE Local Government Commission 2030 is tasked with doing that just that. The Commission will identify and assess the capabilities and capacities of local government, capturing good practice and identifying how local councils can advance a new municipalism and vision for the next ten years. But, to do so effectively, it needs you to have your say on the key challenges facing local government. It needs to hear from you.

The Commission is currently gathering evidence from local authorities, think tanks, trade unions and professional bodies. It will be working to do so through to May 2020. Its call for evidence was initially scheduled to close on 16 December 2019 but given the unexpected General Election the Commission is accepting submissions into early January to enable councils and organisations who have been engaged in election activity to still participate. The evidence gathering stage will be followed by a series of evidence days and visits to local authorities and professional organisations. And, as its thinking unfolds, it will publish its emerging thinking for comment and discussion. Over the summer of 2020, Commissioners will then draft their final report before once again hitting the road to test out their proposals and recommendations with the different communities of local government.

The Commissioners want to hear from as many different viewpoints as possible, from as many individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in local government and local communities as possible. Evidence and views are currently being welcomed on the future role of local government from stewardship of place through to local funding regimes, workforce capacities and service provision and on to local democracy, community leadership, equality and diversity and centre-local relations.

Your response does not need to cover all of the priority areas specified and you can just focus on those that are relevant to you or your organisation. Whatever your contribution, we encourage you to have your say and help shape how we build the future of local government. Keep-up-to-date on the work of the Commission on the dedicated Commission hub which is hosted on the APSE website, where you will find details of oral evidence gathering events, briefings and Commission news.

Neil Barnett, Dr Arianna Giovannini and Professor Steven Griggs
Commission Executive

To access the Call for evidence, go to: www.apse.org.uk



Rob Powell, Political Correspondent Sky News with Cllr Giles McNeill, Leader of West Lindsey District Council, at the Conservative Party Conference.

Conservative Party Conference

APSE hosted a strategic forum lunch during the course of the Conservative Party Conference with Cllr Giles McNeill, Leader of West Lindsey Council providing an overview on the commercial investment strategy to offset budget pressures. The event was opened by Rob Powell, Sky News political correspondent, who shared his views on how councils are viewed when engaging on commercial ventures.

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, also addressed a fringe event at the conference - hosted through Manchester University Tyndall Centre and the Centre for Cities - on the issues of climate action from a local authority perspective alongside a wide-ranging panel of academics and industry experts on the topic. Mo Baines, APSE's Head of Communications, attended a research roundtable on affordable housing hosted at the conference by IPPR, exploring the issues of income-related rent to address the gaps in affordable rents.

LGA Commercialisation Alumni Group

APSE's Mo Baines facilitated a discussion on 14 October at the LGA Commercialisation Alumni Group using recent APSE research on governance and scrutiny issues for councils when entering into trading, charging and investment decision making at a local level.

Local Government Finance Conference

Paul O'Brien, APSE's Chief Executive, chaired the Local Government Finance Conference in London. This wide-ranging conference considered the reliance on new sources of income within the public sector. Following that event, Paul also spoke at the Westminster Briefing conference on commercialisation; this was a wide ranging event with speakers from CIPFA, government departments and industry experts.

Hello, Goodbye!

After 15 years as Head of APSE Training, Jan Kennedy is retiring. Our new Head of APSE Training, Fiona Sutton-Wilson, joins us from Warrington Borough Council.



Since joining in 2005, Jan has been a tremendous asset to APSE. Her determination and focus over the years has ensured our training service has never been in better shape; delivering first-class courses to a whole range of council staff across the UK.

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, "Jan's career has been a model to follow. Having

delivered over 1000 training courses as Head of APSE Training, our members were always in good hands with Jan. Patient and sensitive to their needs, she has been at the forefront of ensuring excellence in local government. Within the Association, Jan's commitment has left an indelible mark on each of us and it has been a real honour to work with her. We wish Jan a long, happy retirement, she deserves it!

Jan will be greatly missed by everyone within APSE and local government. We wish her a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Our new Head of APSE Training, Fiona Sutton-Wilson, joined APSE on 1 December.

Fiona Sutton-Wilson, Head of APSE Training

What is your professional background?

Before joining APSE, I worked for the Cheshire & Warrington Sub-regional Programme Office, managing a number of leadership development programmes, which were designed to help local authorities meet rising demands. I'm a trained trainer and facilitator and qualified teacher and have worked across public services for more than 25 years.



What is your role at APSE?

I'm really pleased to have been appointed as the new Head of APSE Training. This means I'm responsible for APSE's training arm, which delivers excellent results through the development of skills, knowledge and aptitudes.

What is your favourite thing about your role?

I am a firm believer in good quality, cost efficient public services. My favourite thing about this role is supporting APSE members in delivering vital neighbourhood and frontline services through APSE's excellent training and development programmes.

Where can APSE members meet you?

When I'm not out meeting members in their own localities, or delivering training across the UK, or joining members at many of our useful events, I'm based at our Manchester office and can be contacted on fsuttonwilson@apse.org.uk or by phoning 0161 772 1810.

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Trust in Central Government crashes as councils gain public trust

Survation.



New polling by Survation on behalf of APSE finds that whilst trust in Government has crashed, trust in local councils is on the rise and at its highest level since 2016.

Trust

Seven and half times as many people trust the local council over the government to make decisions about how services are delivered in their local area with eleven times as many trusting local councillors over government ministers to make decisions.

The survey also found that nine times as many trusted their local council to provide services in their local area over the government which is a stark rise from 2018 when five times as many trusted local councils above government and in terms of who provides local services five times as many voters trust the local council over a private company

Local public spending

61% of the public do not believe enough of their taxes are spent in the local area and when asked whether the government should keep more money to spend at a national level or give more money to local councils a staggering 81% of the public want to see more money spent locally.

In terms of the services that should be prioritised for extra funding the top of the list, ranked by the public being asked to allocate a nominal budget is social care followed by road maintenance and affordable housing.

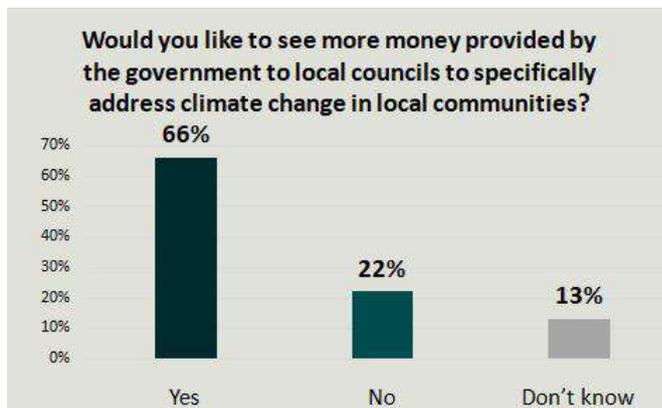
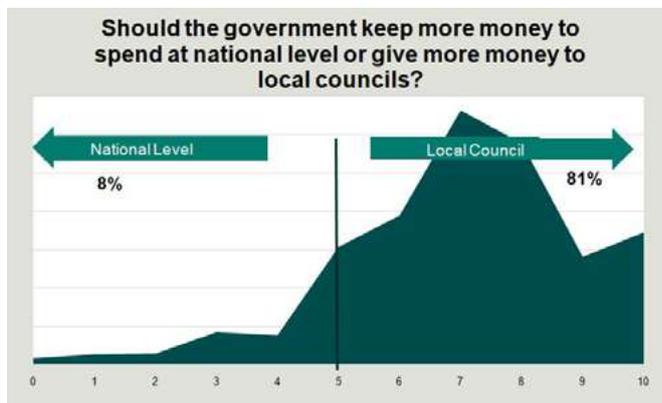
Satisfaction with services

In spite of austerity, the public value local services with parks services ranking the highest with a satisfaction score of 7.1 (out of 10) followed closely by school meals (6.7), street lighting (6.6) and refuse collection and leisure services (both at 6.5)

However the public are increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of affordable housing, scoring the lowest ranking at 4.3 coming below general road maintenance at 4.6 – clearly housing affordability and pot holes remains an issue for voters.

Climate change and local councils

As more and more councils declare a climate emergency APSE wanted to establish if this had any resonance with the public. We asked if they expected councils to take a leading role in responding to climate change and what it might mean to local communities. 74% expect that local communities will have to respond to the effects of climate change in their area and 66% support additional



money for councils to respond to climate change locally compared to 22% opposed. There is equal support for councils being best placed to combat community effects of climate change with government at 36% each.

When asked about the top priorities for local climate change action, the public want to see homes made more energy efficient and improved waste and recycling. When asked to rank climate change as a new spending priority it was found to be second only to social care.

When asked to think about their local area and what steps or actions on climate change would be required to combat its effects the public ranked actions as follows:-

- **62% Homes more efficient**
- **61% Improved recycling and reducing waste**
- **55% Improved public transport**
- **51% local energy suppliers of clean / green energy**
- **48% Improved flood defences**
- **47% More electric cars and charging points**
- **41% Improving public buildings and amenities**
- **38% improving local shops so people can shop locally**

Speaking about the survey Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive said "Whilst trust in government is in steep decline, at a local level trust in councils has not only remained but gained traction, with more of the public trusting councils and councillors to get on with the job of delivering local services.

He added "These results should be a wake-up call on the issues that matter at a local level. Whilst social care remains a pressing priority for spending climate change, affordable housing and the condition of local roads is not that far behind. This survey makes the case for spending at a local level to be prioritised whoever forms the government after 12 December."

Brent's Bee Corridor

2019 was the year that the bees came back to Brent. The Council took its first steps towards this in 2017, and by 2019, theory became reality and it had created its first Bee Corridor; working in its own way to reverse the national decline in meadows and increase the biodiversity of the borough. So what exactly is the Bee Corridor and how did it come about?

In 2017, Brent Council looked for creative ways to solve two problems. How to increase biodiversity across the borough and how to make savings of £240K. The two ideas seemed to be in conflict, until the Council decided to introduce meadow areas in 24 local parks. Leaving areas of longer grass in some parks seemed like the perfect solution; providing a safe and inclusive habitat for nature and at the same time saving money by reducing the amount of times grass had to be cut, from 16 times a year to once.

The challenges of the first two years were vast. No one liked the long grass, not even the insects the Council was trying to encourage! E-mails were received noting that the long grass fell considerably short of a real meadow. However, the Council persisted and produced an 'infographic' explaining the annual lifecycle of local meadows.

The public was warming to the idea; but the project still needed to win over both residents and the insects that it was seeking to entice to local parks, in the quest for an increase in biodiversity.

The challenges remained twofold; how to engage the public in a vibrant discussion about increasing biodiversity in parks within an urban setting, and how to create 'fast track meadows', with natural bursts of wildflowers. Then the concept of the Bee Corridor was born. Bees everywhere issued a collective sigh of relief as humans at Brent Council caught up with their environmental needs.

The Council worked tirelessly on the design, with involvement from the parks team, Veolia and the internal communications team. Additional finance was invested in the purchase and sowing of wildflower seed over a three year period, and thereby creating the seven mile Bee Corridor.

The challenges remained twofold: how to engage the public in a vibrant discussion about increasing biodiversity in parks within an urban setting, and how to create fast track meadows, with natural bursts of wildflowers.

A third of each of 22 meadow areas was designated as the wildflower area. Areas were selected near to pathways and entrances allowing visitors to the park to see the immediate impact of the wildflowers. The drifts had to be created in a natural looking pattern and with the use of absolutely no pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals.



By the beginning of March, the drifts were being dug over, raked and wildflower seeds - carefully selected to ensure they were compatible with London soil - were being sown. Videos were produced to communicate the reasons for the large dirt 'snakes' appearing in their parks and social media communications were posted to help residents anticipate the colourful change that was coming. Briefings were held with councillors and a local environmental group and free wildflower seeds were also distributed to get people excited about the project.

Then, on the late May Bank Holiday weekend, the Evening Standard ran an exclusive story about Brent's newly created Bee Corridor. Coinciding with the release of the UN report on Biodiversity, the news article went viral, spanning not just media outlets in the UK, but worldwide. There was no pressure for the wildflowers to grow at all...

Then the Council held its breath; until on an evening walk home through the park on the 4th June 2019, the first flowers had started to bloom. Photos were frantically taken of the purple blooms of Fiddleneck and in a moment of reflection, there was a buzzing sound... the first bumblebees had found their very own food corridor and habitat.

The Council has achieved their aim and not only saved money but creatively developed a solution that increased biodiversity in local parks in the most spectacularly colourful way. Residents were taking photos in the wildflower meadows and posting them on Instagram and the feedback was positive. "Best initiative Brent has carried out", posted one happy resident; whilst surrounded by bees, butterflies and bush crickets.

2020 will see the expansion of the Bee Corridor and bring with it more colour, vibrancy and biodiversity. •



This initiative recently won the APSE Innovation Award in Parks. This summary has been taken from the APSE Environmental Services Innovation Awards brochure. The brochure contains the summaries of every shortlisted submission in 2017, 2018 and 2019, and is free to download from the APSE website. Brent Council's Kelly Eaton will also be presenting at the APSE Climate Change Seminar on 23 January. Details can be found on page 30.



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Performance
Networks seminar

2019

Report back

A quick look at this year's innovative speakers and thematic forums

Best and Most Improved Performer Awards

Check out the winners and finalists of this year's prestigious APSE Performance Networks Awards

Stats Rock!

Performance Networks Seminar Report Back

This year's seminar - our biggest in a decade - coincided with the 20 year anniversary of our sector-leading benchmarking service. We provide a summary of the event speakers, workshops and forums.



Bertha Johnson, City of Durham Budget and Management Services Director, North Carolina, opens session one.

Data intelligence has become an integral part of service delivery. The need for local government frontline services to demonstrate their competitiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness has never been greater. Benchmarking is essential to achieving this; informing budgets, target setting and highlighting areas of improvement over time.

With this in mind, the APSE Performance Networks seminar remains a unique date in the local government calendar as it provides an unrivalled opportunity for service managers and directors to network and exchange ideas on data intelligence. Our last seminar of the decade was one of our busiest, with almost 340 delegates, speakers and exhibitors in attendance.

On the first day of the seminar, delegates heard from various high-profile keynote speakers discussing the ways council services can leverage their data to demonstrate competitiveness and improve performance. In the afternoon, delegates could attend one of six informative and engaging forums and then one of twelve service-specific workshops. The forums and workshops allowed delegates to discuss issues of local concern and develop solutions with colleagues through problem solving surgeries.

International perspectives

The opening session of this year's event - a panel session - had an international flavour as we were delighted to be joined from the USA by Bertha Johnson, City of Durham Budget and Management Services Director, North Carolina, and from France by Herve Guillame, Co-ordinator, Association for Urban Cleanliness (AVPU).

Bertha offered a brief summary of the City of Durham; its population, demographics and budget. She then moved on to the importance of performance data in shaping and sustaining service delivery. As well as being a platform for cross-departmental problem solving and programme evaluation, Bertha spoke of how data plays a key role in driving budget discussions and a culture of innovation. Of particular interest was the monthly "show and tell" event which encourages directors in the authority to be more engaged and active in using data to make decisions.

Providing a French connection to benchmarking on the continent, Herve was up next highlighting the work of his organisation in measuring street cleanliness across France and beyond. Formed

in 2010 in Versailles, AVPU is the first network of cities in France dedicated to urban cleanliness. With 170 cities as members - including cities in Switzerland, Luxembourg and Belgium - Herve explained how the organisation developed the methodology for its objectives indicators for cleanliness, and also discusses how the measuring process is implemented.

A snapshot of APSE's benchmarking service

Heading back to the UK, APSE's Debbie Johns was up next to provide a picture of performance within the UK from the data sets in Performance Networks. First, Debbie set some context on what's happening in local government finance using figures from APSE's latest research with the New Policy Institute 'Neighbourhood services and sustainable government.' The report found that we've experienced a real fall in total UK local government spending over the nine years from 2009/10 to 2017/18 of 19 per cent.

In terms of the direction of travel for frontline services, Debbie explored a variety of data over different service areas and shared her findings. The data shows that despite the funding challenges faced, local government has risen to the challenge and improved performance.

Over the last 20 years, for parks, we have seen an initial increase in average maintenance expenditure in the service followed by a reduction since 2012-13 of 23%. For street cleansing, we have seen a similar picture with an initial increase in average operational expenditure from around £1.8 million to over £3.5 million in 2009-10 and since then we have witnessed a reduction of 26%. For parks, productivity indicators like the numbers of hectares maintained per FTE front line employee has shown a 67% increase since 2003/04; whilst in one sense this is a positive outcome it also reflects reduced staffing numbers, and changes to the services due to budget pressures.

In areas like refuse collection the ongoing pressure to reduce landfill and increase recycling is shown in a positive picture for the sector. The kg of domestic waste recycled per head of population has increased seven-fold since the year 2000, although this is currently flat lining. However, with over 260 councils declaring Climate Emergency and with the proposals in the Resources and Waste strategy, this will probably increase in future years.



A packed hall listens to the opening panel discussion on using performance data intelligently.

There was also a theme to emerge in the street lighting sector where the increase in LED lighting has led to both a reduction in CO2 emissions, of 40%, and significant cost reduction in energy costs per light reducing by 18% over the last 4 years.

In sports and leisure services, for both wet and dry facilities, usage per opening hour has increased by 26% since the year 2000, despite increased competition across the leisure market. In building maintenance, productivity has also improved with the average time taken to complete a routine repair reducing from 21 days in 2000 to a current average of 8 days.

Debbie then updated delegates as to the progress being made by the Performance Networks service in launching new projects, expanding its influence and improving user experience.

The new Performance Networks portal for all corporate and service contacts was launched last year, and is a significant improvement from the previous web portal as it is customised to members and gives them access to their reports. Debbie reminded delegates that from January 1 2020 the old web portal will no longer be accessible, so they need to make sure they are registered on the brand new portal before the end of the year. To make sure you are registered, please email performance.networks@apse.org.uk.

Performance Networks has been included in the Defra dashboard again and have been working with Zero Waste Scotland on bringing LAMS into the new Litter Monitoring System for Scotland. APSE are continuing to work with SCOTS, DMG and CSS Wales and Steve Berry from the Department for Transport has been supportive of benchmarking work with DMG in helping local authorities demonstrate they are meeting the incentive fund self-assessment principles.

Debbie closed her address by noting APSE's education catering data has been used in a report by the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit at Glasgow Caledonian University on free meals for Assist FM which was called 'Are pupils being served'. The service is also used as a key source of evidence for the All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food where we also provide the Secretariat for the group.



Survation's Paul Smith takes delegates through the findings of APSE and Survation's latest survey.

Public trust in councils on the rise

Our final speaker of the session, Paul Smith of Survation, shared the latest results of the APSE / Survation 2019 public opinion survey. The survey has found that whilst trust in Government has crashed trust in local councils is on the rise and at its highest level since 2016. 61% of the public do not believe enough of their taxes are spent in the local area and when asked whether the government should keep more money to spend at a national level or give more money to local councils a staggering 81% of the public want to see more money spent locally. The poll also surveyed the public on the pertinent issue of climate change. You can learn more about these findings on page 7.



Halton Council's Paul Wright discusses insourcing in forum 1.

Forums and workshops

In the afternoon, delegates attended thematic forums then workshops that honed in on particularly pressing issues and a range of local government frontline services. The forums explored a range of hot topics. In the forum "Insourcing: the importance of benchmarking data to prove the case", Paul Wright, Open Space Services Divisional Manager, Halton Borough Council, and Mo Baines, APSE Head of Communication and Co-ordination, discussed the importance of benchmarking data with regards to Halton's insourcing journey.

In the forum "Collaboration on Facilities Management" Jayne Jones, Commercial Manager, Facility Services, Argyll and Bute Council, and Louise Melville, APSE Principal Advisor, considered a whole range of issues related to building cleaning and catering; from Menu Banks to the Deposit Return Scheme.

Andy Mudd of APSE Solutions and Paul Burr, Building and Facilities Manager, Durham County Council explored commercialism and performance in their forum. Delegates heard from Paul about how his Council has developed a new customer base: academies, community groups, leisure providers and residents in the north east. Delegates also heard how the Council's success has opened up several opportunities for new sources of income.

Other forums looked in detail at the new Highways Code of Practice, award-winning innovative approaches to service improvement and developments in Performance Networks and the LAMS app.

After lunch, day one of the seminar ended with twelve highly informative workshops. With various frontline service experts facilitating the discussions, each workshop looked in depth at ways frontline staff can identify and overcome challenges, and thereby improve their effectiveness.

Climate change

The second day of the seminar opened with Dr Peter Kenway of the New Policy Institute. In light of the recent wave of climate emergency declarations made by councils across the UK, Dr Kenway discussed the response of frontline services to this crisis. Dr Kenway warned against the dangers of "greenwashing" and stressed that councils should not declare an emergency as cover for inaction and/or lack of high level commitment; they need to show strength by intent.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion, made up of a number of senior frontline service managers from across the UK, discussing how frontline services can respond effectively to the climate crisis. The panel included: Jayne Jones, Commercial Manager, Facility Services, Argyll and Bute Council Paul Wright, Open Space Services – Divisional Manager, Halton Borough Council, Richard Brown, Head of Environmental Services & Public Protection, Pembrokeshire County Council, Andy Greig, Fleet & Workshop Manager, Renfrewshire Council; and Debbie Johns, Head of APSE Performance Networks.

If you would like to view any of the speakers' presentations, please visit the APSE website. Alternatively, email Vicky Starmer on vstarmer@apse.org.uk

Best and most improved performer 2019

The APSE Performance Networks Awards 2019 recognised 'Best Performers' and 'Most Improved Performers' across frontline local government services on a range of cost and quality performance indicators, promoting excellence and continuous improvement. This year's finalists were excellent examples of how measuring and comparing services can lead to real change.

The Awards were announced at Blackpool at the rise of the APSE Performance Networks Seminar by Presenter and Broadcaster Charlie Webster.

Commenting on the awards Debbie Johns, APSE Head of Performance Networks said, "These winners have gone above and beyond in

the pursuit of value for money, productivity and quality in service delivery. They should all enjoy this well-deserved recognition of their achievements amongst their peers"

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive added "With the ongoing pressures on council finances now is not the time to let up on the need for effective performance management. By using the hard evidence of data collected across the largest voluntary benchmarking service in UK local councils we know that these winners and finalists in the APSE Performance Networks Awards 2019 are amongst the best in local government. My congratulations to all".

Congratulations to all finalists and winners!

Building Cleaning

Best Performer



Finalists

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Caerphilly County Borough Council | South Lanarkshire Council |
| Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council | Swansea City & County Council |
| East Ayrshire Council | |
| East Renfrewshire Council | |
| Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council | |
| Hartlepool Borough Council | |
| North Ayrshire Council | |

WINNER: EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Durham County Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Scottish Borders Council
- Tayside Contracts

WINNER: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Building Maintenance

Best Performer



Finalists

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Caerphilly County Borough Council Falkirk Council
 North Ayrshire Council
 Oxford City Council
 South Ayrshire Council
 Swansea City & County

WINNER: OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Caerphilly County Borough Council
 City of Lincoln Council
 Fife Council
 Oxford City Council
 South Ayrshire Council
 West Dunbartonshire Council

WINNER: SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Catering services

Best Performer



Finalists

Aberdeenshire Council
 Argyll & Bute Council
 Denbighshire County Council
 Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
 Hartlepool Borough Council
 Oxfordshire County Council
 Scottish Borders Council
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council

WINNER: GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Aberdeenshire Council
 Derbyshire County Council
 East Renfrewshire Council
 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council

WINNER: ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

Cemetery and Crematorium Services

Best Performer



Finalists

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Halton Borough Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Manchester City Council
Oxford City Council

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Stafford Borough Council
Wyre Borough Council

WINNER: KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Aberdeenshire Council
Cheshire East Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
Darlington Borough Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Oxford City Council

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
West Lothian Council

WINNER: DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Environmental Health

Best Performer



Finalists

Dumfries and Galloway Council
Dundee City Council
Inverclyde Council
Stroud District Council
West Lothian Council

WINNER: WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Dundee City Council
Fife Council
Inverclyde Council
Stroud District Council
West Lothian Council

WINNER: STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Parks, Open Spaces and Horticultural Services

Best Performer



Finalists

Aberdeenshire Council
 Chesterfield Borough Council
 East Renfrewshire Council
 Eastleigh Borough Council
 North East Derbyshire District
 Council
 Oxford City Council

Royal Borough of Greenwich
 Stafford Borough Council

WINNER: EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Cambridge City Council
 Chesterfield Borough Council
 Gedling Borough Council
 London Borough of Hounslow
 Manchester City Council
 Rochdale Metropolitan Borough
 Council

Wakefield Metropolitan District
 Council

WINNER: GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Refuse Collection

Best Performer



Finalists

Bolsover District Council
 East Renfrewshire Council
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council
 Gateshead Metropolitan Borough
 Council
 Kettering Borough Council (Corby/
 Kettering Shared Service)
 Oxford City Council

Telford & Wrekin Council
 Wigan Metropolitan Borough
 Council
 Wyre Borough Council

**WINNER: KETTERING BOROUGH
 COUNCIL/CORBY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Blackpool Council
 Bolsover District Council
 Darlington Borough Council
 East Renfrewshire Council
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council
 Huntingdonshire District Council
 North Lanarkshire Council

Warrington Borough Council
 Wigan Metropolitan Borough
 Council

**WINNER: WIGAN METROPOLITAN
 BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Roads, Highways and Winter Maintenance

Best Performer



Finalists

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar
East Ayrshire Council
East Dunbartonshire Council
Falkirk Council
Milton Keynes Council
North Ayrshire Council

Oxfordshire County Council
Scarborough Borough Council
Shetland Islands Council
South Ayrshire Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Argyll & Bute Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Dundee City Council
East Ayrshire Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Falkirk Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Swansea City & County

WINNER: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Sports and Leisure Facility Management

Best Performer



Finalists

Ashfield District Council
Hucknall Leisure Centre
Broxtowe Borough Council
Chilwell Olympia Sports Centre
Chelmsford City Council
Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
East Riding Leisure Francis Scaife
Gedling Borough Council
Redhill Leisure Centre

Hackney London Borough
Clissold Leisure Centre
Nottingham City Council
Ken Martin Swimming Centre
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Wath Leisure Centre

WINNER: EAST RIDING LEISURE FRANCIS SCAIFE

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Aberdeenshire Council
Ellon Swimming Pool & Community Centre
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
Birtley Leisure Centre
Hackney London Borough
Stoke Newington West Reservoir Centre

Ipswich Borough Council
Gainsborough Sports Centre
Nottingham City Council
Southglade Sports Centre
South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
Haven Point
Vision Redbridge Culture & Leisure
Wanstead Leisure Centre

WINNER: WANSTEAD LEISURE CENTRE

Street Cleansing

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Bolsover District Council
 Conwy County Borough Council
 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
 Eastleigh Borough Council
 Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
 Gedling Borough Council

Kettering Borough Council (Corby/
 Kettering shared service)
 North East Derbyshire District Council
 Oxford City Council
 Stafford Borough Council

WINNER: EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

Eastleigh Borough Council
 Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
 Gedling Borough Council
 Kettering Borough Council (Corby/
 Kettering shared service)
 North Ayrshire Council
 Stafford Borough Council

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: KETTERING BOROUGH COUNCIL/CORBY COUNCIL

Street Lighting

Best Performer



Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Angus Council
 Hull City Council
 Isle of Anglesey County Council
 North Lincolnshire Council
 Northumberland County Council
 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
 West Dunbartonshire Council

Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

WINNER: WIGAN METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Finalists

Conwy County Borough Council
 Durham County Council
 East Dunbartonshire Council
 Inverclyde Council
 Kirklees Council
 Northumberland County Council
 Nottinghamshire County Council
 Renfrewshire Council

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
 Shetland Islands Council
 South Lanarkshire Council

WINNER: INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

Transport Operations and Vehicle Maintenance

Best Performer



Finalists

Durham County Council
 North Ayrshire Council
 North Warwickshire Borough
 Council
 Oxford City Council
 Renfrewshire Council

Sheffield City Council
 Tayside Contracts

WINNER: TAYSIDE CONTRACTS

Most Improved Performer



Finalists

Lancashire County Council
 North Ayrshire Council
 Perth & Kinross Council
 Renfrewshire Council
 Shetland Islands Council
 Tayside Contracts

WINNER: SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

APSE would like to thank all sponsors of the Performance Networks Seminar and Awards 2019 for their support



The APSE Highways Innovation Awards 2020 are now open for entries!

These awards celebrate outstanding local councils that use innovative ideas and solutions to tackle the current challenges facing their frontline services. The awards provide participating authorities with an opportunity to showcase their expertise, alongside the results that they have achieved.

The Innovation Awards are split into three categories:

- Winter maintenance and winter resilience services
- Street lighting
- Highways maintenance services

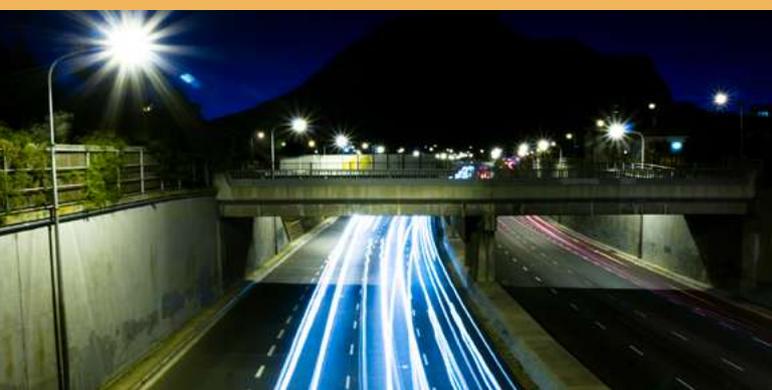
The ideal submission will contain a description of the problem or challenge faced, and the innovative approach taken to remedy it. This could be, for example, a service redesign, new training techniques, use of new materials or equipment, or new methods of responding to/communicating with the public. The submission should also include the outcomes that have been achieved. As a helpful guide, a brochure featuring the successful submissions for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Innovation Awards is available to download.

Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony held as part of the annual APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar on 19 March 2020.

Member and non-member authorities are welcome to submit an application.

Entries will be assessed on a submission basis by an independent judging panel.

Send your expressions of interest to Matt Ellis at mellis@apse.org.uk by no later than Friday 17 January 2020.



New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome **The CDS Group**

CDS



Justin Smith, Director of the CDS Group, receives the Approved Partner certificate from Cllr. Andy Dunbobbin at the APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar in Birmingham on 15 November.

APSE is delighted to welcome The CDS Group (formerly Cemetery Development Services) as the newest member to our Approved Partner scheme.

Speaking about the partnership, The CDS Group Director, Rebecca Ballinger, said, "APSE is at the forefront of delivering excellence in local authority cemetery, crematoria and grounds maintenance services. The opportunity to deepen our relationship with APSE and further embed best practice with the sector was therefore a no-brainer.

"Our extensive experience of cemetery, crematorium and mausoleum feasibility, design and development along with the technical expertise in groundwater risk assessments and drainage management has made The CDS Group one of the leading international brands. We combine creativity with sound technical expertise and with a single point of contact, this experience allows us to manage entire projects from inception to implementation and completion. The CDS Group is very much looking forward to sharing our ideas at the many APSE events across the UK."

Due to the increasing demand and recognising the continued growth of Cemetery Development Services, the company was rebranded as The CDS Group in November 2019 to offer clients a wider range of services covering Cemeteries and Crematoria, Parks and Leisure, and Environmental Solutions.

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, "Having enjoyed a long-standing relationship with The CDS Group, APSE are delighted to have them on board on our Approved Partner scheme. In addition to being market leaders in cemetery design and construction, CDS also specialise in recreational space developments as well as environmental monitoring: contamination sampling, groundwater monitoring and environmental investigations. These specialisms will be of immense value to our members across the UK; specifically, those associated with grounds maintenance. This new partnership will help contribute significantly to the drive for excellence in local authority frontline services."

The CDS Group is recognised as a leading international brand in cemetery, crematorium and mausoleum design and development. Over the last 16 years, CDS has undertaken in excess of 400 feasibility studies and designed and built over 40 new cemeteries both in the UK and overseas. As a result of the success and reputation in the cemetery market, CDS has expanded into designing and developing new crematoria sites for both local authorities and private companies; with many new sites currently under construction and many more at various stages of feasibility, design and planning.

For more information visit: <https://www.thecdsgroup.co.uk>

Who cares? We do!

It's a problem common to many local authorities; struggling to cope with the ever-increasing volumes and financial pressures associated with looked after children, Wirral Council found that the most unlikely of sources can make a big difference to young lives. We spoke to Andy McCartan, Commissioning Services Manager at Wirral Council, about this APSE Service award-winning project.

In local government, we love nothing better than an acronym or terminology nobody else could possibly understand. With no social care background. When I was asked to engage with the Council's Children's Services Team to help find employment opportunities for "care leavers", my natural response was "children who have been in care but are now required to stand on their own two feet... presumably because they are 18?" The answer was actually somewhat more complex - "No, children in care and those who have previously been in the care of the local authority for whom we still have a statutory duty to support with housing, health, education, employment and training until they are 21 and in some case up to the age of 25". I'll leave it with you to figure out!

Nonetheless, this is a serious, complex and expensive issue for local authorities up and down the country. It's also a problem that is worsening for many in the face of an ever-growing precarious financial position. At 120 per 100,000, Wirral has more than double the national average of children in care. When these young people leave care, they are three times more likely to be NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training and 40% more likely to be homeless at some point in their lives. Early intervention for these young people is therefore critical, and at an average cost of £25,000 per annum / per individual, their overall impact on public sector finances is more than significant.

There is no single solution as to how we deal with this crisis. Council officers and partners are working tirelessly day in day out to support early interventions designed to give young people the best possible start in life. The Council itself and some partner organisations already ringfence dedicated positions for care leavers and many private sector organisations do offer support. The range of solutions however are often disproportionate to the scale of the problem, so seeking and establishing new pathways into sustainable training and employment opportunities don't come along very often.

Sometimes however, hope comes from the most unlikely sources. Rather than having

the traditional dialogue with contractors around savings and cost avoidance models; conversations which are often difficult to reach mutual agreement, we asked a different question; how do you as a provider deliver your corporate social responsibility? And more importantly how can you help Wirral to deliver this.

With this different approach, we got a different response. Not focussing on direct contract costs, but rather those areas that were Council pressures led me to ask, "Wirral has a high number of children in care, how can you help us here, using the apprenticeship route and utilising the levy? After some pondering the response was refreshing, "Yes, I think we could have something to work with there!", and in that eureka moment, the concept of our own supply chain employing care leavers was born.

Early intervention for these young people is therefore critical, and at an average cost of £25,000 per annum / per individual, their overall impact on public sector finances is more than significant.

At this point, it would be easy to say things were easy, but this simple conversation triggered a chain of events that led to Wirral adopting a new additional approach to support young care leavers into employment. As it turned out, the "apprentice levy" wasn't quite for everyone. However, this was to be more of a positive than a negative. "Why don't we employ them full time on standard contracts?" – music to my ears! "We are really struggling to attract young people interested in horticulture" – even better! This was just some of the feedback from other suppliers when asked the same question, resulting in two of the early adopters employing four care leavers between them, on contracts equal and comparable to those of their full

time employees – and with all the associated training and development to go with it. At the time of writing there have been 8 jobs created for care leavers with a further 12 in the pipeline.

Whilst this represents a modest victory to reaching our ambition in Wirral, which is every care leaver is given an opportunity for an apprenticeship if that's the route they choose, there is nonetheless a great deal to do to make this work. Not all placements have succeeded, and many young people are not prepared for the major change in their life that full time employment and responsibility can bring.

Due to significant barriers some care leavers face, they often need intensive support not only to access but also to sustain opportunities. Wirral's Children's Services Department have worked hard with the employers throughout the programme to support the individuals and provide any "over and above" requirements to aid and develop their progress, including travel to work and driving license opportunities. And we are still learning. Readiness for work training is now being undertaken and employers and young people are now encouraged to spend a week experiencing their prospective workplace prior to starting "for real".

With the ever-growing impact and opportunity presented through more and more Councils incorporating defined Social Value requirements into their commissioning arrangements, this concept presents a perfect solution as to how commissioners can add real, tangible value to their contracts. It is also a clear example of how a "whole council" approach to corporate parenting can work to support our Care Leavers with meaningful outcomes for both the Care leavers and the wider Council. Due to speed at which this programme has commenced and developed, the financial impacts and benefits are still being mapped, however one thing is for certain – that sustained and progressive implementation of this scheme will undoubtedly change the lives of some young people forever.

Simple! No overly complex systems, or silo working to stop progress, just an approach that we've developed to help our young people build their futures. But don't just take my word for it. There are no better advocates for this programme than the young people themselves. •



To see how this initiative has really changed the life of a young person, please visit: <http://bit.ly/WirralCareLeaver>

Hot food takeaways: Planning a route to healthier communities

Child health campaigners Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming, have recently produced a report on the need for new planning policies to restrict new hot food takeaways near schools. APSE Principal Advisor Louise Melville provides a summary of this timely report.

Childhood obesity levels remain at an all-time high, with one third of all children in the UK obese or overweight by the time they begin secondary school. For many years, local authorities have looked to reverse this worrying trend through planning policies. However, these powers, limited as they are, are coming under further attack. With the news that the fast food outlets McDonalds and KFC are considering opening up 800 new sites across the UK, Sustain's latest report has called on the Government to give more powers to authorities to restrict new hot food takeaways in their localities, specifically near schools.

The report highlights some of the reasons behind why Sustain has chosen to explore planning as a way to improve the access to healthier food. Notwithstanding the scale of childhood obesity in the UK, the report cites growing public interest in addressing the issue of unhealthy hot food takeaways and the corresponding increase in access to unhealthy food retail outlets among children living in low income areas as key reasons. The report also credits the growth in fast food advertising, as well as the importance of a young person's environment in influencing their eating decisions, as justification for the research. Furthermore, the report acknowledges the importance of central and local government working together along with residents to jointly tackle this pressing issue.

The report includes a number of local authority case studies that provide information on how each is using their planning policies and specific guidance on how these policies are promoting the health and wellbeing of their local residents.

The local authority case studies include:

- Barking and Dagenham (London Borough)
- Blackburn with Darwen Council
- Gateshead Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Salford City Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- St Helens Council

These case studies and the report provide a table of information on the mechanisms which the above local authorities have used in order to control hot food takeaways through the use of their Supplementary Planning Documents.

The report notes that "control of hot food takeaways through the planning system is too blunt a tool for councils to use alone to impact poor health, but in association with other measures a council can make a better claim for the role that such a policy can plan towards creating healthier communities".

All case studies highlight the complexity of the issue and note that although hot food takeaways do not directly cause obesity, there are many offering nutritionally poor meals which can contribute to obesity. The case studies therefore highlight the importance of local evidence. For example, the use of public health data in order to strengthen the case for these policies.

APSE welcomes this report and the work already being undertaken within many of our member authorities to tackle this complex issue. This report recommends some important and simple tools, which if local authorities were able to implement, would help to strengthen their current work to reduce some of the alarming statistics regarding obesity in relation to our young people.

From local authority caterers, to planning and licencing to public health departments, local authorities continue to have a willingness and drive to play their part in dealing with this key policy issue. This has been acknowledged within other Government reports including the "Childhood Obesity Plan – Part Two", with local authorities leading on the pilot for the Trailblazer Programme. Group discussions between local authorities take place on this and many other important issues at our regular APSE advisory group meetings. These are free to attend for APSE members. For more information on future meeting dates and agendas, please visit the APSE website. •



This initiative is based on briefing 19-38 'Hot Food Takeaways - Planning a route to healthier communities'. You can download the full briefing from the APSE website for free.

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#GiveAGift

Thurrock Council's Give A Gift campaign collects presents in the run up to Christmas for local children in need who may not receive a gift on Christmas day. Winner of Best Community and Neighbourhood Initiative at the APSE Service Awards 2019, Thurrock Council spoke to APSE Direct about this inspirational scheme.

Sometimes it is the simplest ideas that can be the most powerful and have the greatest impact for those in need.

The simple act of giving a child a present at Christmas is a joy universally understood. The excited, wide-eyed expression on that little person's face as they tear off the paper on Christmas Day morning; parents looking on lovingly; Christmas tree sparkling with decorations, standing guard over even more brightly wrapped presents.

Which is why it is so heart-breaking when we know, for some children, Christmas Day is, at best, just another day – and at worst, a painful reminder of the harsh circumstances life has thrown at them. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Thurrock Council has corporate parental responsibility for hundreds of children. Children Looked After can be any age, ranging from unborn babies to teenagers. Some need to be with brothers and sisters and some will be on their own.

#GiveAGift, our APSE Award winning initiative, was back for a fourth year, promising to give gifts to all of the looked-after children and young people across Thurrock this Christmas.

In what has become the best pairing since Santa met Rudolf, the Council has worked in partnership with Intu Lakeside to run this campaign. It centres on a Christmas tree, located in a shop unit at Intu Lakeside (donated to the council free of charge), decorated with red stars, each one representing a child in need in Thurrock. Each star has an alias name, along with the actual age and gender of the child. People are invited to choose a star and asked to purchase an age/gender appropriate present for a child and return it back to the tree. The council volunteers and social workers then ensure that the present is wrapped and delivered to the child in time for Christmas Day.

The generosity of Intu Lakeside was the catalyst for other local businesses following suit and within weeks, IKEA Thurrock provided the furniture for a cosy corner, the desk space so volunteers could work and two full window displays. Tesco Lakeside, Morrisons Grays and M&S Lakeside provided hundreds of crates to support the logistics of moving the gifts. Thames Oil Port delivered £2,000 worth of presents, Specsavers Lakeside provided bulk items to support the wrapping of presents and there were many more... All of this harnessing community spirit before the unit had even opened!

The project's aims include:

- presents being donated for over 2,400 Thurrock children that were age and gender specific, to be hand delivered by social workers in time for Christmas day
- to secure a shop unit for free at Intu Lakeside during their busiest time of year
- identifying local businesses who would be able to support



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by donating items from an essential wish list to support the logistics of #GiveAGift as well as presents for the children

- to secure over 120 council staff volunteers to run the unit covering shifts for two full weeks, twelve hours a day during intu Lakeside's Christmas opening hours, a total of 168 hours
- to secure council staff volunteers to support the wrapping of over 2,400 gifts at the Civic Offices

Our aim to have a present for 2,400 children was exceeded last year! We had a surplus of presents after all our children had received a Christmas gift, which meant we were able to provide dozens of presents to our local women's refugee, the rape and incest crisis centre and also to our children's outreach centre.

We received handmade thank you cards from some of the children and one Mum even commented she wouldn't have been able to have such a wonderful Christmas without this project. We were also able to provide a non-verbal teenager with an iPad and specialist programme for communicating. Receiving this gave him the opportunity for the first time in his life to share his Christmas wishes with his Mum. The campaign really has been life changing to so many young people in Thurrock.

The unit at intu Lakeside opened this year from Monday 25 November until Sunday 8 December 2019, where anyone could:

- come along to the #GiveAGift unit at intu Lakeside
- choose a star from the tree
- buy a gift for the child they've chosen and bring their gift back to the unit
- write a gift tag wishing the child a Happy Christmas
- hand the present and tag to a #GiveAGift volunteer who will be looking after the tree
- the present will then be wrapped and delivered to the child in time for Christmas

The council's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts are used to raise awareness and promote #GiveAGift. Daily posts were

scheduled in the run up last year (and will be the same for this year!), starting with one tweet, one week before launch reaching 28,958 people. Daily updates were posted from the unit with the amount of presents donated and stories from customers the unit volunteers met.

We had 13,400 organic reach on our Facebook post the day the unit launched, which resulted in 376 reactions, comments and shares. Collectively over 182,000 individuals were reached through the campaign via social media – clearly demonstrating community awareness and collaboration. Social media is a great tool to connect with our residents so that they could feel a real sense of involvement and have real-time results as the campaign progressed.

A wall tally of donated presents proved particularly powerful in that for every 100 presents donated another star was added to the wall and announced on social media; incentivising the community to help push these figures up and also clearly defining how many presents were still needed. A branded #GiveAGift Instagram frame was also used. Donators and volunteers at the unit were encouraged to use the frame to show their support which were then shared on the council's social media platforms as well as on their own – again giving the community another opportunity to feel involved.

Unless anyone is thinking of cancelling Christmas any time soon, there is no reason why #GiveAGift cannot continue for many years to come. Sadly, there will always be children in need regardless of whatever systems and safeguarding methods the council has in place.

But with the amazing residents and partners that we have here in Thurrock, our children should always have something to unwrap on Christmas morning. Every child deserves a little magic at Christmas. •



Working together to end rough sleeping

Having experienced a sharp rise in rough sleepers, the City of Wolverhampton Council has led a highly effective multi-agency response focused on offering tailored, comprehensive support designed to tackle the root causes. Rough sleeping has since fallen sharply. We take a closer look at this APSE Service-Award winning approach.



The City of Wolverhampton was affected by the recent sharp rise in the number of rough sleepers across England. Such a trend brings with it devastating social costs for the individual as well as escalating financial demands on the public purse.

Official statistics showed the number of rough sleepers nationally had risen by 169% since 2010. Historically, Wolverhampton has had a small number of rough sleepers but between 2014-16 the figure doubled and continued to increase in 2017.

Rough sleepers are among the most vulnerable people in the city with a life expectancy of just 43 years for women and 47 for men, according to Crisis. Crisis also estimates the average the cost of someone sleeping rough in terms of emergency health care, criminal justice and other support is approximately £20,000 a year. There are also costs to local business and the council – cleaning up land vacated by rough sleepers can cost thousands of pounds. Enforcement action is also costly and often moves rough sleepers from one part of the city to another without addressing underlying issues.

The Council was already spending £1.2m a year on homelessness and rough sleeping with provision including emergency accommodation via a night shelter, hostels and day centre facilities delivered in partnership with Wolverhampton Homes (an ALMO), the private and voluntary sectors. New thinking was required to address the rise in rough sleeping and develop long-term solutions.

In 2017 council leader Cllr Roger Lawrence launched the City of Wolverhampton Tackling Rough Sleeping Task Team to draw key organisations together around the issue. Chaired by the leader, it involved representatives from Wolverhampton City Centre BID, the council (including public health, community safety, housing & homelessness services, and city health), Recovery Near You, Wolverhampton Drug Service User Involvement Team, Refugee and Migration Centre, West Midlands Police, Wolverhampton Homes and West Midlands Combined Authority.

It became apparent that while there was some partnership working to support rough sleepers, there was duplication, gaps in provision and limited engagement from health partners. The Task Team therefore asked Public Health to lead a multi-agency operational group going forward.

Every year local councils carry out a count of rough sleepers on a date set by Government, which provides a useful snapshot but tends to underestimate the true scale. Through collaboration, the operational group got a far more accurate picture and found there were 30 rough sleepers in the city – far higher than the annual count's figure of 19.

The early stages of this multi-agency approach helped to establish the main reasons for rough sleeping, which included the closure of provision elsewhere and exclusion from local support due to violent and aggressive behaviour (often related to drug and alcohol issues).

The Task Team recognised that ending rough sleeping could not be achieved by any one organisation alone. A key priority was to develop new joint ways of working to provide tailored one-to-one support.

As a result of the Council's joined up and strategic approach, 20 organisations are now involved in the operational group with partners meeting frequently to share intelligence, agree next steps and carry out joint work on the streets. The Council is working with the West Midlands Combined Authority to tackle rough sleeping as part of a coordinated regional response. The Task Team has also overseen the implementation of a refreshed Homelessness Prevention Strategy and allocations policy to support the council to deliver a preventative homeless service in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act. This includes a clear message of intervention and prevention and access to quality accommodation.

A joined-up approach has also ensured the Council's provision is more comprehensive, responsive and better equipped to reach vulnerable individuals. The operational group carries out monthly rough sleeping counts to maintain an accurate picture of the situation. The Group has piloted and rolled out 'out of hours outreach provision' on four nights a week up until 11pm. A multi-agency rough sleeper team has been launched in a prominent location in the city centre involving officers from Wolverhampton Homes, West Midlands Police, outreach services and the antisocial behaviour team.

There are now an extra 10 emergency units of single person's accommodation provision. The Task Team helped four local organisations to secure £374,000 over two years from MHCLG for targeted outreach activity by facilitating a meeting with Government and assisting with the bid.

The operational group has piloted a new way for people sleeping rough, or at risk of rough sleeping, to access support for training and employment via a tailored referral process involving housing, police and local voluntary organisations. So far 31 individuals have registered with Wolves@Work (a council-led partnership bringing together employers, jobseekers and training & education providers), giving them access to a dedicated work coach at three locations. Four people have been supported into employment and learning from the pilot is shaping provision going forward.

The Council now has a city-wide approach that benefits and engages residents. Rather than give money directly to rough sleepers, the public have been encouraged to support the Alternative Giving Campaign, set up and promoted by the City Centre BID. It's so far raised over £14,000 through collection boxes around the city and helped to support rough sleepers to access emergency accommodation, clothes and food at short notice until more sustainable support is in place. Its website has been refreshed this year to enable online donations.

The street link reporting app, www.streetlink.org.uk, and a helpline have been promoted to enable partners and members of the public to notify outreach agencies where people are sleeping rough and in need of assistance.

Rough sleeper numbers have fallen by 64% from 33 in April 2018 to 12 in January 2019 at a time when most areas are experiencing increases.

Rough sleeper numbers have fallen by 64% from 33 in April 2018 to 12 in January 2019 at a time when most areas are experiencing increases. Increasing numbers of rough sleepers are now being helped into accommodation via the city's Pathway Service commissioned by City of Wolverhampton Council and run by charity P3.

Future goals

Two guiding principles have underpinned the approach taken by the Task Team. Firstly, no-one should be forced to sleep rough in Wolverhampton and all efforts should be focused on providing a viable and long-lasting alternative.

Secondly, delivering real and sustainable change to end rough sleeping involves working together to ensure those experiencing rough sleeping are fully engaged and at the heart of what the Council does

So while the Task Team concluded in January, the fundamental changes it ushered in will continue. By piloting new ways of working, with a focus on an outcomes-based approach, it has identified best practice that is now adopted as business as usual.

In January, Health & Wellbeing Together (a forum involving key leaders from city's health and care system) agreed to the Task Team's final recommendations and confirmed a commitment to collectively tackle rough sleeping by having strategic oversight of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2022 and actively contributing to the associated action plan. •

"P3 were my guardian angels. It was a Friday and they were able to give me resources financially to accommodate me in a hotel for three days, until I could get temporary accommodation on the Monday. Now I've managed to source a really lovely flat, I'm going to AA and I've got clean and sober friends. I'm going out, doing wonderful things and life's really good."

Tamsin, former rough sleeper

New APSE Energy Approved Partners:

Welcome  **GRIDSERVE**
sustainable energy



Sebastian Street, Development Manager at GRIDSERVE, receives the APSE Energy Approved Partner certificate from former APSE National Chair Archie Dryburgh and Head of APSE Energy Phil Brennan at the APSE Energy Scotland Summit 2019.

GRIDSERVE are experienced sustainable energy professionals with roots that started with some of the world's first commercial deployments of solar energy and energy storage solutions over 40 years ago. With a wealth of experience and capabilities to share with local authority partners, they are well positioned to provide commercial perspectives and solutions to specific local challenges that councils face.

The continued growth of electric and other low emission vehicles is inevitable as all of the world's major manufacturers continue to announce their commitment to electrification with multiple new electric models. This is prompting greater pressure for renewable electricity generation as well as reliable charging infrastructure. GRIDSERVE are at the forefront of these developments and there are also significant opportunities for local authorities to benefit from investing in this sector.

Head of APSE Energy Phil Brennan said, "Technology is moving at such a pace across the energy agenda that it is impossible for any individual to keep up. Welcoming GRIDSERVE as a partner means we will have access to their understanding, knowledge and experience to help our members keep abreast of some of those changes. Equally, they will be better informed about how the assets they have might contribute to tackling climate change and raising income."

APSE Energy has highlighted the investment that Warrington Borough Council are making in 2 solar farms in Yorkshire and GRIDSERVE are working alongside the Council to ensure they take advantage of all the opportunities the site provides which also includes plans for Electric Forecourts® at the sites.

Matt Sandel, Public Sector Partnerships Director with GRIDSERVE said, "As our engagement with local authorities grows, we are looking to build on the reputation that APSE have across the sector to share knowledge and help more of them. We expect there are many potential sites in local authority ownership which they can take advantage of. Clearly they will need support from industry experts to move forward and we can supply that, based on our ongoing work with councils. At the same time we are looking to spread the word on the wider benefits of investment in sustainable energy and see this partnership as a way of doing that. We have case studies we can point to which are producing exactly what councils are looking for. This partnership will give us the chance to tell the story of those examples and help more local authorities to take a step towards making similar investments with a view to realising similar benefits." •

For more information: <https://www.gridserve.com/>

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Servicing & Maintenance

Go Plant Fleet Services adds new Schmidt Stratos III spreaders to the fleet



Go Plant Fleet Services has boosted its impressive winter fleet with the addition of a number of new Schmidt Stratos III spreaders. The hi-tech Aebi Schmidt vehicles strengthen the company's impressive overall offering to customers all over the UK.

Each of the new spreaders has been specified with Autologic – Aebi Schmidt's highly-acclaimed GPS-guided and fully automated smart spreading system.

They have also each been converted to provide a pre-wet capability with the addition of the appropriate brine tanks. Phil Quelch, Chief Operating Officer at Go Plant Fleet Services, said: "The new spreaders can be supplied supply in either a dry or pre-wet configuration, which is important to winter maintenance customers.

"The technology available, including Autologic and Winter Report, means we can offer brand new, state-of-the-art equipment that gives our customers peace of mind, plus the flexibility to use different drivers on alternative routes and optimise their available workforce."

Thanks to the Autologic system, the spreaders can follow pre-planned routes and use only the amount of salt needed for any specific treatment. 'Winter Report' enables fleet managers to see exactly where the vehicles have been gritting and how much has been used, ensuring all routes are being treated and creating peace of mind should any issues arise.

Phil added: "Sourcing vehicles from several providers can be a costly and time-consuming task in itself – and we know that if something goes wrong with one provider, then an entire operation could be delayed.

"That's why we offer our clients a complete end-to-end solution which can be tailored to precise needs and budget. Our entire fleet of specialist vehicles, including powerful gully emptiers, gritters, road and pedestrian sweepers, is maintained to the highest possible standards.

"We have a team of qualified and professional operators if required, we can often provide vehicles at 24 hours' notice and our fast response 24/7 fleet support means our experts are always on hand should they be needed.

"We can also provide advice and consultancy on the right vehicle for your requirements, whether you need to carry out snow clearing duties, de-icing or preventative spreading." •

Contact us now on 0800 090 2451 for more information.

Making plans for NILGA

APSE is once again proud to sponsor the Northern Ireland Local Government Association Conference. The 2020 event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast on 20 February.



The key driver for the Local Government Conference 2020 is "The Future of Local Government" which will identify the investment, actions and policies councils and their partners play in shaping the future of our communities, environment and economy. What's to come in terms of the massive challenges, powers and transformations needed, in the complex future we face? With expectations on councils rising, the increased demands place huge resource burdens on the 11 councils, so innovation, transformation, new suppliers and relationships will be needed to meet our growth and efficiency challenges!

On Friday 21 February, following the NILGA conference the APSE Local Government Commission 2030 will be holding an evidence gathering day with colleagues within Northern Ireland Local Government. The evidence session will commence at 10.00 AM allowing delegates to hear about Commission themes from Professor Steve Griggs and Commission Chair Paul O'Brien. The event will end with a networking lunch for those providing input into the evidence gathering day. To enquire about attending please email Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk

Conference 2020 is regarded as a key event that promotes networking, the sharing of knowledge, skills and ideas. NILGA represents the 'Voice of Local Government' in Northern Ireland, this year with the direct involvement of SOLACE, the Chief Executives body and with participation from the 11 councils, political parties and many more.

The Conference will also feature the Local Government Awards NI 2020. The Awards showcase brilliance in service provision, new initiatives and personal commitment from councils, councillors, staff and partners. They offer public and peer recognition whilst motivating those delivering and sustaining front line and other key council services.

The Awards cover eight categories and will be revealed at the awards ceremony hosted by Sarah Travers, taking place on the 20 February 2020 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast. •

For more information about the event and the award finalists, please visit: <https://www.nilga.org>



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Summit to chew on in Falkirk

The APSE Energy Summit Scotland returned for a second time to the Central Lowlands for two days of the latest policy and technological developments in the sector. APSE Energy's Charlotte Banks provides a brief summary of the event.

The need for local authorities to support innovation was one of the key themes that emerged at the summit, and it was highlighted by reference to a number of case studies from councils such as Stirling, Warrington, Nottingham and Dumfries and Galloway. These and other local authorities are taking this agenda forward by investing time and resources into new operating models, products and services which are new to the sector and so involve an element of managed risk.

Lori McElroy, Director, Housing and Energy at BRE (Scotland), outlined evidence from a number of studies and highlighted innovative products. The point is that there are many private sector companies looking for public sector partners to pilot new products and services.

A further theme to emerge was the value of starting small in terms of projects within this agenda. It is not the case that all projects have to be large scale and expensive - start small but at least get started. Success breeds momentum and that will lead to more interest and activity.

There was interest in a couple of models which are available to help you track carbon footprints – so make sure you utilise them. We have mentioned the SCATTER tool and the Tyndall Centre model previously



– they can help you monitor where the organisation is starting from and monitor progress towards targets.

The issue of education also emerged – if we are expecting our colleagues across the local authority to suggest schemes which will help the local authority meet its climate emergency targets, then they must be informed enough about the global, national and most importantly local context, to make that contribution.

Finally, there was a focus on the fact that this is an unusual time in terms of the level of public interest in climate change and the resulting declarations made by many councils. What the impact of these declarations will be over the long term, only time will tell, but if ever there was a time to make the case for projects and services which will support sustainability and carbon reduction, it is now. Commitments are being made across local authorities and officers and councillors need to make the most of the amount of support for climate-related action in order to push for long-term and significant investment. •

APSE's January Policy Seminar will focus on climate change for local councils; innovations, developments and practical actions. More details can be found overleaf.

New APSE Energy Approved Partners:

Welcome  **Kensa Contracting**
A KENSA GROUP COMPANY



Matthew Black, Business Development at Kensa Contracting, receives the APSE Energy Approved Partner certificate from former APSE National Chair Archie Dryburgh and Head of APSE Energy Phil Brennan at the APSE Energy Summit 2019.

Kensa Contracting is an award-winning specialist delivery partner and contractor for fifth generation district heating with ambient shared ground loop arrays and ground source heat pumps. Through this partnership, APSE Energy hopes to ensure local councils are able to understand the benefits of ground source heat pumps. Domestic heating remains a significant issue and a focus for government action, and heat pumps are a technology which can make a contribution to de-carbonising heat.

Leading the adoption of low carbon heat frameworks to achieve the UK's net-zero carbon emissions target by 2050, Kensa Contracting

recently expanded into Scotland with the appointment of Matthew Black (pictured).

APSE Energy recently hosted an on-site event with Enfield Council and Kensa Contracting, showcasing their ambitious project which involved the retrofit of eight tower blocks with ground source heat pumps. T

Speaking about our new Energy Partner, Head of APSE Energy Phil Brennan said that, "Kensa Contracting will be a huge asset to all of our members and especially those with responsibility for domestic heat, housing, fuel poverty and related matters. As Energy Partners, Kensa Contracting will appear at events and will be sharing their technological and industry expertise at a range of advisory groups and other meetings.

"Adding Kensa Contracting as a partner gives the APSE Energy membership access to a range of expertise in this technology and they will be contributing to the drive for excellence in local authority services."

Stephanie Gregory, Director of Marketing at the Kensa Group, said, "In order to continue to provide affordable heat whilst meeting ambitious carbon reduction targets, all those in positions of responsibility have a duty to explore and utilise 'green' technology wherever possible. Ground source heat pumps are a tried and tested technology, the financial business case stacks up, and they offer the lowest carbon and running costs – so it's a win-win for all concerned for now, and in the future, as the grid further decarbonises.

"We recognise APSE as a trusted brand and we look forward to the chance to engage with more councils across the UK. We have helped a number of local authorities and know there are many opportunities out there where ground source heat pumps will provide the ideal solution for heat provision from a clean energy source."

For more information: <https://www.kensacontracting.com/>

Climate Change for Local Councils: Innovations, Developments and Practical Actions

APSE Policy Seminar

Includes expert speakers:

Professor Carly McLachlan, Director, Tyndall Centre for Climate Change

Yves Tielemens, Enhance Landfill Mining Project Manager, Group Machiels, Belgium

George Sandkuhler, Chief Engineer, Faun Zoeller, Germany

Wayne Bexton, Head of Energy Services, Commercial, Infrastructure and Energy, Nottingham City Council

John Palmer, Research and Policy Director, Passivhaus Trust

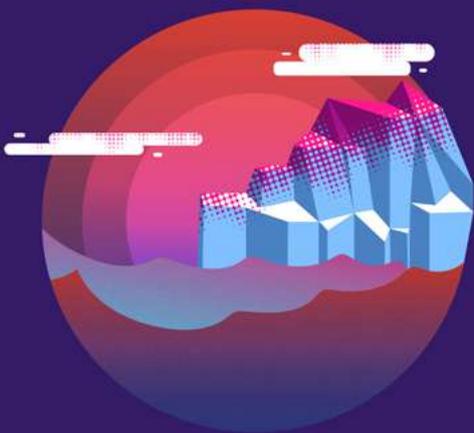
Bean Beanland, Ground Source Heat Pumps Association

Dr Emily O'Donnell, University of Nottingham, Research Fellow, Faculty of Social Sciences

Sukky Choong-Campbell, Environmental Manager, Society of motor manufacturers and traders

Kelly Eaton, London Borough of Brent

Roy Nolan, FCPFA, RP Martin



Thursday 23 January 2020

Midland Hotel (Green Tourism Certified)
Manchester City Centre

New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome **GovPlanet**



GovPlanet® is the place for local authorities and emergency services to sell their surplus vehicles and equipment. Benefiting from 20 years in the business of online auctions, GovPlanet helps public bodies generate higher returns from their end-of-life vehicles and equipment – especially for specialist vehicles, which tend to perform poorly in a live auction.

Speaking of this exciting new partnership, MD David Shouesmith said, "APSE members will benefit enormously from our simple-to-use service; tailored to the requirements of local government sellers with stringent assurance, audit and control processes.

"GovPlanet's online sales platform, combined with the expertise of our team, ensures they select the most appropriate sales channel to achieve the best sale price thus returning the highest proceeds to the seller.

Often this will be a direct sale to an end user; harnessing the power of our technology platform to reach a global buyer base far larger than a conventional auction can. GovPlanet also sell continuously to retail buyers and run a monthly specialist vehicle online auction to ensure a rapid sale."

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, added, "As a market-leader in online vehicle auctions, GovPlanet are a most welcome addition to the APSE family. Their customer-first approach helps them to stand out from the crowd and there is no question that they will deliver a real budget boost for our members, particularly at a time of financial uncertainty."

For more information visit: <https://www.govplanet.co.uk/>



Chair of APSE's Vehicle Maintenance and Transport Advisory Group Cllr. Steve Pearce presents David Shouesmith, GovPlanet's Managing Director, with the Approved Partner Certificate at the national Transport Advisory Group in Manchester on 23 October.



The 4 Key Questions

1

Do you know how your surplus vehicles and equipment are disposed of?

2

Do you know what your vehicles and equipment are really worth?

3

Are you getting the best possible returns for the taxpayer?

4

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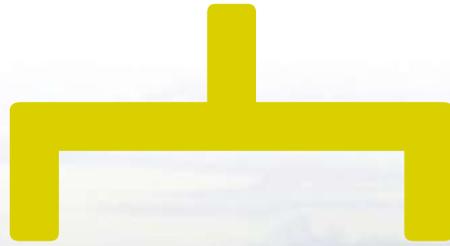
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