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Editorial

That's when good neighbourhoods become good friends



Paul O'Brien
Chief Executive,
APSE

Okay so yes the headline is a word play on the theme tune from the Aussie Soap 'Neighbours' with the original theme tune lyrics (that you will now be singing all day!) including the line 'That's when good neighbours become good friends'. So you might well ask what's an Aussie show got to do with APSE? Well the answer is very little and actually quite a lot!

Most of the UK doesn't have the kind of neighbourhoods with sunny blue skies, permanent BBQ weather or, for that matter, Kylie and Jason as our next door neighbours but ... aside from those differences... most of us live in a street with people of different ages, abilities and at different stages in their lives. They may be a new parent, a young person in their first ever home, an older person, recently retired from the world of work. What binds people together is that when they step out from their homes into their local neighbourhood they step into the very heart of what we do as councils.

Our local neighbourhood services bind together our neighbourhood communities. The new parents taking their children to the local park, the young person using a local leisure centre, the older person who may make use of assisted bin collections and is glad of decent pavements and gritted roads in the winter. The services

delivered at a neighbourhood level allow the fabric of society to function. They support the health, wealth and sustainability of local areas. Sadly, many of the services councils provide at a neighbourhood level are not even recognised as 'council services'. Perhaps this is why cuts to neighbourhood level services have been seen as a more palatable option when making tough decisions about local council budgets?

Of all the services provided by councils at different tiers within local government, neighbourhood services have collectively been the hardest hit by the pressures on council budgets. If this continues by 2020 we will have reduced spending on these services by as much as £6 billion! By any stretch of the imagination these are seismic reductions. That is why we are launching our neighbourhood services campaign. We want to see APSE's huge family in local government support the services that matter in our neighbourhoods. You can help the campaign by visiting the APSE website and getting your council to adopt our model motion on our campaign resource page. Read more about the campaign on page 12 of this edition of APSE direct.

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Report Back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events



Exploring the new municipalism and community wealth building at the Labour LGA. The panel includes [L-R] APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien, Mayor of Newham Rokhsana Fiaz, Cllr Helen Holland, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adult Social Care at Bristol City Council; APSE National Chair John Kerr-Brown, and Cllr Marje Paling of Gedling Borough Council.

Labour LGA

APSE hosted two fringe events at the Labour Local Government Conference in Coventry on Saturday 9 February. In the first session, alongside Paul Smith of Survation and Cllr Brendan Hughes of Lancaster City Council, APSE shared findings on a recent public opinion poll; showing the public trust local councils to deliver services over and above the private sector, and that the public want more of their taxes spent on local public services. You can learn more about these findings and our Neighbourhood Services campaign on page 12. The later session considered the new municipalism, and explored the benefits of adopting a community wealth building approach to local council services. To learn more about community wealth building in practice, read our January Policy Seminar Report Back on page 22.

Risk and commercialisation

This report by APSE and the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) discusses the ways in which scrutiny can engage with issues arising from commercial activity. The full guide is available to download for free from the APSE website. You can read more about the report on page 7. A joint article from report author Ed Hammond and APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien exploring the findings from the report also featured in the 01/02/19 edition of the MJ. You can read the piece on the MJ website.

Annual Service Awards: Call to entries!

APSE is delighted to announce the nominations for the APSE Annual Service Awards 2019 are now open. For information about registering your interest in an award, please visit: <http://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/events/apse-annual-seminar-2019/annual-service-awards-2019/>

Conservative Councillors Association

APSE hosted two events at the CCA Local Government Conference in Oxford on 22 February. The first session explored the findings of our latest public opinion survey on neighbourhood services. You can read more about these findings on page 12. In our second session - the local government finance plenary – APSE shared the findings of our latest local government finance research; asking if austerity is coming to an end, when will local government get its fair share?

Wales

Commercialisation guide

Increasingly councils across the UK are looking at a more commercial approach to service delivery. APSE's latest guide – written and researched by Head of APSE Solutions Andy Mudd - explores powers, best practice and the culture shift needed to embrace a commercial culture in Welsh local government. For more information view page 12.



The panel discusses local government finance at the CCA. [L-R] leader of South Norfolk Council Cllr John Fuller, Heather Wheeler MP, APSE's Mo Baines and leader of Gloucestershire County Council Cllr Mark Hawthorne.

Northern Ireland

Performance networks in Northern Ireland

On 27 February, APSE Northern Ireland delivered a seminar for APSE member councils at the stunning Ecos Centre in Ballymena, exploring the interface between planning, economic development and regeneration. This was followed by a lively discussion session which asked 'Has regeneration become a contested term?' APSE Northern Ireland's growing use of performance information to assist in improvements in planning and the local environment was then debated with Dave Henrys, a leading APSE associate and performance expert in environmental services. APSE Performance Networks hosted two development workshops in Ballymena on 28 February to explore future use of data; this issue of good performance and efficiency is made all the more important with funding pressures now seeping through to local councils as a result of the ongoing suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Scotland

Congratulations Renfrewshire!

Following a rigorous judging process, Renfrewshire Council saw off stiff competition to emerge as the winner of APSE Scotland's inaugural Commercialisation Competition. The Council will be rewarded with five days of APSE Solutions support to help turn their business idea into a reality. APSE Direct takes a look at Renfrewshire's winning proposal on page 25.



The APSE Scotland Apprentice Award finalists share a photograph at the APSE Scotland Building and Housing seminar 2019 in Dunblane.

Recognising excellence in Dunblane!

APSE is delighted to announce the winners of the APSE Scotland Building and Housing Apprentice Awards (kindly sponsored by Jordan Electrics) and the Margo Blair Award 2019:

- Dylan Allan, Fife Council (Joiner) - 1st Year Trade
- Alan Smith, East Lothian Council (Joiner) - 2nd Year Trade
- Matthew Lang, South Lanarkshire Council (Electrician) - 3rd Year Trade
- Callum Bonner, Clackmannanshire Council (Painter & Decorator) - 4th Year Trade
- Ashley Duffy, Fife Council - Non-Trade
- East Ayrshire Council - Margo Blair Award 2019

The winners were announced at the APSE Scotland Building and Housing Seminar in Dunblane on Thursday 7 February 2019. For the full list of the finalists and photographs from the event visit the APSE website.

Meet our new member of staff!

Ryan McNally, Data Analysis and IT Officer



What is your professional background?

Prior to working at APSE, I worked for 12 years at Manchester United in numerous roles within the Ticket Office, the last 6 of those years as a Data Analyst.

What is your role at APSE?

My role at APSE is Data Analysis and IT Officer within the Performance Networks team. I am responsible for providing support to the benchmarking process, populating databases, interrogating and producing reports. I am also responsible for the maintenance of APSE's IT systems, updating the website and providing internal IT support.

What is your favourite thing about your role?

My favourite thing about my role is that it is extremely varied. As my role has two elements to it no two days are the same. I like the Data Analysis side to see the way the data is analysed and interpreted, and also the IT side to see how systems work and investigate issues etc.

Where can APSE members meet you?

I will mainly be based in the APSE Manchester office, you can contact me by emailing rmcnally@apse.org.uk or phoning 0161 772 1810.

New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome **BigChange®**



BigChange Corporate Sales Directors Eli Sufrin and Martin Owens receive their Approved Partner certificate from APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien at the APSE Facilities, Catering and Cleaning Management Seminar 2019 in Nottingham.

BigChange, Leeds-based mobile workforce technology company, has become an Approved Partner of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).

The BigChange 5 in 1 system combines CRM, job scheduling, a mobile app, vehicle tracking, and an on-demand booking app that eliminates 100 per cent of the paper to automate all of the manual processes undertaken by back office and mobile workers. JobWatch can be used to simultaneously manage both in-house and sub contracted operations through their brand new BigChange Network Platform with a single system that provides full management and financial reporting creating digital transformation.

"As local authorities strive to improve efficiency and accountability, there is a growing need to eliminate cumbersome paperwork by introducing digital working. It's especially important for council services involving staff who are out and about all day doing essential community work or providing transport services," comments Martin Port, CEO of BigChange.

JobWatch is already in wide use to manage services such as Special Education Needs, Waste, Passenger Transport, Property Servicing and Repairs, Social Housing, Highway Maintenance and Pest Control. The system is easy to configure for any service and includes a new booking app allowing local residents and businesses to book services from their smartphones.

"We see membership of APSE as the ideal platform to engage with local government and especially those people who are forward-thinkers looking to improve public services through the use of the latest technology," says Port. "With JobWatch we have developed a platform that is already being used to completely transform council services. It replaces a number standalone legacy systems with a much more useful and affordable 5 in 1 solution utilising the latest cloud and mobile technology."

By utilising the cloud and mobile apps, BigChange offers a highly flexible and simple to use solution and requires no special IT equipment or support – everything is available 24/7 through a secure web connection from any web-connected device.

For more on BigChange, visit www.bigchangeapps.com

APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar 2019

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Speakers and facilitators include:

Kate Butler, Head of Performance and Programme Management, Via East Midlands Ltd;

Dorothy Reid, Roads and Grounds Manager, Falkirk Council;

Steve Berry OBE, Head, Highways Maintenance, Innovation, Resilience, Department for Transport;

Richard Hayes, Chief Executive, IHE;

Roger Houston, Director Local Government Mutual and Ben Ticehurst, Accounts Director Local Government Mutual Management Services Ltd;

Matthew Lugg OBE, President Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation, Head of Profession, Local Government, WSP;

Anthony Smith IEng FILP, Institute of Lighting Professionals;

Mike Hansford, Highways Asset & Performance Manager, Dorset County Council;

Paul Aldridge, Sustainability Director, WJ Group & Chairman, RSMA;

Nick Raymond, Head of Infrastructure Recovery & Major Programmes, Cumbria County Council;

David Kinsey, Head of Highways and Grounds Maintenance, Derby City Council;

Andy Martin, APSE Associate.



20 and 21 March 2019
Grand Hotel, Blackpool FY1 2JQ

Point of view



A District view on Commercialisation

Cllr Giles McNeill
*Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee,
West Lindsey District Council*

From recent press coverage those outside of the local government family could be forgiven for thinking I am writing this whilst sipping a cocktail in a casino in Monte Carlo (if only!). Terms such as 'reckless' 'gambling' and 'risky business' have all been used to conjure up a picture of local councils' asset and investment strategies. As if they are akin to betting on a roulette wheel or throwing the dice, with little or no thought for the consequences. The sobering reality is that nothing could be further from the truth.

As a district council, responsible for delivering services to near 93,000 local residents, we have made it our business to protect frontline services from Government austerity. That is not an easy task when local councils have faced huge challenges in their finances. Part of our strategy to respond to the changing financial landscape has been to explore ways of generating new sources of income, including investing in property and assets. Some investment is within our local area and some beyond our border in other parts of the country. As any property investor will tell you going outside of the area is not a case of being 'reckless' but is actually a sensible option, spreading risk and diversifying our investment portfolio. A perfectly rational approach and one that has been properly thought through, considered and actioned within a democratic and accountable process.

It may seem to some that we have no business investing in hotels or retail premises but my view, as Chairman of our Governance and Audit Committee, is that providing we are acting responsibly why not us? Our returns on investment are not going to faceless shareholders elsewhere but coming straight back to us to reinvest in our local communities. We can actively use the outcomes of our assets and investment strategy to support the services we know residents value. It therefore causes me some concerns when, from time to time, our Westminster colleagues sabre rattle about curbing our powers to make these investment decisions; which are ultimately in the interests of our residents, protecting services from cuts to local government funding. They can't expect to reduce our funding, cap our ability to raise the Council Tax, and then when we do everything we can to find ways to replace that revenue, say 'you can't do that', without either a plan for fairer funding for local authorities or reverse some of the reductions in funding.

Local government has a rich history in good governance and accountability; indeed, some would argue more so than our colleagues in central government. I naturally accept that it is entirely proper for any local government minister to keep under review the financial health of local councils; it is reasonable to expect that this includes activities that are new and may or may not be in the overall public interest. However, the evidence now points to local councils acting responsibly and doing what they can to preserve local services for our communities. I know that we simply would not welcome interventions that restrict the entrepreneurial and commercial responses that, by necessity, many councils have taken.

Cllr Giles McNeill is Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee at West Lindsey District Council and Chair of the APSE Commercialisation Strategic Forum

Risk and commercialisation: Why scrutiny matters

Some scrutiny practitioners are in two minds about the need to engage with scrutiny of issues relating to commercialisation. APSE's latest guide, written and researched by Ed Hammond, Director of Research at the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS), aims to provide a toolkit to help you build your own bespoke, locally-relevant governance and scrutiny systems for commercial activity.

The ongoing pressures of local government finance has placed councils in unprecedented positions when it comes to the ongoing delivery of services. Choices between reduced service frequencies, developing more efficient ways of delivering services or even making decisions to stop or substantially reduce some non-statutory services have all been made. However, many councils have sought an alternative to these stark choices through raising income; in other words adopting a commercialisation approach towards mitigating the impact of reduced budgets.

Commercialisation of council services is a term that has many meanings to many people and indeed many modes of operation; from simple use of local authority charging powers to full blown trading companies, or asset and investment strategies, that may stretch beyond the local authority's own boundaries. Whatever approach is adopted there is a degree of risk. So with that risk we argue the role of scrutiny is fundamentally important.

APSE recently published a new research report 'Risk and Commercialisation: A guide for local scrutiny councillors' with the Centre for Public Scrutiny. Interviewing both senior officers and scrutiny councillors we found that when councils approach commercialisation the role of scrutiny is often an afterthought - or worse still seen as something that will slow down the entrepreneurialism that enshrines commercialisation. This creates a tension; all parties recognise the importance of commercialisation to council income in the face of ongoing austerity but equally due diligence, transparency and good governance must all be assured.

Our report found that council Leaders and senior managers, including Chief Finance Officers, were keen to support the role of scrutiny but also stressed that they needed to be assured that scrutiny councillors understood the terms of reference. Whilst

commercialisation often demands flexibility and dynamic responses, scrutiny was often viewed as working against these principles. Nevertheless the role of scrutiny in safeguarding council finances, core services and of course residents is vital.

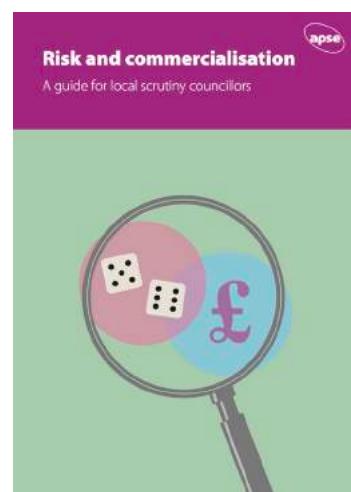
Whilst commercialisation often demands flexibility and dynamic responses, scrutiny was often viewed as working against these principles. Nevertheless the role of scrutiny in safeguarding council finances, core services and of course residents is vital

Our research findings therefore suggest a number of ways forward. First of all we would recommend that from the very outset there is an understanding of the terms of reference. To help shape the terms of reference a number of questions need to be answered. Does the council have a commercialisation strategy that is a clear articulation of how and why it wishes to pursue commercial opportunities and become more entrepreneurial? Does the council understand the importance of culture to this change? Does this strategy include all commercialisation activities that the council is undertaking or is planning to undertake? Is the strategy one that is owned at a corporate and political leadership level? How will the outcomes of commercial endeavours be monitored and risk managed? What is the risk appetite in the council and has there been a fair assessment of risks of commercialisation activities and consideration of alternative options?

By exploring these areas at the start of the process common-ground, between scrutineers and those who are scrutinised, can be established early on. Embedding

a common understanding of the terms of reference and the role of scrutiny from the start will enable a more effective role for scrutiny; one which enhances rather than inhibits commercialisation. Essentially our research suggests that early engagement and streamlining of scrutiny into commercialisation decisions will provide scrutiny councillors with the knowledge and understanding to bring added value to the commercialisation journey, without taking time away from the decision making process. In short scrutiny is not about throwing down iron filings when you are trying to launch a ship but about lubricating the slipway to ensure that commercialisation goes smoothly.

• The full report can be downloaded from the APSE website go to www.apse.org.uk and click on the research tab. You can order print copies either online by email to Wai Lee on wlee@apse.org.uk. £20 for APSE members and £40 for non-members





Cementing best practice in building services

To produce a skilled workforce that will meet the needs of the emerging 21st century business, Swansea Council's Corporate Building & Property Services (CB&PS) has embarked on a major program of staff training and development. We spoke to Nigel Williams, Head of Building Services, about how this APSE Service Award winning initiative is helping the Council "resource for the future."

Swansea Council's Building Services department currently employs 713 employees which includes 420 tradesperson/manuals and 62 apprentices. The annual turnover for the department which includes the Building Maintenance and Technical departments is approximately £45m internally delivered, with a further £30m procured externally.

One of Building Services' business objectives is to continue to maintain a 10% ratio of apprenticeship recruitment to existing skill base. The current numbers represent a 15% ratio. Financing the apprenticeship program is a responsibility held firmly by the service division and is funded directly from its business trading account.

Forecasted skills shortages, competing in the market place, inability to attract quality applicants and investing in our greatest asset staff, were all issues faced by Building Services. As such, the department embarked on a major program of staff training and development. The aim of this new approach was to produce a skilled workforce that will meet the needs of the emerging 21st century business. The three-pronged approach aimed at developing future capacity and skills across Building Services and Swansea Council as a whole, is based on tried and tested best practice. This includes:

1. Specifically targeting apprentices and pre-apprenticeship opportunities;
2. Replicating mentoring processes, equality, support mechanisms, engagement. Using lessons learned from the apprentice strategy in terms of mentoring, to work with agencies such as the Refugee resettlement program, workways and Job Centre plus etc., benefiting the communities in which we all live.
3. Inserting our Apprenticeship & Training strategy into "hard to recruit" areas such as Social services and IT etc.

As a result of a commissioning review in 2016 - which was not just about savings but also socio-economic benefits - five outcomes were identified. These included a recommendation to grow the business through insourcing, to internally deliver key areas of activity based on benchmarking and evidenced value for money, as well as contributing to the Council's overall corporate objective of transforming lives and strengthening the local economy. To achieve this, the recommendation was to: offer increased local employment opportunities; launch a highly successful apprentice programme, provide more work placements, increase joint-working with local SME's and maximise the use of community benefit clauses.

The best practice approach of apprenticeship support, mentoring and inclusion (which was developed over a number of years) is now being replicated in workforce development of existing staff. As with the apprentices, results have shown training with mainstream employees

The average number of courses completed per person has increased from 13.07 to 17.30 within the last year

is far more effective when supported by work placed mentors. The objective is to revolutionise the way in which Swansea Council as a whole "resource for the future"; creating a "cradle to grave" strategy based on equality and inclusion across a wide variety of service areas.

Evidence of success

- The continued commitment to trade apprenticeships recognises the need to replace skilled tradespersons who are part of an increasingly aging workforce. The continuous cycle of "growing your own"- managed through age profiling and succession planning - has ensured the current numbers taken on since commencing the program stand at 196.
- The department has achieved a retention rate of around 88% representing a replacement of existing and aging workforce in the region of 31%. Many ex-apprentices have gone on to further their careers within Building Services.
- The Saturday morning trade school programme actively encourages applications from female and minority groups: over 150 placements have been completed with 14% representation from females.
- In collaboration with the authority's Education department, Building Services developed a structured recruitment approach creating opportunity for circa 40 placements per year and over 440 since 2007.
- Mentoring/Coaching work with agencies such as the Refugee resettlement program has helped to educate resettled refugees on site inductions and toolbox talks, Personal protective equipment (PPE), site tours and construction talks.
- Mentoring/Coaching work with internal departments such as Social services has helped to "link up" apprenticeship opportunities for looked after children (LAC) within the care of the Authority.
- There has been an upskilling of 23 labourers / Semi-skilled employees, qualified to NVQ level 2 in wet trades and Carpentry. This has been developed in conjunction with Unison and Unite, through Union Learning Reps (ULRs).
- 10,845 Training-Toolbox talks and E-Learning courses have been delivered between October 2013 and March 2018. The average number of courses completed per person has increased from 13.07 to 17.30 within the last year.

In addition to the measurable successes in terms of impact on young people, the initiative also resulted in achieving significant progress in other areas including the attainment of IIP Accreditation ISO14002 in a range of business areas and Green Dragon Level 5 for its waste and sustainability initiatives.

Future aspirations for the apprenticeship programme see the focus on professional apprentices and innovation as 2 key areas of development. Recruitment is currently underway to place two professional apprentices within technical disciplines and will be expanded upon next year once pathways have been established. Areas of concern for future capacities are already highlighting the need for Quantity Surveyors, Estimators and Designers.

Building Services recently completed the first new build housing project delivered by the council for a generation which was an innovative "Passivhaus" development of 18 new houses and apartments. Though this exposed a gulf between modern and traditional construction methodologies/technologies, the experience of delivering innovative fast track construction has proven extremely valuable to informing the process of working with Qualification Wales. The department will use this experience to adapt training methods to incorporate new innovative building techniques to future proof our apprentices and existing trade skills sets, as well as the greater good of the City's construction resource needs.

The same principles will be adopted across the Council, using the newly developed Council-wide Apprentice and Traineeship Strategy to instill a positive support mechanism, in relation to its existing staff via its Union Learning Reps (ULRs) joint trade union initiative.

The benefits of Apprentice mentors are more than evident, the same principles can be transferred and utilised by the work place "Buddies" to assist development of the Council existing workforce and help ready them for future challenges.

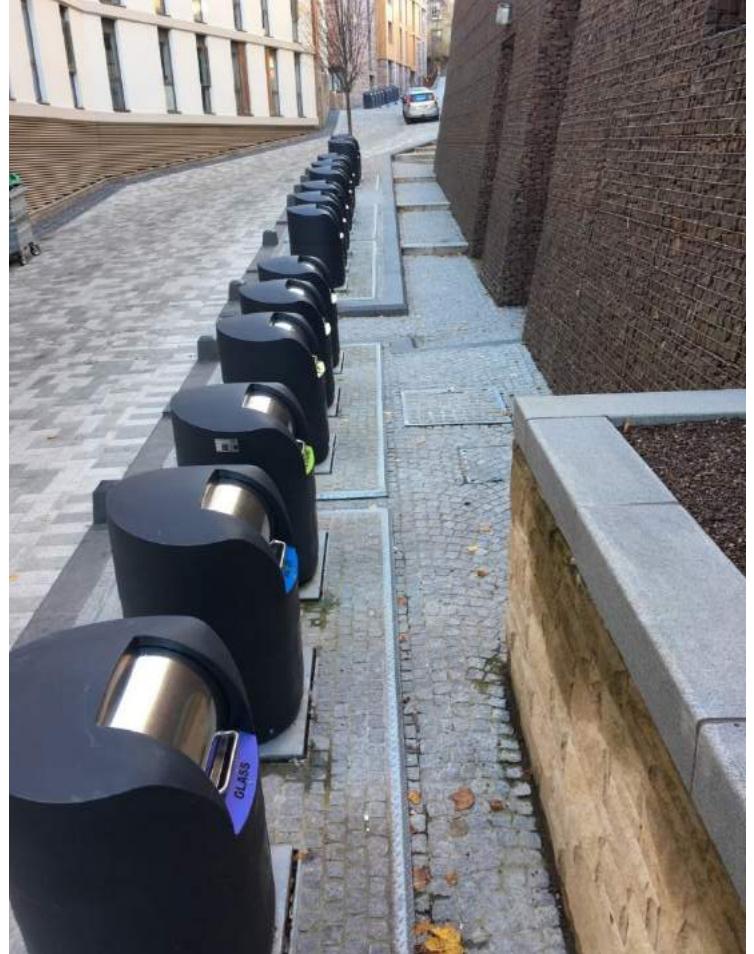
The future direction for the Council is an exciting and positive opportunity for internal collaboration which will offer up opportunities, through empowerment, development and positive engagement with our greatest asset, staff, and an area of huge potential which will result in magnified impacts.

- *For the latest news and developments in local authority building maintenance services, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking on 0161 772 1810.*

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Register your interest online no later than the 15 March 2019

apse service awards 2019



Underground Refuse Systems: The Binfrastructure of tomorrow?

In conjunction with APSE Approved Partner Contenur, APSE Solutions held two successful field trip events in 2018 exploring underground refuse systems; first in Cambridge and then in Edinburgh. Head of APSE Solutions Andy Mudd looks at how both authorities are using underground bins to reap significant benefits for their local communities and businesses.

Over the last 2 years, APSE has carried out extensive research into how underground refuse systems (URSs) and technological innovations such as fill level sensors can assist authorities in improving the efficiency and cost effectiveness of both domestic and commercial waste collection services. In partnership with City of Edinburgh Council, Cambridge City Council and APSE Approved Partners Contenur, APSE Solutions organised a unique market engagement event for local authorities to discuss this innovative collection method, to see these systems in a practical setting and meet with both users and manufacturers to discuss the practical use of these systems.

APSE's first trip was to see the ground breaking development in Cambridge. Here, underground units add to the modern clean feel of new housing and has reduced collection costs by around 50%. The second event was held in Edinburgh where underground systems have been installed at a number of locations, including as a replacement for conventional litter bins in Princes Street Gardens and at new student accommodation in the City Centre.

The benefits of installing URSs in new residential developments are easy to identify. A huge reduction in the cost of collection is the most obvious but they can also have significant environmental benefits and add to the quality of life for residents. Developers can also benefit as the cost of installation can be less than that of creating bin storage areas and the space saved allows for additional units of housing to be included on the site.

Edinburgh University Student Accommodation makes good use of an underground system supplied by Contenur to optimise space and keep the site clean and tidy. This system uses a hydraulic platform housing standard 1280 litre containers rather than the 5000 litre capacity of the Cambridge bins.

The student accommodation we visited in Edinburgh is on a compact infill site and would have been difficult to construct without the URS.

On sites where there is space for the crane mounted vehicle to operate, underground containers can accommodate the equivalent of twenty 240 litre wheeled bins to reduce frequency of collection and minimise

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Contact Emma Taylor, Client Coordination Officer
Call 0161 772 1810 or email etaylor@apse.org.uk

CONTENUR

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Clockwise from top:
A URS collection in Cambridge.
Underground bins at
Edinburgh University Student
accommodation.



the space required for the storage of refuse.

Delegates attending the Cambridge event saw a demonstration of a standard URS collection and also visited a localised bring site where residents are able to recycle a range of materials. In many areas this would involve a trip to an out of town HWRC making it difficult for those without cars as well as raising issues around the environmental desirability of such facilities.

One use of URS that should be explored further is in commercial waste collection. Small businesses such as shops and restaurants often have little storage space for above ground commercial waste containers and in many town and city centres these ugly bins are now a permanent presence on the street. In others, the sight of piles of black sacks and cardboard piled up on the pavement at all times of day and night spoils amenity value and is welcomed by only seagulls, foxes and rats. Frequent collections – daily in many cases are necessary and with multiple providers the impact on the environment, public safety and cost to small traders is significant. URS can transform all of this with greatly reduced frequency of collection, an end to the need to either keep bins out on the street or take up expensive space inside business premises and a major improvement in the look and cleanliness of town and city centre streets. We know that above ground bins are a major contributor to street litter so it is reasonable to expect a reduced need for cleansing as well as for refuse collection.

- For more information about underground refuse systems, please contact Head of APSE Solutions Andy Mudd on amudd@apse.org.uk or call 0161 772 1810.



Taking a commercial approach

A new guide for local councils in Wales to income generation, trading and charging

Local government in Wales is undergoing changes and challenges. Demand on services is increasing and at the same time resources are being squeezed. However, those who in local government know that communities value local services and simply withdrawing services is not an easy option for any council to take.

Increasingly councils across the UK are looking at a more commercial approach to service delivery. This does not mean unfair charges on those least able to pay but rather local councils making the most of their assets and human resources. This entrepreneurial approach provides an opportunity for local councils to charge or trade in services; not for profit motives but to develop income for a purpose. That purpose being to support local services that have suffered budget reductions by replacing those lost budgets with new sources of finances.

Researched and written by Head of APSE Solutions Andy Mudd, this report looks in detail at:

- Corporate objectives for commercialisation
- Resourcing action
- Strategy development and innovation
- The role of leadership
- Options for management and resources
- Legal issues
- Risk issues

This guide is free to download from the APSE website and will serve as a useful tool for Welsh local authorities that are considering engaging in trading activity.

- You can view a digital copy of the research on the APSE website at www.apse.org.uk. Print copies are also available.

To order, please use the form on our website or email Wai Lee on wlee@apse.org.uk.

Preventative not punitive Why good neighbourhoods ensure healthy communities

In collaboration with leading poll company Survation, we present a compelling case as to why your council should champion the importance of neighbourhoods that good quality neighbourhoods can play a huge part in the long-term wellbeing of communities, thereby reducing the need for social care.



When a resident steps outside their own front door what do they see? Pavements? Local roads? A flower bed? A recycling bin? A street light?

Each one of these items seem unremarkable on their own but together they make the neighbourhoods we live in liveable. Maintaining our neighbourhoods requires a great deal of hard work on the part of local "neighbourhood services" such as parks, highways and refuse collection (our research in 2015 showed that people prefer the word neighbourhood to the more "council speak" term frontline).

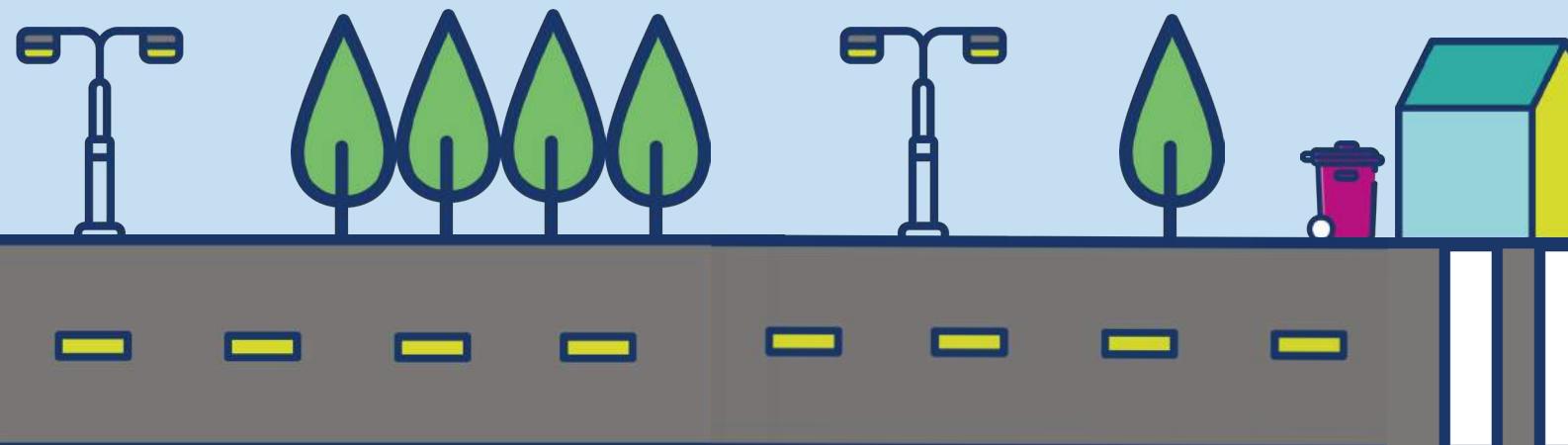
Since 2010, spending on neighbourhood services has fallen more steeply than any other combined local authority budget area. The most deprived areas have been hit the hardest with some authorities seeing their spending reduced by up to two thirds.

These services are critical to safeguarding our public realm. Our neighbourhoods are special places to all of us and, as such, their upkeep remains a key doorstep issue. We take enormous pride of place in our surroundings as they are a part of our identity and security. A safe, secure and green environment provides a foundation for helping people to maximise their contribution to society, and creates areas that are economically prosperous.

Neighbourhoods that are poorly managed, unsightly and unsafe will not attract and retain businesses, jobs and skills in the local area. This creates a vicious cycle whereby economic insecurity leads to social dislocation and a rising social care bill.

palliative: neighbourhood services communities

Survation, APSE's latest campaign presents a research-champion neighbourhood services. The evidence shows a huge part in improving the mental and physical health need for social care interventions.



APSE's new Neighbourhood Service campaign makes the case for investing in the public realm. As well as playing an integral role in boosting local economies, investment in high quality neighbourhood services can save public funds; reducing poor physical and mental health outcomes that are currently experienced by those living in areas of high deprivation.

This campaign is not about a competition between neighbourhood services and social care but more a recognition that good quality neighbourhood services help to support our communities; helping in the prevention agenda by ensuring neighbourhood services are able to meet the needs of everyone in our communities.

Informing our campaign are the results of a public opinion survey APSE has conducted alongside leading poll company Survation. The poll found that:

- Over 80% of the public want to see more money spent in their local area by their local council.
- Almost five times as many people trust local councils over central government to deliver services in their area.
- A huge 68% of the public would prefer to see public service contracts going to local firms that bring something back to the local area.

It would be unwise for any council to disregard the views of their local electorate. That is why APSE is calling on local councillors and councils to adopt a strategy in support of neighbourhood services.

APSE has identified four different things your council can do in support of neighbourhood services:

- 1 Adopt a neighbourhood services champion within your political group to act as a voice in support of neighbourhood services
- 2 Adopt the model resolution to Full Council to raise awareness of the positive impact of neighbourhood services on local communities and the consequences of these services being lost or cut through pressure on local council finances
- 3 Raise awareness amongst the local community and local businesses about the neighbourhood services you provide and how you are working to preserve them for future generations
- 4 Fight for Funding! There is no point in having extra funding for core statutory services like social care if the fabric of our communities is lost at a neighbourhood level. The Fair funding review for local government needs to take into account the funding pressures on neighbourhood services. They are vital to healthy, sustainable communities.



For more information visit:
<http://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/research/good-neighbourhoods/>



You can also join the conversation using
#apseneighbourhoods on Twitter and LinkedIn

Investing in the future

All of Warrington Borough Council's commercial investments to date have been successful. APSE Direct caught up with Danny Mather, Head of the Council's Corporate Finance team, to learn more about how the authority's enterprising culture has opened up a number of exciting opportunities.



Warrington Borough Council is no stranger to being innovative and showing initiative in response to local need. It is particularly important in these times when Local Authorities are facing shrinking budgets, coupled with rising costs and demand, which impact on local services and local communities. If we want to create sustainable solutions, being enterprising is now more important than ever.

Over the last few years the Council has led on the creation of the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, given loans to Housing Associations, taken a 33% share in a Challenger Bank (Redwood Bank), issued a £150m Bond, invested in the green agenda, formed a Housing Company and, like a lot of Councils, invested in property.

Whilst Warrington has invested heavily over the last few years, the primary driving force has been policy objectives: the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme was developed to get first-time buyers on the housing ladder; loans to Housing Associations provide much needed finance to build new houses; Redwood Bank was formed to give loans to Small Medium Sized Enterprises; the green energy programme was developed to help address fuel poverty issues and the Housing Company to increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough.

All of Warrington's investments to date have been successful. The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme resulted in 200 local people being able to get a mortgage and get on the housing ladder, and loans given to Housing Associations to date have financed in the region of 1,000 new homes.

Our green energy programme has reduced fuel poverty in the borough and the returns from our property investments are reinvested in front line services. Warrington's Invest to Save Programme is generating in the region of £20.5m to the Council each year.

Warrington adopts a very strategic approach to its investment programme. This is covered in its corporate strategies, all of which are integrated and linked. Engagement with members, staff and stakeholders is at its core. Strong project management and governance, due diligence and risk management underpin the strategies. This is evident by the fact that the Council was one of the first Councils to publish a Capital Strategy in 2018/19 and one of its large property purchases in 2017/18 was covered in a good practice case study by CIPFA. The Council has worked hard over recent years through training and communication to promote a strong commercial culture throughout.

Warrington also promotes good practice across the local government sector. The Council has shared good practice of its commercial schemes with other local authorities, has written guides and articles and its officers are regular speakers at conferences.

**Warrington's Invest to Save
Programme is generating in the
region of £20.5m to the Council
each year**

New APSE Energy Approved Partners: Welcome Beond



But like all good social entrepreneurs, the Council has one eye on the future. Warrington has just announced a £62m investment to develop two solar farms in York and Hull, with York incorporating battery storage. All the power from the Hull Solar Farm will be used to power the Council, with the Council becoming the first fully green energy supplied Council in the UK. The farms, once complete, will save 25,000 tonnes of carbon per year and will supply enough power to power 18,000 houses.

Power from the York solar farm will also be sold to another Local Authority and considerable interest has been generated in this area. Local authorities have a huge part to play in delivering the carbon reduction targets of the Paris Accord. Our primary objective in developing these solar farms is carbon reduction. But we have also developed a model that generates an excellent commercial return to the Council. We hope we have been pathfinders in developing a model that can be copied by other Local Authorities in the future which will lead to the rejuvenation of solar investment in the UK.'

If this was not enough, the Council is putting finishing touches to the Public Sector Social Impact Fund. This is an ethical investment fund that will invest in secured social impact assets. It is aimed at treasury balances and it is intended that all Councils throughout the UK and across the public sector will have access to it.

Not a week goes by when we do not get several phone calls from other Councils seeking our advice on how they can invest their treasury balances in more secure, ethical, social investments. One of the blockages for Councils following our approach is the cost of due diligence and a lack of capacity and expertise across the sector. By creating a centralised fund, the due diligence and investments can be done by expert fund managers enabling Councils to gain higher returns on their balances that are more secure but more importantly are delivering social impact.'

The Chinese have a saying "you are fortunate to live in interesting times." The last 20 years have witnessed off-balance sheet financing and outsourcing of Council services. We are now witnessing a renaissance of Councils bringing manageable risk back on to their balance sheets to mitigate the Government funding cuts since 2010 and to provide real social impact investing to its residents.

- Danny will be giving a presentation about Warrington Borough Council's energy investments at the BIG Energy Summit in Warwick on 14 March. For more information about this event, please turn overleaf.

Through this partnership, APSE hopes to ensure local councils are able to take advantage of Beond's unique energy procurement software and tendering services to ensure more transparency, choice and savings.

Beond will be attending this year's APSE Energy Summit in March where they will be presenting a risk free and compliant method to ensure your council is getting value from your energy provider. Their workshop will aim to show energy and procurement managers:

- How to contract reverse engineer your supply contracts to expose hidden margins
- How to utilise technology to force suppliers to reduce their margins
- How to budget for rising non commodity energy cost
- How to ensure budget certainty and manage wholesale risks

Beond's innovative approach to public sector procurement has allowed them to win several industry awards and their approach is proven to create significant savings and efficiency gains against traditional energy consortium offers.

Speaking about our new Energy Partner, Head of APSE Energy Phil Brennan said that, "As a highly experienced market leader in energy tendering and risk management, Beond will be a huge asset to our local authority members, particularly those who are responsible for energy procurement."

As Energy Partners, Beond will appear at events and will be sharing their technological and industry expertise at a range of advisory groups and other meetings.

Phil added "Beond are a terrific addition to our community and we look forward to their contribution as they help to drive excellence in local authority services".

Mike Chan, Beond's Sales Director "Delivering energy savings is an increasingly challenging prospect, so we are really excited by the opportunity to help more councils across the UK find a fresh approach to energy cost reduction. We look forward to meeting key players within local government and showing them the value we can offer as an alternative energy tendering provider."

Beond Group will be presented with their APSE Energy Partner certificate at The Big Energy Summit in Warwick on 14 / 15 March 2019. Interested in attending the Seminar? Then turn overleaf for details.

For more on Beond Group, please visit <https://beondgroup.com/our-services/public-sector/>

MULTEVO

WHAT'S CHANGED, WHAT HASN'T AND WHAT'S HAPPENING SINCE THE REBRAND

BY MATT LAMBERT - HIGHWAYSINDUSTRY.COM

SO, NICK, FIRSTLY - WHY THE REBRAND? WHAT BROUGHT IT ON?

"While continuing being the sole UK distributor of the Multihog product range which we have been associated with for nearly a decade our customers are constantly asking us to increase what we can offer them in terms of services and complimentary products to the Multihog range. The rebrand enables us to do this."

WHAT DOES THE REBRAND ACTUALLY OFFER? WHY IS IT A BETTER SERVICE FOR CLIENTS?

"The rebrand allows us to increase our scope and offer our clients increased access to innovative products and services because we aren't solely tied to one product."



WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT MULTEVO AS OPPOSED TO MULTIHOG UK?

"As Multihog UK Ltd our sole product was obviously the Multihog range which is manufactured in Dundalk in Ireland. This, we continue to do as Multevo Ltd. What makes Multevo unique is that we can introduce innovative products and services and continue to support the risks that our clients have to take to use new products and services brought to the market. Our history shows that we can bring innovation, support innovation and help clients to make it work for them, all we are now doing is increasing

our offerings in each of these areas to more than one product."

WHAT TOP CLASS ELEMENTS OF MULTIHOG UK REMAIN?

"In short: Everything. "Our targets are to maintain and improve everything about what we have been doing for over nearly a decade, all the good things we are known and respected for remain, the sales, service and hire of this exceptional Multihog product."

BY BEING MULTEVO, WHAT IS NEW THAT ADDS TO WHAT WAS EXISTING WITH MULTIHOG UK?

"Mainly, a new contracting division for the clients who prefer us to complete the services using the Multihog range ourselves, instead of them self-delivering. It means they can hire expertise as well as hardware. As well as sales, service and hire of this equipment we also offer the same access to the use of the equipment through the contracting division. Additionally, the Hot Water Weed Control range of equipment which kills weeds without the use of chemicals. This Waterkracht product range is particularly effective on invasive and injurious plant species and are particularly appealing in this age of constantly having to be as environmentally friendly as possible."

WHAT ARE YOUR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE NEW BRAND/COMPANY?

"We want to evolve and help our clients to evolve at the same time by bringing strong innovative products to market by any means required, we want people to just ask and see if we can do it as opposed to assuming we won't. "We want to be known and renowned for being an evolving flexible partner!"

WHAT ARE THE SHORT-TERM GOALS FOR 2019?



"Our ultimate goal in the short-term is to rubber stamp to everyone who's known us as Multihog UK Ltd that we are still the same people and standards but with more to offer and to establish our new brand Multevo in the market place."

WE THEN ASKED NICK ABOUT THE SHORT-TERM CHANGES AND IMPACT - IF ANY - OF THE REBRAND. NICK CONCLUDED:

"During the transition we have had strong support from our main brand Multihog who continue to be a strategic partner moving forward. "The transition has helped us to get more Multihogs on the UK network using the contracting mechanism, this part is a win-win for us, Multihog and our clients, Additionally, we can also use this successful model for other brands like Waterkracht which are bringing innovation to the marketplace as we all evolve together."



CONTACT TO FIND OUT MORE

(+44) 01254 703212 info@multevo.co.uk www.multevo.co.uk



Multihog



MULTEVO

The Big Energy Summit 2019

Energising Local Government

Speakers and facilitators include:

Dr. Jackie Lawrence, Energy Manager, Warwickshire County Council;

Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy, BEIS;

Danny Mather, Head of Corporate Finance, Warrington Borough Council;

Ed Nelson, Head of Local and Devolved Delivery, OLEV;

Wayne Bexton, Head of Energy Services, Nottingham City Council;

Cllr John Clare, Cabinet Support Member for Economic Regeneration, Durham County Council;

David Kilduff, Partner, Walker Morris Solicitors;

Mike Chan, Director, Beond Group;

Samantha Nicol, Head of Innovation and Market Development, Bristol Energy;

James Johnson, Manager, Local North West Energy Hub;

Nigel Turvey, Network Strategy and Innovation Manager, Western Power Distribution;

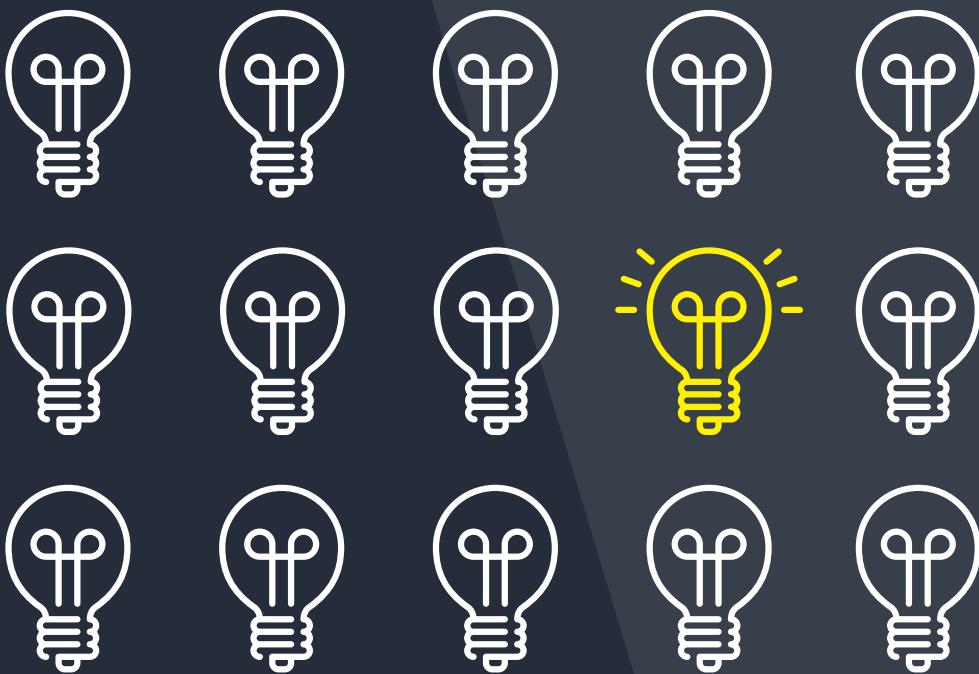
Leman Barmaki, Commercial Sustainability Manager, Enfield Council;

Roy Nolan, Head of Public Sector Liaison, RP Martin;

Colin King, Director, BRE and UK Centre for Moisture in Buildings;

Steve Cirell and Peter Walker, APSE Energy Associates;

Cllr Archie Dryburgh, Dumfries and Galloway Council.



14 and 15 March 2019

Hilton Hotel, Stratford upon Avon,
Warwick CV34 6RE



Join the conversation:
@apseevents #apseenergy

Helping to give every child the best start in life

The introduction of the "Edge of Care Service" by Cheshire West and Chester Council has led to a significant reduction in the number of children between the ages of nine and 15 years going into care. APSE Direct spoke to Emma Taylor, the Council's Director of Children's Services, about this remarkable APSE Service Award-winning initiative.



Like many councils, Cheshire West and Chester Council has seen a rise in children entering care in recent years. Between 2013 and 2015 we saw a 52 per cent increase in the number of looked after children in our area, compared to just an eight per cent increase in England.

With more demand being placed on our children's services than ever before, we launched a new service in 2015 to support families at significant risk of breakdown. The introduction of the Edge of Care service and commitment by our staff to adjust to a new way of working has helped three quarters of the children who were supported by the service to remain with their families and avoid entering the care system. Its success has also contributed to a significant financial saving for the Council.

The increase in the number of children entering care was the real driver for this new way of working. Whilst our services, at the time, were working well to offer support to children who were at risk of entering care, that level of support didn't extend to their families. This was the area we needed to concentrate on; providing each family with an intensive, needs-led service that addressed their individual situation.

A large proportion of the children entering care were aged nine to 15. We find that there can be some challenges finding foster placements for this group of children. Often, if they come in to care during this age range, they remain in care throughout their teenage years. We needed to find a solution to help stop these young people entering care in the first place.

In June 2015 our Edge of Care team was launched to support families at significant risk of breakdown where other interventions did not appear to be making an impact.

The team supports families at the edge of care – those who have been flagged by our social workers or partner agencies as being at risk of having their children taken in to care. We focused on children between nine and 15 years of age, helping them to remain with their families, wherever possible and safe to do so, and improve their lives.

Sometimes, social workers can understandably focus on removing risk altogether rather than managing it as proportionately as possible, particularly given the high profile nature of children's safeguarding. The 12 members of our Edge of Care team work closely with our front line practitioners to strengthen their trust and confidence in the team. A strong culture and practice of using evidence-based interventions, building on family strengths; and doing whatever it takes to keep a child

The percentage of care joiners in the nine to 15 year age range reduced from 60 per cent to 25 per cent by April 2017 and as a result of the team's approach, we've managed to maintain this level



with its family has resulted in consistently high level of requests for the services of our Edge of Care Team.

The team was originally tasked to work with 85 children per year and prevent at least 40 children each year from entering the care system. Another target was to reduce the proportion of children entering the care system from the nine to 15 cohort and to achieve a gross savings target of £972k over three years.

The focus for the team is to make families more resilient in the long term so that the families can better manage the difficulties they are experiencing. The child or young person is at the heart of the support offered. We listen to both their views and their families and help them build on their strengths. This could involve applying a solution focused approach, allowing families to decide their own pathways and solutions to reach their goals, for example, to help increase their confidence and self-esteem. Or we may arrange practical support such as transport, transition plans and reintroduction meetings to help improve school attendance and attainment.

Every child gets a different service from the team. It's about being creative and adapting our service so that it works best for the child and family so that everyone gets the best outcome. If a member of the team is struggling to overcome a certain issue we often hold case busting sessions where three members of the team come together to work through the case and use their combined knowledge to find a solution.

It was important, when setting up the service, that the team was able to provide a prompt, intensive and persistent approach to its support. This meant being available for families when they needed us. Flexible working was introduced so that the team can speak and meet with a family at a time that works for them. A family intervention worker will work with a family for up to six months and speak with them around three times a week.

When we reduce our visits to a family we'll outline what we think is suitable for the child going forward and connect them with other services that will be able to provide ongoing support.

We've invested heavily in training both for our team members and for the families we work with so that families have a wide variety of opportunities to learn new skills or approaches to parenting such as on our parent programmes.

This investment has meant that, in less than three years, there has

been a significant reduction in the number of children between the ages of nine and 15 years going in to care. Of the 271 families who have completed the intervention, 194 children have successfully avoided entering our care with strategies, skills and resilience embedded within families to support continued success and safety.

The percentage of care joiners in the nine to 15 year age range reduced from 60 per cent to 25 per cent by April 2017 and as a result of the team's approach, we've managed to maintain this level.

This reduction in numbers has contributed to over £3m towards the Council's cost reduction programme as a result of care costs being avoided over the last three years.

By sticking with our set criteria we have been able to concentrate on the families that needed our help the most. We have learned what approaches work and have shared this learning both within the team and with our partners.

Since April 2018 the Edge of Care team has expanded to work with a younger group of children: newborns to two year olds. Again, the team works closely with the families of the children and provides a range of support to ensure the risk to the child is managed safely and that families get access to any specialist services they might need. Although it's early days we are already seeing some positive results with the number of children in this age range entering care reducing by 57 per cent compared to figures over the same period in 2017.

The success of the Edge of Care Service has been down to our strategic approach that focused on a specific group of children, a change in our social work culture and the 'can do' approach of our dedicated team. We have consistently exceeded the challenging targets set and the foundations are in place to continue to offer this service to more families in the future, helping to give every child in west Cheshire the best start in life.

- Has your council's social care team been involved in any innovative and effective projects over the past twelve months that you feel deserves recognition? If so, make sure the team registers their interest online for the APSE Annual Service Awards 2019. The deadline to register is 15 March - make sure you don't miss out!



*The Respectful Funeral Service
is dignified and professional but still
affordable, providing an alternative
choice to consider for your departed
friend, relative or loved one.*

Dignified, affordable and local

East Ayrshire Council's Respectful Funeral Service is the first of its kind in Scotland. Launched in 2017 by the Bereavement Services Team, their innovative approach has improved wellbeing and addressed issues relating to funeral poverty, providing a bereavement service that is dignified, affordable, and local.

The Council's Respectful Funeral package was put together to provide dignity, affordability and respect to the bereaved and includes no restriction to date and time of funeral, collection, care and preparation of the deceased, a choice of coffin, a place of rest and viewing facilities, a hearse, family car and all arrangements on the day of the funeral.

The bereaved can also access additional services via the package which includes recovery of the deceased from outwith East Ayrshire, a celebrant, additional cars and orders of service.

Whilst the new approach is not a direct contract between the council and funeral supplier, the Council believed that for the purposes of fairness and transparency the use of the procurement process would ensure that all those entering into a unique partnership could be confident in the methods used. This ensured that services being specified were beyond those basic standards being offered by other companies.

Background

A number of recent reports (including most notably the Birrell – Citizens Advice Scotland Report, 2016) identified a number of recommendations relating to funeral poverty across Scotland and set out how to support communities by ensuring respect and best value for funeral services.

East Ayrshire Council, as part of our commitment to 'putting people at the heart of everything we do' agreed to explore ways to ensure that our bereaved families had access to a respectful and dignified funeral at an affordable cost.

The Council, in developing this model, was able to learn from other funeral service delivery models, including Cardiff City Council, with the overall aim of creating a package that is dignified, professional and affordable.

A service level agreement was put in place between the funeral directors and bereaved families. The Council were accommodating the process and specifying the service available, whilst ensuring standards and costs met an agreed criteria and were not entering a

direct agreement with the supplier. This would prove challenging; larger companies in this marketplace already offered simple and basic funerals as part of their main services, with existing price structures already in place.

The Council's Respectful Funeral package required these companies to challenge their existing business models and provide an improved service package from their existing Simple/Basic Funeral at a reduced cost. The target identified was to achieve savings in excess of 25% on the average cost of Funeral Director fees.

A project board was set up and included colleagues from a range of Council services, including Bereavement, Procurement, Legal and the Vibrant Communities Team.

Detailed planning processes were put in place. A public consultation programme was undertaken, including a range of local events delivered in partnership with the Vibrant Communities Team and external partners. Information leaflets were distributed widely and adverts placed in local media outlets. The initiative also received extensive coverage across national media, including BBC Scotland.

Achievements

In its first year, of 561 full body adult interments, 124 were delivered as respectful funerals in East Ayrshire. Based on the updated average funeral director costs for 2017 (Royal London and Citizen Advice Scotland reports) and East Ayrshire Bereavement fees 2017-18 we have delivered savings to our bereaved families totalling £165,548. Over 22% of all full body interments in East Ayrshire have been delivered as Respectful Funeral packages.

Speaking at the scheme's launch in Kilmarnock on 27 February 2017, the Scottish Government's Social Security Minister, Jeanne Freeman MSP said, 'Funerals are very personal wrapped in family and tradition, but they can also be stressful, particularly if money is tight. I welcome the fact that East Ayrshire Council is taking positive steps to enable those in the area to plan a stress free and affordable funeral'.

Beyond the direct financial benefits, our approach has also led to greater public and personal discussion, to encourage open and honest conversations around bereavement and funeral poverty.

The word about our approach is spreading. A number of other local authorities have approached us to enquire about our innovative approach to addressing funeral poverty, and the Scottish Government highlighted the progress being made in East Ayrshire in its Funeral Costs Plan, published in August 2017.

Next steps

The Council is currently undertaking a review of all services as part of its new Transformation Strategy 2017-2022, which will look at service alignment and redesign. As part of this, Bereavement Services are considering how we will deliver a wider range of services in line with partners or in-house.

In terms of external opportunities, this process has allowed other funeral operators to consider their approach to pricing, with a number of local businesses contacting the council to enquire about being included within the service. Indeed, partners have transformed their existing practices to allow the Council's Respectful Funeral Package to be offered as part of their own product offering.

In a wider context, significant numbers of fellow councils in Scotland have taken an interest in our unique offer and are considering setting up similar models. This could potentially result in a wider transformation of services across the country, providing a business model that helps to support the bereaved when they are at their most vulnerable.

- For the latest information on local authority cemetery and crematoria, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Wayne Priestley on 0161 772 1810.

"It is a pleasure working in partnership with East Ayrshire Council on this bold new venture. This has helped to highlight the need for affordable services and makes a positive step towards combatting Funeral Poverty."

Alex Muir, Funeral Directors

"It has been a pleasure to work alongside East Ayrshire Council in this scheme. Fosters Funeral Directors will continue to work alongside and support the Respectful Funeral Scheme offered by East Ayrshire Council to ensure that we reduce the impact of funeral poverty for all bereaved families."

Fosters Group

apse seminars

Moving with the times: the need for innovation and best practice in Bereavement Services

APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria
Seminar 2019



Thursday 11 April 2019
Aston Villa, Birmingham



Getting local authorities onside with the new municipalism

Hotel Football was the venue for a timely discussion on the concept of 'new municipalism'. As more and more councils develop entrepreneurial approaches to manage tightening budgets, speakers from across the UK shared their experiences of generating income for the public purpose. We bring you the highlights from the event.

Millions of people regard local authorities as stewards of local wellbeing. We rely on them to empty our bins, maintain our roads and make sure our loved ones are looked after. However, the continued delivery of these vital services is under serious threat as councils battle against growing demand for their services with ever-decreasing budgets. The future shape of our neighbourhoods and those that live within them now hinges on councils being more creative and entrepreneurially-minded when delivering services.

Amidst a rapidly transforming landscape, this seminar offered a unique opportunity for delegates to share ideas and explore the emerging practice of municipal entrepreneurship. APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien opened the Seminar by painting a (far from rosy) picture of the current financial landscape councils are operating in. Looking ahead, Paul noted that councils ought not to expect much financial relief in the upcoming Fair Funding and Spending Reviews. Rather than rely on the benevolence of central government, Paul argued councils have to get serious about

making financial interventions if they are to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Out of this sense of urgency, a renewed spirit of municipal entrepreneurship has emerged across the UK and, in particular, Preston City Council. APSE was therefore delighted to have leader of Preston City Council Matthew Brown talk us through his council's groundbreaking work on building an economy where wealth – including the spend of local anchor organisations – is recirculated locally for the benefit of local communities. This highly successful anchor strategy has been followed by investments in new housing companies, an energy company, a community bank and even a civic drone centre. Having hit "rock bottom" in 2011 with the abandonment of the £700m Tithebarn regeneration scheme, Preston topped the Good Growth for Cities index in 2018. No small wonder then that the "Preston Model" has emerged as a blueprint to follow for cash-strapped councils across Europe.

Returning to the topic of funding, Dr Peter Kenway from the New Policy Institute was up next to highlight some of the findings from APSE's latest research 'Hollowed

out: The impact of financial localisation' on neighbourhood services. Drawing on the responses of those interviewed in the report, Dr Kenway noted the shift in mentality amongst service managers as they start or increase their efforts to seek out commercial work. Nonetheless, Dr Kenway cautioned that commercialisation is not a cure-all panacea to austerity. Since 2010, a great deal of specialist knowledge and know-how - the ground from which practical judgment springs - has been lost. Without this knowledge, making the new municipalism an embedded feature of service delivery grows more difficult. To help prevent council capacity being hollowed out further, Dr Kenway argued for an end to the reverse subsidy of central government by local government. Dr Kenway's most recent findings on funding for neighbourhood services in the Comprehensive Spending Review are due to be published by APSE in the spring.

For Session 2, the panel explored the ways in which the new municipalism is allowing councils – and by extension local residents – to take back control of local assets. Joining

us from DeMontfort University, Professor Steven Griggs began his address by stressing that any commercial activity which is not driven by local policy challenges – tackling homelessness, reducing the carbon footprint, upskilling workforces – ought not to be bracketed under the term new municipalism. Instead, any income generation has to be aligned with innovative policy initiatives which can advance community wealth creation and well-being.

As well as keeping social value at the forefront of thinking, Professor Griggs also made a number of other recommendations for councils looking to pursue municipal entrepreneurialism. These include the need to:

- Manage expectations of increased flexibility;
- Re-evaluate budgetary logics, consider in advance the use of surpluses;
- Facilitate an organisational culture of challenge: the ‘art of puzzling’;
- Start from where you are;
- Nurture your networks with communities and stakeholders;
- Understand and manage risk: risk aware not risk adverse;
- Upskill the workforce and build core capacities.

Drawing on the case studies in APSE’s report ‘The new municipalism: Taking back entrepreneurship’, Professor Griggs found that creating a culture of challenge was key to success as consensus and ‘groupthink’ can serve to dampen innovation. Of course, cultivating this puzzling culture requires leadership that is open to dialogue. You can download the new municipalism report for free from the APSE website.

Our next speaker was APSE’s Head of Communication and Coordination Mo Baines who, considering the uptick in the number of councils insourcing their services following Carillion’s collapse in January 2018, asked what role insourcing can play in helping to facilitate municipal entrepreneurialism. Citing case studies of insourcing success from across the UK, ranging from Highland Council bringing their grass-cutting and public conveniences back in-house to Halton Borough Council doing likewise with their leisure centres, it was argued that insourcing – like the new municipalism – has been a pragmatic response to austerity. Drawing on the findings from APSE’s upcoming research on insourcing, Mo showed that bringing contracts back in house has not been driven by ideological aims, but is instead about local councils taking back control of resource allocation. Eight recommendations for insourcing success were then presented to delegates.

Remaining on the theme of taking back

control of local resources, our final speaker from Session 2, Madeleine Bell of Harrogate Borough Council, shared her experiences of adding democracy to housing delivery. Dismayed at what she saw as the uneven relationship that existed between local property developers and her council, Madeleine sought to strengthen her council’s hand as it attempted to alleviate the acute housing crisis affecting the Harrogate area. One particularly interesting and effective measure included a “speed dating” event in which Homes England, the Council Planner, the Rural Housing Enabler, 5 Housing Associations, 21 Landowners and various SME Builders were invited to Harrogate’s Sun Pavilion.

Our final session of the day looked at the different ways in which councils have approached entrepreneurialism and delivered positive outcomes for their communities. Joining us all the way from North Ayrshire, Russell McCutcheon began his address by acknowledging how commercialisation was a concept that took root in his Council much later than in other areas of the UK. Through membership of APSE, the Council was able to make up to this ground by learning from and building on the success of pioneering authorities such as Dumfries and Galloway (Enterprising DG) and Nottingham City Council (Robin Hood Energy). Russell also cited APSE’s commercialisation guide as a highly valuable tool in helping him and others in North Ayrshire to accurately identify risks and build robust business cases. Moving on to outcomes, Russell showed that the new municipalism has helped the Council’s Commercial Waste Service turn an estimated £300k profit, in addition to helping the Council’s facilities management service grow its income from £100k to £1m in just over 3 years.

Drawing on the findings from APSE’s upcoming research on insourcing, it was shown that bringing contracts back in house has not been driven by ideological aims, but is instead about local councils taking back control of resource allocation

Next up to speak was Nicola Taylor, Enterprise Team Manager at South Staffordshire Council, who took delegates on her Council’s quest to be financially stable by 2020. The journey started back in May 2011 with the launch of a Transformation Business Plan. This plan looked at payroll, contracts and procurement, increasing income, shared services and an improving service challenge. By November 2012, it had achieved 108% against its

target, saving £2,381,195. Building on this success, The Efficiency and Income Plan was introduced by the Council in April 2015 with the aim of reducing a £2.2 million funding gap. By investing in assets, developing staff potential and collaborating with commercial expertise, the Council is now in a position where income generation is very much at the heart of its thinking. The first Efficiency and Income Plan resulted in savings of over £1,300,000 and the Business Hub alone is achieving a profit of £286,000 a year, which is estimated to culminate in £1.43 million by 2020.

Our final speaker of the session was Stewart Brown, Head of Estates at Warrington Borough Council, providing valuable insight into how his Council is delivering on property investments, and helping to cement Warrington’s position as the most productive city in the north west of England. Whereas in the past, his Council (and UK councils in general) had grown accustomed to selling their assets, now Warrington is making smart investments in assets such as solar energy and loans to housing associations. Whatever happens to the UK post-Brexit, delivering affordable homes will remain a key priority for local and central government. Consequently, Warrington Council has been providing loan facilities to 16 housing associations to stimulate housing development in the region. Not only is this creating much needed income for the Council, it is also helping to alleviate the severe housing shortage in the area.

After a lively and productive afternoon in Old Trafford, the seminar came to a close. As delegates and speakers exchanged ideas on their way out of the venue, the message from Hotel Football was clear: if councils are to give deprivation in their neighbourhoods the red card, they need to seriously consider a community wealth building approach to local council services. From insourcing services to developing local supply chains through procurement, and acting as market disruptors – making changes to the shape and function of the local economy is essential to changing an economic model that continues to leave many people behind.

- Each of the presentations from the event can be downloaded from the APSE website.
- To learn more about how your authority can benefit from the new municipalism and community wealth-building, join APSE’s Commercialisation, Income and Trading Network today. Contact APSE’s Head of Communications and Coordination Mo Baines at mbaines@apse.org.uk or call 0161 772 1810 for more information.

Looking back, Looking forward: APSE at 20!

Twenty years ago, Ricky Martin ruled the airwaves with 'Livin' la Vida Loca', Manchester City were in the third tier of English football and nobody had heard of Simon Cowell. 1999 was also the year the Association of Direct Labour Organisations (ADLO) became APSE. A lot has changed since then, most notably in local government. From CCT to Best Value to Austerity, the changes have been quite dramatic. As part of our 'APSE at 20' series, we will be asking key figures in the sector about their journey over these transformative years, and how APSE has helped them adapt and progress along the way.



**Steve Thomas CBE
Outgoing Chief Executive of the WLGA**

Working in the Welsh public sector for over 30 years I have been proud to build a strong and lasting relationship with APSE. The organisation is infused with a strong public sector ethos and a dedicated focus on the crucial importance of frontline services. APSE has championed those functions which the public really care about and which unfortunately have been so severely cut in the age of austerity. It is because of this that the voice of APSE is even more important today. Its research publications set out in the clearest terms

important new ideas to take forward waste and refuse collection, environmental services and housing. But more than that they also set out alternatives visions for a revitalised public sector. In the Welsh context, we were encouraged by APSE's focus on devolution and the recognition that across the UK that innovation and best practice were emerging with wider lessons for public sector management. I was always delighted to speak at APSE events especially the annual conference. In this setting, I would like to put on record my profound apologies for the consistent bad language and occasionally outrageous utterances which you have tolerated from me with good humour! Congratulations and I wish APSE all the best for the next twenty years.



**Elaine Bridge
Head of Service, Bolton MBC**

Reflecting back on the last 20 years, most local government officers and managers will recall service delivery pre-partnerships, new models of delivery, Job Evaluation, Austerity, Welfare Reform, Localism, Brexit and Entrepreneurism.

Back in those simple days we were proving Best Value, reducing overheads and focusing on innovation. Social Value, commercialism, environmental impacts and reputation did not feature in our service psyche.

Contract gains and losses for traded services were a material issue. We discussed the competition and their scurrilous practices and networked effectively through APSE to modernise and deliver excellence, measured through new legislation, National Indicators and various other inspection regimes. We benchmarked through Performance Networks accepting an electronic version to embrace the digital agenda.

In 2000 we shared TQM concepts with APSE members as part of Best Value. This yielded mass-evidence-gathering projects for fraught

service managers and the mammoth tomes to be produced for an inspection which bestowed a single score - "Good" if you were lucky.

APSE remained faithful as private sector consultants were routinely employed across the sector to review services. We particularly valued APSE's professional support at these times where the networking was a balm for manic service managers. We continued to benefit from uplifting and inspiring conferences, seminars and focus groups, as well as much needed direct support and industry intelligence. Also the targeted and scientific research for the ever-widening group of APSE members built on the vital support as we faced austerity challenges amidst mass retirements and redundancies across the sector. The unique and "incredible" entertainment programme laid on at the seminars continued to leave members breathless and were a total distraction from intense conferencing!

To date APSE enjoys true recognition in Central Government through its analytics, lobbying and representation. It embodies the principles of a progressive and dynamic organisation as it spearheads and shares new solutions to public sector reform. The network contributes a professional "warm hug" for embattled and often frustrated service managers in its pursuit of public sector Best Practise.

Well done APSE for 20 years of support and for showcasing public sector excellence.

and the winner is... Renfrewshire Council!



Pete Johnson
Transport Services Manager,
Wakefield MDC

It was during my time at Tameside MBC in the 1990s I learned about an organisation called "ADLO". I started to attend meetings

and quickly became involved in assisting the Association in developing meaningful benchmarking for vehicle maintenance as a member of the working group, assisting Trevor Hawkins and then Dave Knapman (IQSS) in what should/could be measured and setting the data parameters. As a result, I have submitted data to APSE from year one to present which has culminated in the ability to examine trends spanning the last 20 years.

Furthermore, I have undertaken submission audits for both Best Performers and Most Improved performers on behalf of APSE, which required site visits to verify data submissions. As you can imagine this not only widened my horizons but exposed me to best practice across the nation (the true value of networking).

In addition to participating in the Performance Networks aspect of APSE I have also attended and been invited as a speaker at numerous seminars and advisory groups.

Since joining APSE we have also been fortunate to be a finalist in Best Service Team, Best Performer and Most Improved Performer through the years, picking up Best Service Team in 2009 & 2010 and MIP in 2013 & 2018.

I am a great believer in investing in the workforce via training and apprenticeships and have been fortunate enough to have a finalist in the APSE Apprentice of the Year in Transport and Vehicle Maintenance since its inception in 2003 with apprentices from Wakefield winning this prestigious award 5 times (2003, 2004, 2006 2014 & 2017).

Owing to our work with APSE we have secured two councils that have taken services from us: North East Lincolnshire who piggy back on to our fleet management system and as a result won awards in 2015, 2016 & 2017, the other ANSA (Cheshire East Council) which, following one of our presentation at a APSE transport seminar, took on our Driver CPC training and now form a consortium with us.

We have also worked closely with APSE Solutions over the years. Both the Council and Transport team have used APSE consultants in critical review. Conversely, I have done some work on behalf of Solutions in respect of expected whole life costs for a council. I can therefore say with confidence that working with APSE over the years has widened my knowledge base, exponentially expanded my networking opportunities and has contributed enormously to my personal development.

- Stay tuned for more in the 'APSE at 20' series.

Following a rigorous judging process, Renfrewshire Council saw off stiff competition to emerge as the winner of APSE Scotland's inaugural Commercialisation Competition. The Council will be rewarded with five days of APSE Solutions support to help turn their business idea into a reality. APSE Direct takes a look at Renfrewshire's winning proposal.

Proposal

That Renfrewshire Council, Building Services, offer a complete Landlord & Property Owners Compliance Service (LPOCS) in Renfrewshire and the wider area. LPOCS will provide a complete compliance service to ensure that all Renfrewshire's residents live in a safe property which meets all legislative criteria.

The service would include:

- Domestic heating systems – gas, solid fuel, and renewable systems.
- Non domestic heating systems – including commercial boilers and district heating systems.
- (EICRs) Condition Reports and (PAT) Portable Appliance Testing to both domestic and commercial installations.
- Water and Air hygiene – including water hygiene, legionella control, ductwork cleaning and water treatment.
- Fire detection and passive systems – including fire alarms, hard wired smoke detectors, fire doors, sprinkler systems and wet/dry risers.

Existing areas for consideration include:

- Private Landlords and Property Owners
- Housing Associations
- Commercial Properties such as retail parks, shops/supermarkets, sports centers, care homes, etc.

Using their current IT systems, the Council can record servicing histories and electronic copies of compliance certification against each property. Servicing programs can be developed based on anniversary dates and residents profile information to prioritise properties with poor access records to ensure 100% compliance; providing clients with peace of mind that their properties and people that occupy them are kept safe and the terms of their licenses are met.

Benefit

There are very few reliable contractors in Renfrewshire that can undertake this type of work at present. Building Services is ideally suited to take the lead in this field as it has locally based trained staff across various trade disciplines and a 24hr stand-by provision which is required for servicing and maintaining the current Council housing stock of 13,000 homes and almost 300 Public Buildings.

This project would provide additional income to the council and enhance their long term sustainable green energy policy while considering the safety and wellbeing of all residents. LPOCS will provide landlords and property owners the comfort of knowing that their homes and properties are well maintained, safe and compliant. The generated income from this additional work would allow additional employment and training opportunities as well as apprenticeships from within the Renfrewshire area.

Income from this work would be reinvested to support Renfrewshire Councils 2017-2022 Plan. •

Making use of the Apprenticeship Levy

The Apprenticeship Levy is intended to increase funding and boost the volume of apprenticeships available within the UK, both in the public and private sectors. However, of the total £2.7 billion levy pot across all industries, just £370m has been drawn down to fund courses, according to Department for Education (DfE) data. With the clock ticking, APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking explores the Levy's legal requirements and how authorities can use it effectively.

Under the Public Sector Apprenticeship Target Regulations 2017, prescribed groups and public sector bodies with 250 or more staff in England have a target to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period of 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021.

Bodies that fall in the scope of the legislation must 'have regard' to the target which in practice means that in making workforce planning decisions, public bodies should actively consider apprenticeships, either for new recruits or as part of career development for existing staff.

Why do local authorities need to utilise the Apprentice Levy?

In the current climate of reduced budgets, and an ageing workforce many authorities report that it is increasingly difficult to recruit and retained skilled employees. The Apprentice Levy provides an opportunity to ensure the workforce has the skills required for the future.

In addition to the duty to have regard to the target, there is a financial implication for councils. The Apprenticeship Levy is charged at 0.5% of the annual pay bill of the organization and is paid to the government each month through the PAYE process. The levy is paid into a specific employers account on a monthly basis with a 10% government top up.

Funds that are not used will expire 24 months after they are entered into the account. Therefore, councils opting not to use the levy funding are not only forfeiting the 0.5% paid into the fund but the additional 10% government top up.

The Open University reported that for all businesses paying the levy from its introduction until 6 April 2017, only £108m of the money available through the collection of the apprenticeship levy, has been withdrawn. This is despite around £1.39bn being available to fund apprenticeship programmes.

What can the Levy be used for and what can't it be used for?

With the new duties placed upon local authorities to meet the target set by the government, Councils need to gain an understanding of how their existing programmes can contribute to meeting this target and how to make the most of the funding provided through the levy.

The levy can pay for the following: training on a framework or recognised standard by the Institute of Apprenticeships for staff employed by the organisation; in the coming year, 10% of the levy can be spent on sub-contractors with their agreement; a training provider listed on the government's register of apprenticeship training providers; for apprenticeships that are at least 12 months in length.

The levy cannot be used for the following: To pay staff salaries; For training that is not included in the framework; For training that is less than 20% off the job training.

The terms and conditions for apprentices

There are a variety of terms and conditions that need to be in place for apprentices which include a contract of employment for a minimum of one year and one day (not seasonal staff) needs to be in place; the employee must work for a minimum of 30 hours per week; the pay must be at least the national apprenticeship rate; they need to be released to attend off the job training for 20% of the time and they must receive all the same risk assessment; induction training; health and safety training as all regular staff.

Apprenticeships options for local and combined authorities

Local and combined authorities employ a wide range of roles that align with apprenticeships. When considering how to use apprenticeships, consideration could be given to the following: Are other authorities in the area already using apprenticeships, if so, what can be learnt from them? What skills do employees need now and in the future? Does the organisation have the right skills and talent in place? Can apprenticeships be aligned to support the skills gaps and ongoing skills requirements? How do the roles in the authority fit with the current available apprenticeships? What is the most effective way of procuring apprenticeships training, can existing frameworks be used, could it be possible to collaborate with other authorities to procure training?

Recruiting apprentices - Do's and Don't

To ensure that the most suitable people are recruited to apprenticeships the approach to recruitment needs to take into consideration some steps to ensure it is successful: Produce a simplified application form; Assess numeracy and literacy to ensure the candidate is at the correct level; Ensure that the role profile and

the essential and desirable criteria is suitable for the level of apprenticeship.

When recruiting apprenticeships, the 'traditional' methods of advertising the vacancy may restrict the pool of applications received, therefore alternative approaches will achieve better results, such as career fairs, social media and working with schools and colleges.

Upskilling your existing workforce

The levy provides an opportunity for local authorities to invest in apprenticeships for existing staff. Apprenticeships are not just for frontline, entry level employees, they can also be used to bridge skills gaps in the current workforce. There is provision in the Apprenticeships Frameworks for the employee to gain a qualification whilst remaining in their current role.

The National Apprenticeship Service has advised that when using the Apprenticeship Levy to upskill existing members of staff, it is not a requirement to change the employee's job title or contract of employment. However, the employer is required to ensure that there is an Apprenticeship Agreement in place that has been signed by both the employer and the apprentice. In addition, the employee needs to ensure that there is a Commitment Statement in place that has been signed by the employer, apprentice and the training provider.

APSE Training

APSE believe that the Apprentice Levy has assisted in raising the profile of apprenticeships and focuses financial resource on building the skills and knowledge of the workforce. A training course for frontline managers has been developed by APSE that explains in detail the legal requirements for the public sector in terms of apprenticeship training and provides information on how best to utilise the Councils Apprenticeship Levy. For further details please visit the APSE Training hub on the APSE website or contact Head of APSE Training Jan Kennedy at 0161 772 1810.

- This article is based on 'Briefing 19 - 08 Apprenticeship Levy – Meeting your legal duty and maximising your income.' For a more comprehensive understanding of the Levy, download the briefing from the APSE website.



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