

apse direct

Association for Public Service Excellence

June/July 2020 • ISSN 16465-2493



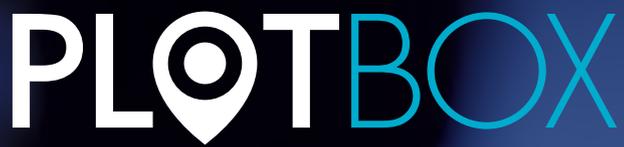
Flower Power

**Turning up the volume on the need
for serious investment in our parks
and greenspaces**

The Local Matters
Cllr. Kelham Cooke
p5

Health and Safety in the Spotlight
Pinsent Masons
p14

**Responding to the Climate
Emergency**
Fife Council
p16



Austin
Belfast
Boston
San Francisco
Sydney

028 2582 1005
www.plotbox.io

Bereavement Services Reimagined.

So what is PlotBox?

PlotBox is the international deathcare management solution that facilitates cemeteries and crematoria in operating to world-class standards through integrated software and georectified mapping modules. The number and scope of problems this innovation solves revolutionises the way deathcare facilities both operate and grow.

To find out about our range of packages or to book a demo, please contact:
cemetery@plotbox.io



APSE Office Remobilisation

APSE are working on a phased return back to our offices. We are planning this with staff safety as our number one priority; putting a number of measures in place which we feel will make it safer and reduce the risk of infection within the APSE offices. Guidance on returning to the office with new social distancing measures has been mailed to our Manchester-based staff and will be adapted when we have gained access to our Hamilton and Oxford offices. The safety of those who work with APSE is our highest priority so everything will continue to be kept under review. Should there be any changes, we will update our website and notify you immediately.

We are pleased to report that all of our services are currently operating online with new services added to support our member councils through this crisis including our APSE COVID-19 support hub, specialities network query service and our popular COVID-19 WhatsApp groups. We have now completed our first round of remobilisation reports and updating the membership as we emerge from lockdown with up-to-date guidance for frontline services across the UK. You can visit our website on www.apse.org.uk for all the latest information.

However we do look forward to seeing you all soon in 3-D ... there is a cup of coffee, a biscuit and a warm welcome waiting for you!

Contents

- 4 Be brave, the community needs you more than ever**
Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive
- 5 The local matters**
Cllr Kelham Cooke, Leader of South Kesteven Council
- 7 Underground refuse systems**
A report back on the APSE Solutions Underground Refuse Systems virtual briefing
- 8 Serious investment needed in our parks and neighbourhood services**
APSE Scotland and the New Policy Institute's new report
- 10 Local councils: A natural place to nurture talent**
An interview with Paul Boardman, Halton Borough Council's new parks manager
- 12 #HomesAtTheHeart campaign**
National Housing Federation
- 14 Health and safety in the spotlight**
Pinsent Masons LLP
- 16 How Fife is responding to the climate emergency**
Hugh Muschamp, Resource Efficient Solutions
- 19 Keeping it green with Telford & Wrekin**
Telford & Wrekin Council
- 20 So you've declared a climate emergency: what next?**
A look at APSE and the New Policy Institute's latest report
- 22 The rise of insourcing**
Tom Sasse, Institute for Government
- 26 Protecting the frontline by networking online**
APSE's online summer programme
- 28 Loving the local**
A report back on the APSE Policy Seminar
- 30 Back to the future of local government**
Report back on the most recent APSE Local government Commission 2030 meeting
- 31 What have ships got to do with houses?**
Phil Brennan, Head of APSE Energy

To advertise in the next edition of APSE direct, please contact Matt Paton at Spacehouse on 01625 614000 or email m.paton@spacehouse.co.uk

APSE direct is published by
Association for Public Service Excellence
3rd Floor Trafford House,
Chester Road, Old Trafford, Manchester M32 0RS
t: 0161 772 1810
e: enquiries@apse.org.uk
w: www.apse.org.uk

Be brave, the community needs you more than ever



COVID-19 has left many local businesses in a perilous financial state. More than ever local businesses and communities will be looking towards their local council to support, nurture and strengthen local high streets. Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, argues councils need to step up to their role as place-shapers, stepping in where developers have withdrawn and looking much more pragmatically at actions to improve local town centres.

Large scale crises – such as the one we currently find ourselves in the thick of – are often regarded as hugely disruptive events. Of course, in one sense they are, as the millions furloughed across the UK can attest to, but these kinds of generation-defining crises can also serve to accelerate pre-existing trends; speeding up the process by which older institutions, technologies and patterns of behaviour lose their popular appeal.

Before COVID, one trend that was depressingly familiar to local authorities was the decline of our high streets. Changing shopping habits driven mainly by the growth of ecommerce has meant boarded-up, empty shops are now a common feature in many of our town centres. A poll from last year revealed that almost every town centre in England and Wales has declined since 2013, with some losing over a fifth of stores. Another poll found that, in 2019 alone, the number of empty shops in the UK increased by 7,500. With a big-name high-street retailer seemingly facing collapse every day now, one worries what the figure will be for 2020.

This worry is particularly acute for local councils. For generations our high streets and town centres have acted as the lifeblood to our local areas. As well as instilling a strong sense of civic pride amongst communities and contributing enormously to the local economy, the health of the high street has in recent years become increasingly entwined with the health of local government finances.

As of 2020, councils are faced with a system where they have very little central government grants with a shift to self-financing. As an example, shire county budgets are made up of 75% council tax, 19% business rates, 4% other grants and just 2% revenue support grant. Therefore, for councils there is an ever greater need to focus on local economic growth and an enlarged council tax base.

Any discussion of local government finance also needs to contend with the giant elephant in the room - COVID. The response to the virus has stripped away 21% of local government's spending power. At present we wait to see whether this sum – estimated to be in excess of £10bn – will be reimbursed to local government in full or partially.

What with a beleaguered high street and the COVID response draining council resources, one doesn't need to be an economist to appreciate that this spells trouble for local government finances.

So how can local government respond?

Though it has been said that crises act as accelerators of pre-existing trends, we also know that throughout history necessity has been the mother of invention. And that is exactly how local authorities need to approach this challenge – with inventiveness.

Easier said than done you may say. But it has been done and done successfully. There are many examples of councils across the UK stepping up to their role of place-maker and steward of the local area by intervening, investing and co-ordinating a transformation in their town centres. Key to their success a long-term strategy move beyond a purely retail-oriented high street to one that is more multi-dimensional.

For some years now many councils have been directly intervening and trying to shift from a purely retail driven high street to one that is a mix of retail, residential and recreational; strategically deploying and utilising council assets to drive footfall back into the area and stimulate the local economy.

Creative community groups and artists are hugely important and local government needs to find ways of working with them. Places like Hull, Stockton, Durham and Liverpool have used culture, arts and festivals to bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to the city and town centres to spend in the local economy.

Councils have also looked to property investments as a potential means of securing an additional, sustainable source of revenue, whilst also promoting local employment or regeneration activities. Notable examples include:

- Southampton City Council has a £200m capital investment fund.
- In Bolton, the Council has created a £100 million development fund to kick start development and bring in £1 billion of development and investment.

So long as any portfolio is balanced, risk-managed and is about the long term, then this kind of borrowing for investment can be both an important source of revenue for authorities and a steer for regeneration efforts.

For some years now many councils have been directly intervening and trying to shift from a purely retail driven high street to one that is a mix of retail, residential and recreational.

Time for leadership

The current situation demands that local government has to step up the plate when it comes to repurposing and revitalising town centres and high streets. Whereas developers can sometimes be sclerotic in making decisions - waiting on the right time to maximise return on profit rather than weighing up the long-term needs of local communities – councils can act with greater urgency and their decision-making can be much more joined-up.

With more people shopping local as a result of the pandemic, now is the time for councils to accelerate their efforts and energy in delivering more multi-functional town centres, stemming the deterioration of community wealth. The message to town halls across the UK is this: It's time to be bold and forge a new municipalism; putting town centres at the heart of community life. Councils need to embrace entrepreneurialism and innovation if they are to deliver for struggling communities. •

On 9 and 10 July, APSE held its policy seminar "Loving the Local: The role of councils in our High Streets and Town Centres." You can read a summary of the event on [page 28](#)

In "Bricks – Mortar – Money", APSE and CIPFA explore the impact of property investment as a potential means of securing an additional and sustainable source of revenue for local authorities. You can download it for free [here](#).



Point of view

The local matters

Cllr Kelham Cooke, Leader of South Kesteven Council, Lincolnshire, responds to Chancellor Rishi Sunak's Summer Statement.

"I know that in South Kesteven we have a long list of innovative ideas as to how we can both save money and decarbonise our assets."

As a local council leader, I understand now all too well the pressures placed on local people and local economies as a result of the health pandemic.

South Kesteven District Council, like all others, has made seismic moves to support our most vulnerable residents, for example - the setting up of our hugely successful Community Hub, whilst acting as the conduit for support to local businesses.

We have witnessed unprecedented funding at a national government level through business grants, support for our NHS, additional funding for local councils and the furlough scheme, which has helped to retain and safeguard jobs across all sectors of the economy.

Even with this level of support it has not been easy and of course, like every other council leader, I suspect there is a little bit of Oliver in all of us. We are always tempted to ask 'please Sir could I have some more?' I am however acutely aware of the fragile state of both our national and local economies; now, after the shockwave of the lockdown, it is time for a reality check, and to move to the next stage in recovering Britain's physical and economic health.

Whilst the furlough scheme has proven to be a lifesaver for jobs and businesses, what we need in the longer term is for those jobs to be sustainable, and the harsh reality is that jobs dependent upon, in effect, a Government subsidy, will not be sustainable.

We also know that there is a confidence issue in persuading the public, to resume their post-lockdown spending patterns and to encourage them, in particular, to buy from local businesses, which in turn will provide that sustainability for local jobs.

I therefore very much welcome the measures to bolster the confidence of employers in bringing employees back off furlough, with the additional incentive of a £1,000 bonus per employee, if they are retained in employment, until January 2021. This, if nothing else, will provide businesses with the time to re-establish their client and customer base, and with the confidence of some financial headroom.

The boost to the housing market is important to South Kesteven too. Not only do we have ambitious plans for housing growth in all of our towns, but we are also home to key regional developers and housing companies that we need to help prosper. If they keep building, this creates much needed homes and skilled jobs across the economy.

With 80% of hospitality firms having stopped trading in March, in a sector with 1.4 million workers, like most council leaders I have been hoping that the cessation of trading is only temporary. Cafes, pubs and restaurants are the very businesses that make our local high streets and towns vibrant and attractive places. This is particularly true and important in South Kesteven's market towns – notably Stamford - which thrives on the visitor economy and the leisure sector. Therefore, the Chancellor's measures, to cut VAT to just 5% to help the hospitality and accommodation sector, alongside the measures to provide discounts on dining ('Eat Out to Help Out') are both practical and innovative ways to support the recovery of our local economies.

Going beyond this, the big-ticket items of £2 Billion to support green home improvements, and a further £1 Billion to green the public estate, are not only welcome in terms of local economies, but a big green step in the right direction to decarbonising Britain. I know that in South Kesteven we have a long list of innovative ideas as to how we can both save money and decarbonise our assets. Funding to enable projects to get off the ground will be a welcome boost to jobs, skills and our ambitions to address climate change.

I will of course be continuing to make the case loudly for local councils. I believe that we are the driving force for local prosperity and local growth. That means our ambitions for local places may outstrip the reality of resources but, as a starting point, the Chancellor's summer statement provides the stimulus that we need to start to nurture our local economies back to full health, enshrining resilience, not dependency, in local places. •

Cllr. Kelham Cooke is Leader of South Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire.

BUCHER
municipal

**Experts in every field
we compete in**



BUCHER
municipal

 **Johnston**
a BUCHER company

 **Hvidtved Larsen**
a BUCHER company



So take these sunken bins and learn to smile again!

Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions, offers a brief overview of the recent Underground Refuse Systems event virtual briefing on Tuesday 14 July.

APSE Solutions and Liverpool City Council are working together to bring Underground Refuse Systems to the UK. 150 people, representing 98 authorities joined a recent online briefing to hear about the benefits of going underground, including:

- A significant reduction in the cost of refuse and recycling collection.
- A major reduction in the carbon footprint of collecting waste and recycling.
- Reduced litter on streets.
- A more attractive street-scape.
- Value added commercial waste services.

Attendees were given information about a range of URS designs suitable for different locations. From new housing developments to existing urban areas, to replacing litter bins in parks and on sea fronts, going underground can cut cost whilst also improving the environment. Liverpool spoke of the city's compelling vision for transforming areas of terraced housing and the central role that URS is set to play in making that vision a reality for thousands of Liverpool residents.

APSE and Liverpool are in the process of creating a procurement framework to cover underground refuse systems, vehicles to collect them, technology to add functionality to them and cleaning/maintenance to keep them working properly. The framework is attracting the interest of major European suppliers and is expected to be available for use by all UK contracting authorities in the Autumn of this year.

The APSE Solutions Underground Refuse Hub contains all of our latest articles and events on this innovative and increasingly popular refuse system. [Click here to keep up to date with the latest developments.](#)

Alternatively, contact Head of APSE Solutions, Andy Mudd at amudd@apse.org.uk.

New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome AssetWORKS

AssetWorks, a leading provider of fleet and asset management software in the United Kingdom, announced their status as approved partner of APSE.

For over 35 years, AssetWorks has provided fleet and asset management software for organisations spanning the public and private sectors, including Wakefield Council, Royal Mail and UBICO, to help accurately track and report on vehicle maintenance, labour, fuel and more.

"The AssetWorks team is proud of our status as an APSE approved partner," said Mike Gadd, Managing Director of UK Operations at AssetWorks, "We have been committed to public service excellence in the United Kingdom for over 35 years and this partnership reflects our ongoing commitment to our customers and their communities."

AssetWorks is a leading provider of fleet management, enterprise asset management (EAM) and automated fuelling systems in the United Kingdom and North America, with over 550 customers, including both private and public sector organisations. AssetWorks solutions enable fleet organisations of all sizes to improve maintenance practices, streamline operations and improve accountability for mission-critical transportation assets.

Speaking of the partnership, Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive said, "As an internationally renowned company with vast experience, AssetWorks set the benchmark in the provision of fleet management solutions.

"With an international customer base of more than 1,000 public and private industry customers, Assetworks offer an outstanding service to local authorities across the UK and we're delighted that they're now on board."

For more information about our new Approved Partner and how they can help improve your frontline service, please [click on the link here.](#)

Interested in becoming an



Approved
Partner?

APSE's Approved Partner Scheme offers a select group of suppliers and manufacturers an exceptional opportunity to be associated with the unique APSE brand; synonymous with excellence in local council frontline services.

For more information, please contact Matt Paton at Spacehouse on 01625 614000 or email m.paton@spacehouse.co.uk

Serious investment needed in our parks and neighbourhood services

A look at APSE Scotland's and the New Policy Institute's new report: "Spending on parks and neighbourhood services in Scotland."

Parks are the lungs of our community, However, cuts in spending since 2010 has left many of these valuable green assets fighting for breath.

A new report by APSE Scotland - written and researched with the New Policy Institute (NPI) - examines what has happened to spending on parks and open spaces by Scottish local authorities. To provide context, the report also looks at spending on the wider group of local authority neighbourhood services - the services that local authorities provide that are neither education, social care nor housing.

The main findings are:

- Spending on parks has been hit harder than spending in general. From a peak in 2008/09, parks have seen deeper cuts in spending (down by a third) than neighbourhood services (down a fifth) and all local government services (down a tenth). Half the fall in spending on parks had happened by 2010/11.
- Parks have been hit about as hard in Scotland as England. Between 2009/10 and 2017/18, the percentage fall in net spending on parks was the same in Scotland as in England. The fall for neighbourhood services was less in Scotland as a whole.
- Revenue generation has been less buoyant in Scotland than England. Customer and client receipts produce less income for neighbourhood services in Scotland than in England. Rising in England, this income has been falling in Scotland.



[To celebrate the launch of the report, APSE held a free online discussion group on 16 June. To download the report and view the highlights from this discussion click here.](#)



- The all-Scotland parks average is only a rough guide to what has happened in individual local authority areas. Over the five years to 2017/18, 10 authorities saw no falls in gross spending on parks while 5 saw falls more than double the average.
- Neighbourhood services have a low priority attached to them compared with other services. APSE has identified 2012/13 levels of funding as the minimum sustainable level for local government UK-wide. Budget data suggests that after inflation, total council service spending in Scotland in 2019/20 is above the 2012/13 level whereas spending on neighbourhood services is below.

Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive of APSE said "Parks and neighbourhood services are universal services. Frustratingly, the contribution of these services to wellbeing and health is often hidden. It has been estimated that parks contribute £2.8bn per year to Scotland's community health and wellbeing. In turn, this saves NHS Scotland some £9m per year, including fewer GP visits. Neighbourhood services have demonstrated their resilience during these challenging times and we cannot risk these services being hollowed out and unable to respond in the future."

"It has been estimated that parks contribute £2.8bn per year to Scotland's community health and wellbeing. In turn, this saves NHS Scotland some £9m per year, including fewer GP visits."

Chair of APSE Scotland, Cllr Les Sharp said, "Though councillors and officers have faced some very tough budget decisions, many out with their direct control, recent events ought to make decision-makers wake up to the consequences of serious underinvestment in our neighbourhood services. Clean and green neighbourhoods are the bedrock for happier and healthier local communities. Furthermore, they are vital to the fight against climate change; supporting biodiversity, absorbing flood water, improving air quality and mitigating urban heat. Future decision making needs to be made through the prism of value rather than just cost, and APSE believes our neighbourhood services have demonstrated their value tenfold throughout this current crisis."

The past few months have shown just how important our parks are to maintaining the health and well-being of local communities. By bringing into focus the enormous benefits of our greenspace, the pandemic has raised many issues about the role of parks in society: particularly how they are funded. The report demonstrates that the underfunding of neighbourhood services, which has been taking place over the last decade, undermines the very essence of local government and needs to be reversed.

Louise Melville, APSE Principal Advisor for Scotland urged Scottish Councils to continue to collaborate and share their ideas for parks and neighbourhood services stating, "As this report demonstrates the battle for our parks, green spaces and neighbourhood services is far from over. I would urge our member councils in Scotland to ensure they participate and share best practice in our advisory groups' networks so that their collective voice is not lost. The value of our parks to Scotland communities cannot be lost in the current debate about the health pandemic. We need to continue to work together to be that voice of parks in Scotland."

- *Are you an APSE member? If so you can sign up for free to our Parks, Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance Advisory Groups. For information on how to sign up [click here](#).*



Local councils: A natural place to nurture talent

Recently appointed parks manager at Halton Borough Council, Paul Boardman rose through the ranks having first joined the authority as a gardening apprentice. Paul is no stranger to success after being named APSE Young Horticulture Apprentice of The Year in 2008. We interviewed Paul about his achievement, and what it says about the value of local authority apprenticeship schemes.



“There’s a wealth of experience within local government which apprentices can use to their advantage, and the passing down of that understanding will go in hand with the new ideas that the younger generations can bring.”

Q: Hi Paul, first of all we would like to say congratulations on your success. The first thing we want to ask is what made you consider an apprenticeship with Halton Council?

In my final years of high school I had every intention of continuing with education and attending university, and signed up to sixth form college to study geography, biology, and business. During my time at sixth form college, however, I became interested in other possible paths to take: I was undecided, as many young people are, on what I wanted to pursue a career in. I had always been interested in the outdoors, and many of my interests revolved around being outside and enjoying the open spaces around us, and this is still the case today. I found myself spending most of my college free periods within the nearby Victoria Park as I would go there for a quiet coffee to get away from the chaos of the common room. I quickly started to take notice of the work which went in to maintaining these vital community assets and started to look for courses within horticulture. I was in my final year of college when I saw a job posting which stated that Halton Borough Council were looking for apprentices within what was the Landscape Services Division, the timing couldn’t have been any better for me and my interest was piqued straight away. I attended the open day and was fortunate enough to be selected for interview before being offered a position in Victoria Park.

Q: What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship and why?

Managing the expectations of others could be quite challenging, and there were occasions where someone would need reminding of our limited knowledge and skills; there were times when we were viewed as “just another pair of hands” by some colleagues rather than somebody who required training and guidance. Indeed, we were employed to do a job (and I was certainly happy to do my part), but it took some compromise and communication from both myself and my team in order for us to balance the needs of the workforce with my own interest in working towards my qualifications. I’ll be forever grateful for the patience and encouragement afforded to me during the course of my apprenticeship.

Q: What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

The most rewarding part of my apprenticeship was working towards something which made a real difference in the local community; working within the parks team meant that I was in contact with the users of the service on a daily basis and those encounters were overwhelmingly positive. We would often get compliments on the work we were doing around the park, and I always enjoyed the satisfaction that brought. I’ve used parks and open spaces for recreation throughout my life, and to see first-hand that my work being appreciated by the residents and visitors of the Borough was fantastic. I must also mention the APSE Apprentice Awards in 2008 where I won the award for Horticultural Apprentice of the Year. It was an especially proud moment to have my achievements and passion for work within my local area recognised on a national scale.

Q: What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

I’ve learned a lot of lessons throughout my career, from being an apprentice through to eventually managing our current crop of apprentices. I’ve always been curious of how things worked and taken advantage of the wealth of knowledge around me. I’ve asked questions and listened to others and taken their experiences on board which has provided me with a good base for my working life. There’s a wealth of experience within local government which apprentices can use to their advantage, and the passing down of that understanding will go in hand with the new ideas that the younger generations can bring. Apprentices play an important part in succession planning and filling gaps in the future. My own experiences have shown that you can build a great career from an apprenticeship if you put the work in.



“Apprentices play an important part in succession planning and filling gaps in the future.”

Q: Any other comments, maybe in relation to your new role - aims and future projects?

As ever, it is an interesting time to be in local government! We have some great challenges on the horizon with climate change affecting our industry this will involve building resilient planting stock for the future through sensible species selection. People are also taking a greater interest in their local area during the current COVID-19 crisis which is putting immediate pressure on our service areas; quality parks will be essential to societies recovery following the impact of the coronavirus, as people continue to explore what is on their doorstep. It is also a personal ambition to improve our environment through the small changes we can all make. One key area I believe our industry can set an example in being sustainable is through the reduction in single use plastics from seasonal bedding and litter picking operations. I hope that Halton's Parks Section can play its part of a much bigger picture in that regard through using more environmentally friendly practices.

Q: Thank you for your time Paul. we wish you every success in your new role! •

The APSE local authority apprentice and trainee awards scheme is open to candidates from all stages of training and have been running successfully for close to two decades throughout the UK. The aim of the awards is not only to give recognition to our future tradespersons, but also to the councils themselves who continue to invest in the workforce of the future and provide first-class training and employment initiatives via modern apprenticeship and trainee schemes.

Unfortunately, due to the current situation and uncertainty around the use of event venues for evening functions, APSE will not be running the apprentice awards in 2020. All nominated applicants will be eligible to apply in 2021. [To download our Apprentice Awards Brochure click here.](#)

New APSE Approved Partners:

Welcome



APSE is delighted to welcome Estate Research as the newest member to our Approved Partner scheme.

Established in 2001, Estate Research is a firm of International Probate Genealogists who specialise in locating missing beneficiaries and assets to estates. Estate Research offer a complete worldwide service backed up with their own in-house expertise; enabling them to complete research quickly and thoroughly.

Over the last 19 years Estate Research have provided free genealogy and probate services to the public sector, this includes local authorities, hospitals and coroners.

Speaking about the partnership, Aidan Hutchings, Managing Director said, “I consider it important to not just concentrate on the commercial aspect but the overarching mission, which is to assist local authorities in contacting next of kin so that they can attend the funeral of a relative and help minimise public expenditure on welfare funerals. It feeds through to our commitment to be transparent to all parties and to be used by public sector bodies for all occasions.

Through this partnership with APSE, we hope to play a vital role in ensuring that our services meet the needs of local authorities; keeping us at the forefront of best practice in local government in the UK.”

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive said, “As a market-leader in this field, APSE members will benefit enormously from Estate Research's expertise and use of cutting-edge technology; helping them make significant savings at a time of growing financial uncertainty. I'm sure you will all join me in congratulating them on their status as APSE Approved Partners.”

Estate Research's experienced paralegal staff are able to offer an array of services to clients and they remain open and fully operational.

[Find out how Estate Research can help your council.](#)

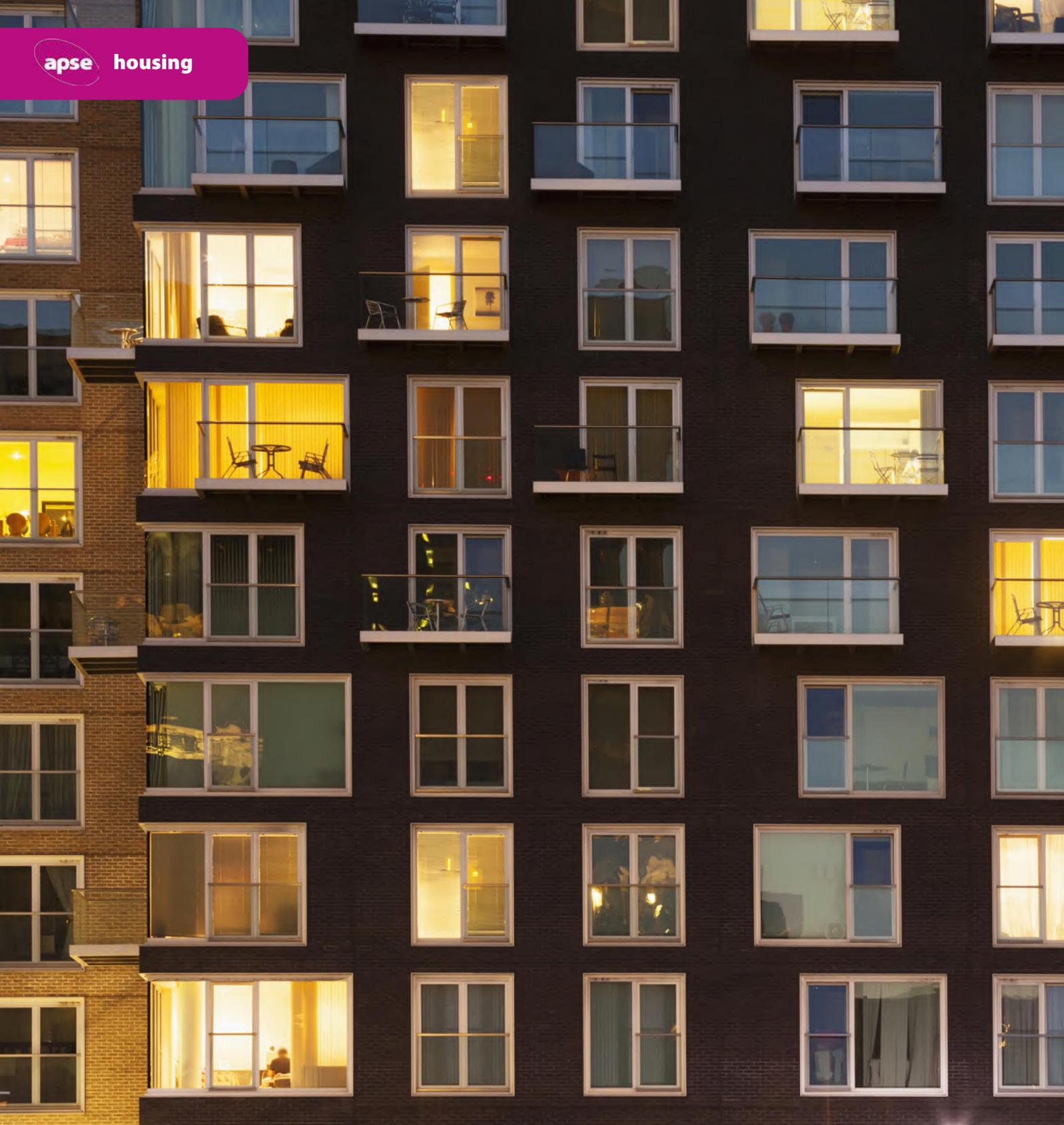
Coronavirus Update

Estate Research fully appreciate the pressure being placed upon the UK's public sector by the current pandemic and would like to reassure everybody that Estate Research remains open and fully operational to support Local Authorities and Public Sector Bodies with our services.

Their staff are working from home with complete access to their systems allowing them to continue to locate next-of-kin and support public health funerals to go ahead with the family's support.

Additionally, Estate Research have been able to adapt and continue to offer their property services including Search and Security via a nationwide property management company. They will only enter a property 7 days after the passing of the deceased and upon entry of the property, will wear protective clothing whilst following Government hygiene guidelines all times.

For further information please visit the website www.estateresearch.co.uk or get in touch with the Public Sector department directly at ps@estateresearch.co.uk



Poor housing causing health problems for nearly a third of Brits during lockdown



Homes at the Heart

The COVID crisis has thrown into sharp relief just how acute the housing crisis is. APSE has therefore joined the National Housing Federation's campaign to put good quality, affordable housing at the heart of plans for the recovery from COVID-19.

Nearly a third (31%) of adults in Britain – 15.9m people – have had mental or physical health problems because of the condition of, or lack of space in, their home during lockdown, according to a new YouGov survey. This includes people seeking medical help or taking medication for mental health issues, not getting enough sleep, people experiencing depression or stress, as well as those falling physically ill or catching coronavirus.

Five leading housing organisations - backed by 60 businesses, banks, charities and think tanks – have now launched a campaign to warn that the country's housing crisis is making lockdown even more unbearable for millions. The 'Homes at the Heart' campaign is urging government to put funding for new and existing social homes at the heart of the country's recovery from coronavirus.

New figures released by the campaign - including an online YouGov survey of 4,116 people and new analysis of the English Housing Survey - reveals the true shape of the country's housing situation during lockdown:

- A record 3.7m people are living in overcrowded homes, including a record 1.6m children.
- 30,000 people are spending lockdown in a home that consists of one room, and more than 3,600 children are spending lockdown in a home made up of two rooms.
- 62,580 families are living in temporary accommodation, the highest number for 13 years.
- Millions more people across the country are spending lockdown in homes that are damp and mouldy, insecure or pushing them in to debt.

The lack of space and cramped living conditions has played a big role in causing health problems for these huge numbers of people during lockdown. More than half of those (52%) who said their homes weren't big enough said they'd suffered from health problems:

- More than 1 in 10 (11%) of all British adults said they felt depressed during lockdown because of a lack of space in their home.
- 1 in 20 (5%) of everyone who said they had a lack of space said this had led them to seek medical help or take medication for their mental health.
- Almost a fifth (19%) of those in cramped conditions said they hadn't been able to get enough sleep because of the lack of space.

These findings follow a recent review from Public Health England into why BAME people have been worst hit by the pandemic, which found that issues of overcrowding and housing conditions contributed to the increased spread of COVID-19 among these communities.

The main cause of these housing problems is the severe lack of housing in Britain, especially social housing. A shortage of homes means growing families have nowhere affordable to move to, leading to overcrowding. Meanwhile, rent in social homes is typically half the cost of privately rented homes, making them much more affordable for people on low incomes. On average, social homes are also of a better standard than those rented from private landlords.

The 'Homes at the Heart' campaign has been set up by the National Housing Federation.

- *To find out more about the 'Homes at the Heart' campaign and see the full list of 61 supporters visit housing.org.uk/HomesAtTheHeart*



Case study

Emma, 42, from Luton, is a care worker. She rents a 2 bedroom maisonette from a private landlord, where she had been living with her 13-year-old daughter.

"The mould, damp and leaking pipes got so bad that my daughter had to go to hospital for her asthma twice during lockdown because she couldn't breathe. The house has been bad for a while, but constantly being at home has made her asthma much worse. She had to move in with her father because it's not safe for her to live here."

Before the crisis Emma had been in contact with environmental health and her local MP who both tried to help. Her landlord then started eviction proceedings. These have now been delayed because of the ban on evictions but Emma is urgently trying to find a new home.

She said: "I'm desperate to find somewhere else to live. We are on the social housing waiting list but the council has said it could take 16 years for us to get a home. I've been looking at private rent but it's too expensive, especially when you take into account paying a deposit and fees."

As a care worker Emma is on a zero-hour contract, and her income is topped up by universal credit. She has found it virtually impossible to find a safe and affordable private rented home that accepts people on benefits.

Emma said: "It's heartbreaking. I just want my daughter back with me again."

A record 3.7m people are living in overcrowded homes, including a record 1.6m children.



Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation

"For many people, our homes have been important places of refuge and safety during this pandemic – but for countless others across the country home has felt less like a sanctuary and more like a prison. Inadequate housing and cramped conditions are making lockdown even more unbearable for millions of people right now.

"Homes have been the centre of our lives during the pandemic and as the country starts to re-open, the government must put homes at the heart of the country's recovery too. The government have said they want to end rough sleeping, rebuild communities and help the economy bounce back. Putting more money in to building new social homes, and improving the quality of existing homes, will help achieve all of these things – more jobs, a boost to the economy, and affordable, high quality places for people to live and communities to thrive."



Health and safety in the spotlight

A high-hazard industry, the waste sector is high on the list of priorities for the Health and Safety Executive. Zoe Betts, Legal Services Manager, and Jonathan Cowlan, Health and Safety Senior Manager at Pinsent Masons LLP, highlight the true costs of health and safety issues to local authority waste services.



Pinsent Masons

When it comes to securing convictions, the HSE 'strike rate' is high. The latest figures reveal a 92% success rate in securing a conviction for at least one offence in cases where a verdict was reached.

The waste sector typically involves high-hazard activities such as waste collection, recycling, and disposal. This diverse range of activities presents numerous challenges to employers and occupational safety and health professionals. Not only is the work carried out in a variety of settings but it involves significant interaction with members of the public. We explore the statistical data, the true costs of health and safety incidents and raises a range of practical and regulatory issues for employers to consider.

The human costs

The statistics make for depressingly familiar reading, especially because they don't reflect the considerable variation in performance within the industry and the range of service providers (including local authorities, major private contractors and SMEs).

According to figures published by the Health and Safety Executive ("HSE") in October 2019, the waste sector is still the most dangerous industry, aside from agriculture. The rate of fatal accidents is nearly 5 times higher than the construction sector and 17 times higher than the average across all other industries. Whilst the number of fatalities in 2018/19 (at 7) was lower than 2017/18, there is no room for complacency.

Health and safety incidents are commonly foreseeable and avoidable and the statistics also bear this out. Over the five year period from 2014 – 2019, 30% of people killed in the waste sector came into contact with moving machinery, 28% were struck by a moving vehicle and 16% were struck by moving or falling objects. These types of incidents founded the basis for a series of successful HSE prosecutions over the last decade of public and private sector organisations.

Against this backdrop, it is unsurprising that the waste sector is high on the list of priorities for the HSE, both in terms of proactive inspections and enforcement action following serious incidents. The regulator has implemented a sector plan with a dedicated inspector. Quite rightly, the sector plan focusses on both aspects of "health and safety" instead of the traditional emphasis on safety only. The HSE's priorities are to see "significant improvements in all areas of health and safety performance, in particular:

- a reduction in the number of people killed by moving vehicles / caught in machinery; and
- a reduction in cases of musculo-skeletal disorders ("MSDs") and occupational lung disease".

Key issues for duty holders

From a practical perspective, some key areas for employers are:

- Collection route specific risk assessments – how many will you need; who will undertake and review them; and how will they be communicated to crews?
- High levels of noise exposure – particularly in kerbside glass collections and materials recovery facilities.
- Manual handling – MSDs account for around one third of reported injuries in the industry and the majority are associated with collection activities
- Mental health – according to the HSE, over a third of reported cases of new or long-standing ill-health in 2018/19 were attributed to stress, depression or anxiety

From a management perspective, some key areas to consider are:

- Effective supervision and monitoring - how many supervisors do you need and what will 'supervision' and 'monitoring' look like in practice (for they are two different things)?
- Competency and training – what skills, knowledge and experience are needed for different job roles and how are employees assessed?
- Use of contractors and agency staff – do you have robust procedures for these types of activities and workers?

Business costs

Time spent on these issues is unlikely to be time wasted. Aside from the human costs, there are significant business costs which arise out of a serious health and safety incident. The more immediate (but not necessarily insured) costs include lost time, sick pay, production delays, damaged plant and equipment, repairs, enhanced safety measures and legal fees. The less tangible, but no less real, costs can include lost contracts, failed tenders, decreased share price and reputational damage (remember Merlin Attractions and the crash on the Smiler at Alton Towers?). The HSE suggest that for every £1 compensated by insurance, £10 is lost from uninsured costs due to injury and ill health caused by work.

As well as the monetary cost, there is the investment of time to consider. HSE investigations are rarely concluded swiftly. Inspectors have very wide powers to gather evidence pertaining to the investigation and co-operation is strongly advised. In addition to the power to interview (voluntarily, by compulsion and under caution), HSE Inspectors are legally entitled to enter premises; make examinations; take samples of articles or substances; take measurements, photographs and recordings; seize an article or substance; require the production and inspection of documents; and take copies of such material.

Inspectors may also issue enforcement notices. An improvement notice alleges a breach of health and safety legislation which must be rectified within a prescribed period of time. A prohibition notice requires the immediate cessation of an activity which, in the Inspector's opinion, poses a risk of serious injury. Obstructing an Inspector, making false statements, refusing to answer questions when compelled to do so and failing to comply with an enforcement notice are criminal offences contrary to the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Understanding the powers of the HSE, and your own rights and obligations, is a vital part of the process.

A regulatory case can commonly take between two and four years (or more) from the date of the incident to the date of the sentencing hearing following a conviction. The management time and internal resources that must be devoted to an HSE investigation, and a prosecution if one is brought, are significant. As the adage goes, "If you think safety is expensive, try having an accident".

Financial costs

When it comes to securing convictions, the HSE 'strike rate' is high. The latest figures reveal a 92% success rate in securing a conviction for at least one offence in cases where a verdict was reached.

Mandatory Sentencing Guidelines for all health and safety offences and corporate manslaughter were implemented just over 4 years ago and the consequences of non-compliance have never been more serious.

For individuals who are convicted of H&S offences, the custody threshold has been lowered. In other words, someone is now more likely to be sentenced to a term of imprisonment than was previously the case for the same offence. For organisations that are convicted of offences, the financial penalties have increased significantly. We have already seen that in the year following the implementation of the Guidelines, there were more fines in excess of £1 million than in the preceding 20 years.

Fines are tariff-based and predicated on the organisation's turnover (not profit). Penalties are also linked to the degree of harm that was risked by the offender's breach, rather than any harm that was actually caused.

The Guidelines state that the fine "must be sufficiently substantial to have a real economic impact which will bring home to both management and shareholders the need to comply with health and safety legislation". Given the highly hazardous nature of many waste sector activities, and the drive to improve health and safety performance, further prosecutions and severe penalties are to be expected.

Concluding thoughts

Waste sector services are an essential and valuable part of our daily lives. Increasingly innovative means are being introduced in order to meet increasingly more challenging targets. And yet the spotlight remains firmly fixed on the waste sector as a whole in terms of health and safety compliance. Cultural attitudes take time to change and become truly embedded. Only then should we start to see a widespread improvement in behavioural safety and higher health and safety standards; all resulting in fewer instances of injury and ill-health.

The HSE's sector plan encourages collaborative working between stakeholders in the industry. The Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum ("WISH"), SWITCH in Scotland, APSE, ESA, the HSE website and your fellow local authorities are all rich sources of guidance and best practice. We endorse this sharing of ideas in the pursuit of a safer and healthier sector for all. •

Burnish your health and safety credentials - book a place on one of our training courses!

Health & Safety in Waste and Environmental Services

£249+VAT (APSE members)
£429+VAT (Non-members)



Delivered over two half-day sessions, this masterclass is led in conjunction with our legal partners, Pinsent Masons. You will develop an understanding of the "big picture" on health and safety, asking questions such as: how serious is it? Why should we be concerned in waste and environmental services? What are the issues for us? What are the hazards and risks for my specific service? The course explores case law and best practice case studies.

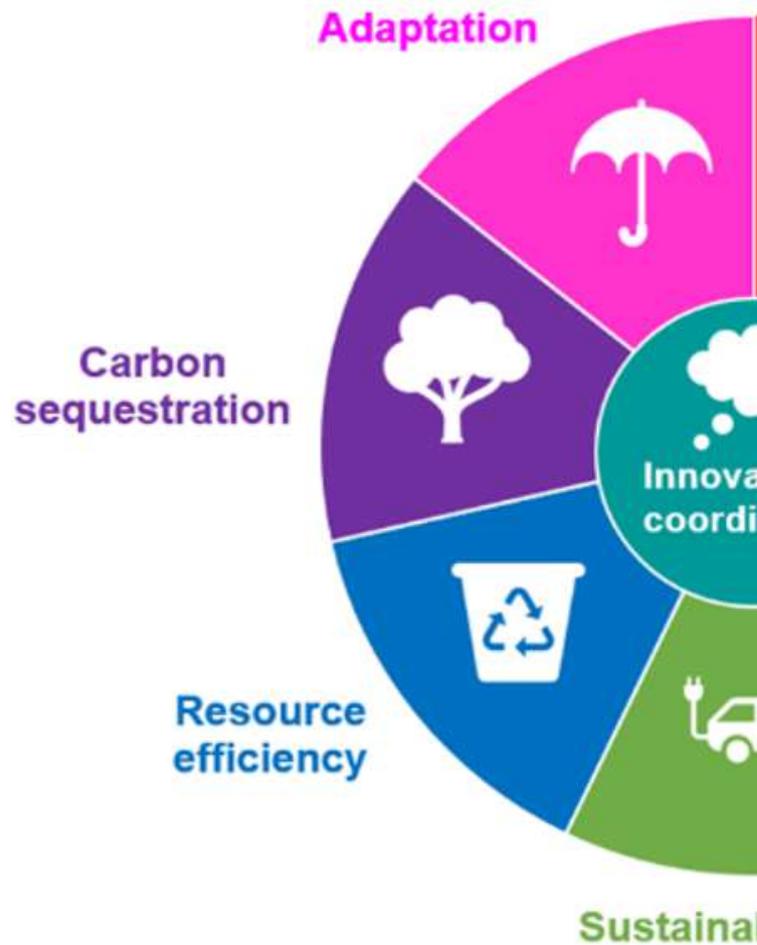
This course has been reintroduced in response to alleged breaches of health and safety regulations by local authorities. [Click here for more information.](#)

The Circle of Fife: How Fife Council is responding to the climate emergency

Hugh Muschamp is programme manager in the Climate Change and Zero Waste team in Resource Efficient Solutions, an arm's length company owned by Fife Council. With the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in September 2019, we spoke to Hugh about how Fife intends to deliver on its declaration.



Energy efficiency is the critical starting point and is commonly the most cost-effective way of reducing costs and carbon emissions.



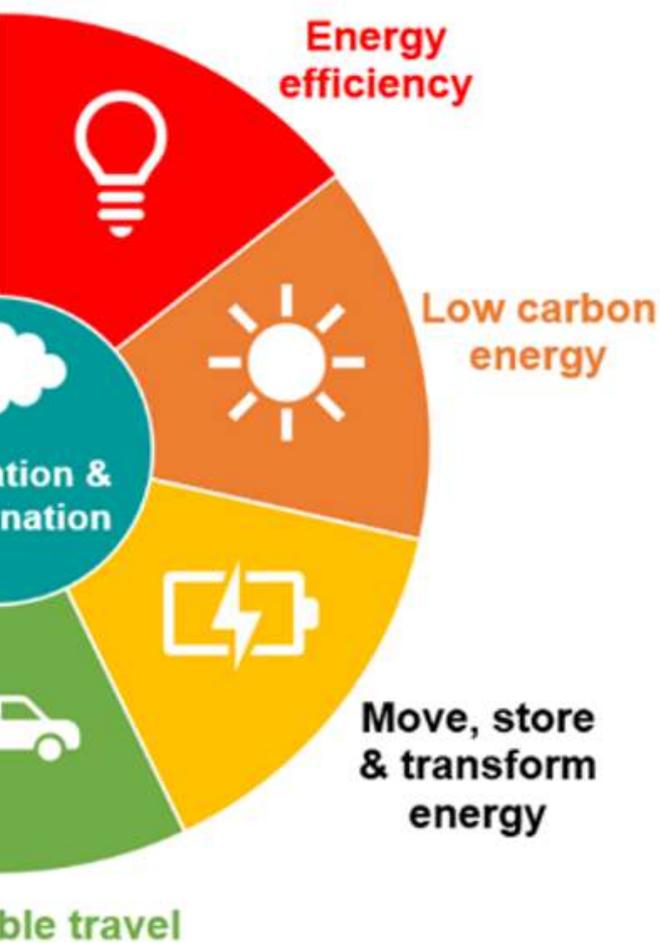
In February 2020 Fife Council agreed its next climate plan - Climate Fife. In some ways the timing was ideal, following closely on the heels of widescale recognition of the climate emergency.

For those that do not know, Fife is the third biggest Council in Scotland. It is a coastal peninsula between two estuaries, and two cities, Edinburgh and Dundee.

Fife Council has acted on sustainability and climate change over many decades. Over the years Fife has tackled many low hanging fruits. This provides a solid foundation, but also means the remaining challenges are bigger, well more challenging. This is the focus of Climate Fife. Fife Council has invested over the long term in both a skilled climate change team, and equally skilled and motivated colleagues across the council. Fife Council placed the Climate Change team within a new arm's length council owned company called Fife Resource Solutions, delivering many services for the Council and sharing our expertise as consultancy services for others through Resource Efficient Solutions LLP.

Really understanding climate change

A colleague puts it this way: why is climate change 'suddenly' an emergency? Spoiler alert, – it hasn't suddenly become an emergency – it's always been an emergency. This is just the last gasp of climate scientists for people to take this issue seriously while there is still a tiny chance to save a relatively stable climate. Climate scientists have been shouting about this for the last ten years. Unfortunately, climate change is progressing much faster than even most scientists dared imagine and our models underestimate the problem.



Run-away warming, for those unfamiliar with the term, is the prospect that carbon emissions from human activities will warm the planet sufficiently for vast natural carbon stores to be released which would lead to run-away warming. For example: by drying out the Amazon rainforest and causing vast forest fires; by melting the permafrost and releasing natural stores of methane frozen in ice and frozen soils. Once released the scale would be so huge and sudden that humanity would be powerless to stop more positive feedback, the release of more natural stores of carbon, meaning that warming causes more and unstoppable warming for centuries. Once a fringe idea - catastrophic run-away warming is now the most likely case based on current emission trends.

Do you need more reasons to act? Half of human emissions since the industrial revolution have occurred in the last 30 years. The rate is still increasing year on year. If we limit warming to less than 1.5 Celsius the odds of disaster are still 33%. The message is surely clear, act now and act quickly.

Like all areas, the focus of recent work has been driven by responding to the COVID19 challenges. This has impacted on some the early actions in Climate Fife. The changes driven by COVID19 have also provided opportunities to demonstrate the potential new ways of action and rapidity of response. Lise Kingo of the United Nations reminded us that "the COVID-19 pandemic is a 'fire drill' for the effects of climate change".

Some lessons for Fife Council

Through more fully understanding the challenge, this in turn helps understand the strategic risks this brings. Climate change mitigation impacts, such as the transformation of our energy system, and the need to adapt to unavoidable climate change are on the Council risk register.

This is a big challenge, so it is good to be part of something big. Fife Council is a signatory of the Global Covenant of Mayors on Climate Change. Signatories commit to developing a Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plan. This is a well structured and supported process, drawing on the knowledge of the wider group. The actions are to measure emissions, assess climate risks and vulnerability, and develop (then deliver) an action plan. Climate Fife is that plan. Fife Council's Fife Resource Solutions team led the work to develop Climate Fife.

The vision is Climate Fife is to be:

- Climate friendly, having transformed the economy, infrastructure, land use and energy system to decarbonise how we live;
- Climate ready, with plans and projects to increase the resilience of Fife communities and the economy to help minimise the impacts from unavoidable climate change; and
- Climate just, ensuring that all Fifers and the Fife environment can benefit from this transition. No one left behind.

Through workshops and engagement with partners, a set of themes have been identified to guide our action.

For mitigation, energy efficiency is the critical starting point and is commonly the most cost-effective way of reducing costs and carbon emissions. Efficiency decisions then drive the demand and thereby scale of low carbon energy. More efficient whole energy system approach with energy networks, smart grids, energy storage will be needed to move, store and transform energy. Sustainable travel choices will combine decarbonised vehicle fuels, actively encouraging walking, cycling and improved low carbon public transport and impacting the need for travel, such as through improved communications infrastructure.

Resource efficiency is a foundation by reducing the amount of resource we use. The circular economy will be critical in managing, recovering and avoiding waste. Carbon sequestration looks to be a limited and constrained resource where we need to plan for critical needs, such as anaesthetics for surgery. Long lead times mean early will be required for carbon sinks: forest, peat, land, marine, rock; alongside carbon capture. Even if we stop emitting now (which we are far from doing) we will need to adapt to unavoidable climate change. This is about increasing Fife's resilience to changing climate through adapting society, economy and infrastructure.

Making this happen will require innovation and coordination across all these themes. Climate Fife works through existing policies, plans and strategies, and through collaborative partnerships to ensure actions are delivered in the most effective way. Business as usual will not deliver the urgent and decisive action that is needed to tackle the climate emergency.

The plan recognises action across Fife will require a vast programme of work and investment from many partners.

Governance of the plan is based around the principles of project, programme and portfolio management. The Council's partners can feed in to any place in this structure. The council will provide the programme management support, as well as senior officer leadership. Climate Fife not only reports within the council to a strategic board and Committee, but also to the community planning Fife Partnership.

Delivery is in phases, recognising the increased challenge of net zero by 2045, for those of us in Scotland.

[continues on next page]

First plan period		Second plan period			Third plan period	
Ground work	Scaling up	Acceleration of mitigation and adaptation actions (main phase)			Near net zero GHG	Deliver SCCAP
2020-2022	2023-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	2040-2045	2045-2050

[continued from previous page]

Driving forward early action. Fife Council has set out a first year action plan to drive the process, and reports to the Executive Director. Climate Fife is a Fife-wide plan, bringing actions not just from the Council, but other partners. It is Fife's plan. #OurFifeMatters.

Two examples can help give the scale of the opportunity and the challenge.

- **Opportunity:** Fife spends and estimated £446m on fuel alone through electricity, petrol and diesel (light vans and cars). Think about what we could achieve if some of this money was spent in the local economy by local energy generation and storage to benefit our communities. Just 10% could mean £46M put back in the local economy.
- **Challenge:** How many homes in Fife have to be retrofitted each year to be ready for net zero in 2045 and the changed climate? We know each home will need a mix of energy efficiency measures, energy generation and connection to new energy systems, adapting to unavoidable climate change, and for some enabling charging of an electric vehicle. If all changes are done in one go for each home, then that means 6,400 homes need to

be retrofitted each year from 2020-2045. If we take an iterative approach, with say 4 interventions, then this would up the challenge to over 25,000 homes every year from now to 2045. That is notwithstanding the likely reduced cost of doing these interventions once, such as scaffolding.

Climate Fife is a collective response to the climate challenge of our times. Climate change is not a problem for the future – the window of action is now and is closing rapidly. The next decade must be the decade of action or there is no hope of avoiding runaway climate change. Limiting climate change could have huge economic benefits and, in the words of Sharan Burrow, the International Trade Union Confederation Secretary-General, "There are no jobs on a dead planet."

[For more information about Climate Fife click here.](#)

Fife Council are members of APSE Energy. For information on how APSE Energy can help your council make progress on reducing climate emissions [click here.](#)



Land Audit Management System

LAMS

A quality inspection system for land management



Includes monitoring for:

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE
STREET CLEANSING
CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA

Don't be sheepish - what are ewe waiting for?

JOIN IN NOW!

For more information, contact:

performance.networks@apse.org.uk



**APSE members can advertise
job vacancies on our website
for FREE!**

**If you have a current vacancy
you want to list please complete
[our online enquiry form](#)**

Keeping it green with Telford and Wrekin



Earlier this year, Telford and Wrekin Council took home the APSE Soft FM Green Innovation Award. Lorna Hicks, Catering Group Manager, and Kate Sumner, Cleaning Group Manager, outline the progress their services have made in helping to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Here at Telford & Wrekin Council, our catering and cleaning teams are taking a proactive stance to meet the government agenda in support of climate change initiatives within our local area. Our mission is to reduce our carbon footprint by lessening single-use plastic and recycling food waste into fuel. Both services have been strong advocates for climate change initiatives for many years, with the cleaning team recently winning the 'Green Achiever Award'. Our teams are now redirecting such efforts towards the Council's commitment to reduce its carbon footprint by 2030.

The Council set-up a task force gathering members from all areas of business and local schools to become more environmentally friendly and plastic free by 2030. Our catering and cleaning teams are strong advocates for tackling climate change. As a service area we have not only been able to deliver efficiencies and more sustainable services in line with our local policies, but we have also been 'keeping it green' by supporting both the Government's 25 year plan to improve the environment and the UN's 13th Goal to tackle climate change. As a local authority, we work together to achieve these outcomes.

Catering (Let's Dine) and Cleaning (Let's Clean) supply school services including the provision of school meals, caretaking and cleaning with over 200 contracts. We have taken a joint approach to support the reduction of single-use plastic, food waste, and harmful chemicals, providing a more sustainable service that supports not only the education of children within our borough and the wider community, but also the worldwide agenda to protect the planet for the future generation.

Team Catering - Bronze Food For Life

Our catering service has promoted several initiatives to combat climate change including efficient energy measures within school kitchens, returning recyclable packaging back to our suppliers, and the use of fully compostable plant-based disposables within our catering units. We have also introduced a large purgal milk machine into our commercial café which has reduced the use of single-use plastic by 20 bottles per week, and trialed a reusable cup initiative (below) where the customer pays a deposit and is then reimbursed upon the cups return; reducing the use of fully-compostable take out cups.

We received a positive response to this initiative and are now looking to introduce this within other parts of our commercial catering services and events. These cups will also be used for in-house hospitality alongside a crockery alternative, and water is now served in reusable glass bottles and glasses.

Within our school kitchens we have also reduced the use of Clingfilm. Our waste oil is collected by our main food supplier and is recycled for fuel; we have also begun decanting fruit and yoghurts from large containers; reducing the use of individual plastic pots, we will introduce more Vegan options on the next menu cycle.

Cleaning - The Green Achievers

Our cleaning team have removed all desk bins in corporate buildings to support the recycling initiative to encourage workers to use recycling stations located on each floor. We have also introduced recyclable toilet



paper and have put a stop on single-use cloths in favour of microfibre. All vacuums used by our cleaning teams are made within the UK reducing our carbon footprint by avoiding unnecessary imports. We are committed to supporting the environment and make every effort to use environmentally friendly products. The core products we use are Jangro Enviro Range - these are concentrated in 1litre containers, reducing packaging and storage (now used in catering).

Our policy is to support ECO schools, with an aim to reduce our carbon footprint, manage our energy, and use sustainable recyclable packaging and environmentally friendly chemicals. We have an energy awareness campaign to encourage employees to be aware of energy costs, this includes switching lights off if rooms are not in use, ensuring equipment is turned off when not in use, and ensuring taps are turned off after use.

From these initiatives we have achieved 'Green Achiever' status; an award for supporting the environment by recycling/using environmentally friendly cleaning materials and energy efficient cleaning equipment. In a bid to support the 'Plastic Free Telford' initiative, we are now revising all our plastic products to see if there are more environmentally sustainable products that we could switch to, to support our environmental aims.

Working Together – Catering & Cleaning

Both teams visited a local factory to procure a new waste bag that is made from 100% recycled plastic, which has been introduced across all the combined sites that we supply. The council also has an outdoor centre in Wales; both our teams have supported the centre operationally introducing changes as implemented in Telford. Within our procurement process, we also ensure our suppliers have an environment policy to support us with our goals. •

For more information about how you can green your frontline FM services, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk



So you've declared a climate emergency: what next?

A new report published by APSE sets out the steps that UK councils need to consider in translating climate emergency declarations into positive actions to address climate change. The report, written and researched with the New Policy Institute (NPI) suggests that actions taken now by councils, to reduce emissions will provide long term benefits with early cuts across a broad range of activities being the immediate aim. Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, and APSE Head of Communications and Corodination Mo Baines, provide a summary of the report.



Not unsurprisingly headlines about the climate emergency have been all but replaced by COVID-19; an epic pandemic which has dominated the thoughts and actions of world leaders. The immediacy of the threat has led to the vast majority of citizens responsibly actioning the demands of governments. Lockdowns and social distancing have, in the vast majority of cases, been accepted as the right thing to do, with the public obeying and conforming with emergency powers to restrict their individual liberties. Yet when it comes to climate action, the urgency of the situation has not led to the sweeping reforms seen on COVID-19. In stark contrast to the pandemic response, the signalled intentions of global, UK and local leaders are mere baby steps in a race that necessitates giant leaps forward.

In our new report 'So you've declared a climate emergency: what next?' we set out to explore the actions that lie behind councils who have declared a climate emergency. Whilst there are 282 councils that have made some form of climate emergency declaration, so far just 38 have set out an action plan, explaining how they intend to deliver their ambitious aims. Whilst the majority have pledged to reach net zero emissions the deadline for achieving this varies widely between councils, with some suggesting they will reach their goal as soon as 2030, with others aligned to the UK wide goal of 2050. What is common across all of the declarations is that they are rooted in some way to the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report which gave its doomsday warning on halting rising temperatures to avoid global catastrophe; not just economically but to human health.

In January 2019 the New England Journal of Medicine reported that reduced food production alone could lead to a 529,000 net increase in adult deaths due to climate change. Others suggest 100 million could be plunged into extreme poverty by 2030. By contrast WHO data for the end of July 2020 finds that global deaths from COVID-19 have reached just over 550,000. So, whilst the seriousness of COVID-19 as a threat cannot be understated, there is a clear comparison on the urgent actions needed on the impact of climate change on society as we know it. Arguably, the major obstacle to more urgent action on climate change is that the scale of deaths and poverty are not yet as visible, unlike COVID-19 with its rancorous and rapid impact on society as we know it.

The science is now unequivocal; to halt climate change and its grotesque impact on some of the poorest and most vulnerable

Our research suggests that there is a positive gearing effect if action is taken sooner rather than later; so, the priority should be to start cutting emissions as soon as possible rather than worrying about how to eliminate them altogether.

A council reducing its own emissions serves two main purposes: it is demonstrating political leadership through serious action on climate change, and it is acting as a staging post – to generate wider actions across partner organisations, helping to build momentum across the public sector, businesses and the wider community.



communities, man-made emissions can and should be addressed. Local councils are a critical part of action on climate change. Whilst many argue that councils are themselves relatively low contributors to greenhouse gases, the role of councils as the local hub -to enable and encourage change - cannot be disregarded. One of the key findings of our research report is that scope matters. Councils must be able to influence their wider local or sub-regional area. But that often starts by putting their own house in order. Whilst councils 'own emissions' ought to be relatively straightforward these need to be balanced with the competing priorities of continuing to deliver services. Even agreeing a baseline can be complicated. However, a council reducing its own emissions serves two main purposes; it is demonstrating political leadership through serious action on climate change, and it is acting as a staging post – to generate wider actions across partner organisations, helping to build momentum across the public sector, businesses and the wider community.

Our research finds that within the developed action plans use has been made of the Committee on Climate Change 'key near term actions' which provides a strategic action plan with many applying directly to local authorities. These include some actions already familiar to councils such as improving the energy efficiency of buildings, and switching to low carbon heating, whilst preparing the public for a move away from natural gas. Many have advanced plans to transition to electric vehicles, including EV charging networks, as well as low-carbon hydrogen and development of carbon capture and storage clusters by 2030. On the environmental side of services, plans are developing at pace to avoid any biodegradable waste going to landfill by 2025. Alongside a huge expanse in tree planting, councils are developing and enhancing active travel, with walking and cycling routes, to minimise or replace vehicular access to shops and town centres. These are all laudable actions but some may argue it is not enough.

What we suggest is that something is better than nothing! There is no such thing as a perfect action plan but what we do know is that a cut in emissions today is better than the same cut tomorrow. A smaller cut today can be worth as much as a larger cut later. Our research suggests that there is a positive gearing effect if action is taken sooner rather than later; so, the priority should be to start cutting emissions as soon as possible rather than worrying about how to eliminate

them altogether. The CCC's advice to the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments is that net zero overall will require most sectors to reduce emissions close to zero without offsetting; those emissions that require offsetting will be the exception, not the rule.

All of this of course requires brave actions and proper resourcing. To go back to COVID-19, such is the immediate threat to human health it would be unthinkable for any government to deny the resources, and actions, needed to tackle the threat. Yet when it comes to an existential threat to the world as we know it, the issues have too often become mired in bureaucracy, and the seeking of both political consensus and public consent. If there is one lesson we can learn from COVID-19, it is that not all of our actions will be popular, but the public may now be ready to accept that there is necessity in the greater good of the planet and the global community. •

APSE is supported in its on work climate action by APSE Energy; a UK first in bringing together those councils that have developed municipal energy schemes to green and localise energy supply. For more information on how APSE Energy can help your council contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk.

APSE Solutions provides operational support to frontline services who are transitioning to green operations including in areas such as waste and recycling solutions. For more information on how APSE Solutions can help your council contact Andy Mudd on amudd@apse.org.uk.



[The full report 'So you've declared a climate emergency: what next?' can be downloaded for free from the research pages on the APSE website](#)





The rise of insourcing

From probation to waste collection, there is growing enthusiasm in government for bringing services back in house. Tom Sasse sets out new research from the Institute for Government on when and how insourcing can deliver benefits.



The Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 might not sound like the most earth-shattering piece of legislation. But it set the ball rolling on a set of reforms that would profoundly change the way public services in the UK – and around the world – are run.

The Act compelled local authorities to open contracts for construction, maintenance and highways work to competition from the private sector. Catering, waste collection and IT soon followed.

Enthusiasm for the private sector survived Labour's election in 1997 – in fact outsourcing was extended, particularly via complex private financing schemes. The Coalition government kept with the mantra that the private sector could do most things better, outsourcing probation in 2013.

Only in the last few years has the momentum behind these reforms begun to run out. The collapse of Carillion in January 2018 – on the back of high-profile failures in areas including probation – suggested the model developed since the 1980s, often with a narrow focus on cost reduction, was beginning to creak.

Many now see that approach as “outdated”. Rather than “what should we outsource next?” the question that many local authorities, government departments and NHS bodies are starting to ask is “what might we do better ourselves?”

This is welcome. As we argue in a new report, it is high time that government developed a more thoughtful approach to where the private sector can deliver improvements, and where it cannot. Outsourcing has produced benefits, but it has also resulted in failures where it has been done poorly or where it was not the best option.

The bodies we spoke to that are bringing services back in-house are largely doing so for pragmatic, not ideological, reasons: they believe they can make savings or improve the quality of a service.

Some have already done so. The DVLA brought its IT back in-house in 2014, saving at least £60m and delivering a much improved service which allowed drivers to renew their license online more easily.

Hackney council has insourced both its waste collection and street cleaning services in the last five years, ending contracts with separate providers that proved unreliable and expensive.

This is happening across the political divide: 13 Conservative local authorities have brought waste collection back in-house since 2011. Last month, the Ministry of Justice decided to fully insource probation from next year, after years of chaos in the probation sector. The justice secretary, Robert Buckland, cited the need for “greater flexibility, control and resilience” to deal with the impact of coronavirus.

Buckland’s statement exemplifies one of our key criteria for where insourcing might deliver benefits – where government needs the flexibility to make changes to the nature or scope of a service. This has been made more acute by the current crisis: it is hard to predict exactly what type of probation service government will need to offer in a month’s time, let alone several years.

Other criteria include where an outsourced market has become unhealthy, government lacks the ability to procure and manage a contract, and when, as in the case of Hackney, two services can be integrated, delivering savings and improvements.

But bringing services back in-house is not a silver bullet. In many areas, the private sector will continue to have expertise, capability and a capacity for innovation that government does not. Public bodies will need to be clear-eyed about where they can do things better.

They will need to keep an eye on costs – while many claim that insourcing will achieve savings, there are as yet few examples of this, and reasons to think some costs (such as pensions) will grow. They will also need to be honest about what has gone wrong: a poorly managed contract could easily become a poorly managed service.

Switching back to in-house delivery after years or decades of outsourcing will be hard: people, systems, culture and ways of working will be deeply embedded and difficult to uproot. Many services have been outsourced for a generation. Without careful planning and the right management and staff capability, efforts will founder.

Switching back to in-house delivery after years or decades of outsourcing will be hard: people, systems, culture and ways of working will be deeply embedded and difficult to uproot.

Our recommendations include that public sector bodies should conduct a thorough assessment of the service in question, assess whether fully insourcing or using a trading company is the best option, start planning at least two years in advance and hire experienced managers to oversee the transition.

Once they have insourced a service, they should monitor whether it delivers improvements and savings – and keep an open mind such that they can switch back and forth between their own and contracted-out provision, without being captured by either approach.

Forty years on from the Act that kicked off the outsourcing revolution, the time has come for a change of scene.

- [To download the IfG report click here.](#)

The APSE report “Rebuilding capacity: The case for insourcing contracts” explores the growing phenomenon of ‘insourcing’; bringing back ‘in-house’ the delivery of services. It takes a particular focus on UK local government services and questions the drivers for this increase in insourcing. [You can download the report for free here.](#)

New APSE Energy Approved Partners:



The Telford-based AceOn Group has been appointed an Approved partner by APSE Energy.

AceOn Energy managing director Richard Partington said the move could open up new markets for the company working with the public sector to help ensure climate change targets were met over the next 30 years.

The Stafford Park firm has developed a market-leading Virtual Power Plant which can be installed in individual homes and uses state-of-the-art battery technology to store renewable energy from solar panels for use when needed.

Mr Partington said, “APSE brings together local authorities and public sector organisations from across the country, very many of which have already declared a climate emergency.

“Our Virtual Power Plant provides an energy storage system which can be both retro-fitted and installed in new developments and is small enough to fit in a cupboard under stairs. We believe it will play a major part in driving up renewable energy use and cutting carbon emissions in line with the UK’s legally-binding targets.

“We are confident this new partnership will open up new opportunities for us with partners in the public sector and herald a significant expansion of the business over the coming years.”

AceOn have over 25 years experience in the design and manufacture of custom-built battery packs and the distribution of industrial and consumer batteries to the worldwide market. The energy division provides a training, service and distribution centre to offer a full turnkey solution for residential and commercial battery energy storage systems.

AceOn Founder Mark Thompson added: “With AceOn’s in-house design team we can assist local authorities in the design of energy storage system solutions that meet the customer’s specification through every stage.

“We are thrilled to be partnered with APSE Energy – the go-to resource for all things municipal-energy related - and very much look forward to sharing our technological and industry expertise with local councils as they strive for a cleaner and greener UK.”

Phil Brennan, Head of APSE Energy said: “As a highly-experienced market leader in battery solar and portable energy products, AceOn will be a huge asset to our local authority members.

“The need for energy storage continues to grow dramatically and, through this partnership, I am in no doubt that AceOn will play a vital role in delivering highly efficient and cost-effective storage solutions for local government.”

AceOn, which employs 23 members of staff, has built a reputation as being specialists in solar and battery technology, particularly the development of bespoke, custom-built battery packs. Companies and organisations that AceOn currently supply include the MOD, BT and Rolls Royce.

[For more information on how AceOn can help your authority click here.](#)

Ground-breaking market boost for renewables ignites local authority climate emergency action

APSE Energy partners, The Kensa Group, have recently partnered with Legal & General to strengthen its market-leading position and accelerate deployment of its ground source heat pumps across the UK.



In October 2017 the governments clean growth strategy set out ambitions to fully decarbonise how we heat our homes by 2050. Heat pumps installed by local authorities on housing estates have demonstrated that they have the ability to decarbonise heating on mass and as such demand for low carbon ground and water source heat pumps have been increasing rapidly.

280 local authorities have declared climate emergencies in the last 18 months. Decarbonisation of heating in social housing has increased the demand for reliable heat pump technology that can be installed with long term carbon savings and fuel poverty mitigation at the centre of the agenda.

Heating and hot water for UK homes accounts for over a third of the total carbon emissions in the UK. The current consultation on new building regulations will likely outlaw fossil fuel heating systems for new build homes, presenting a significant and immediate opportunity for an alternate low carbon heating solution.

Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) work by collecting a large amount of low-grade heat from the ground or a body of water and upgrading this heat using a small heat pump. The process creates enough useable heat to provide heating and hot water. Heat pumps connected to multiple boreholes collecting ambient heat from the ground can offer 300%+ efficiency and a saving of over 80% in carbon emissions compared to gas central heating.

The Kensa Group manufactures, installs and maintains the worlds smallest and quietest ground source heat pumps, specifically developed as a mass market solution for both retrofit and new builds.

APSE Energy partners, The Kensa Group has recently partnered with Legal & General to strengthen its market-leading position and accelerate deployment of its ground source heat pumps across the UK.

The move will help with advancing Kensa Heat Pumps' research and development programme, expanding Kensa Contracting's district heating shared ground loop array installations, and funding zero-cost heating infrastructure through Kensa Utilities. This also offers a unique opportunity for local authorities working with Kensa to achieve their zero carbon goals at a faster pace.

As the UK's largest manufacturer and installer of ground source heat pump technology, Kensa is the only integrated supplier and one of the most developed and effective for delivering homes with the lowest operational carbon emissions. Enfield Council installed this technology in 12 tower blocks helping lift social housing resident out of fuel poverty and saving the equivalent carbon emissions to taking 2000 cars of the road. The Council continues to retrofit social housing blocks with Kensa Heat pumps, helping the council on its journey towards net zero by 2030.

The Committee on Climate Change has suggested that 2.5M heat pumps need to be installed in the UK to meet the net zero by 2030 goals, this means that demand for heat pumps is expected to increase from 20,000 to 250,000 a year over the next 10 years. Kensa Heat Pumps has ramped up its manufacturing ability 10-fold with the opening of its new factory earlier this year at Mount Wellington Mine in Cornwall. The factory and offices are heated by harnessing the ambient temperature from the mine water under the factory.

Retrofit represents a significant opportunity, with around 23 million homes in Great Britain using mains gas (carbon intensive) as their heating fuel, two million homes electrically heated (high running costs) and the remaining two million using heating oil or other fossil fuel systems (carbon intensive and high running costs).

Dr Matthew Trehwella, managing director of Kensa Contracting said, "Over the next 20 years we will be carrying out large scale electrification of heating and transport while massively increasing renewable generation into the grid."

"Flexibility will be the key to ensuring the right balance between supply and demand and being able to control millions of heat pumps and car chargers automatically and remotely will unlock the route to net zero."

Kensa has also partnered with experts from the Energy Superhub Oxford project that has looked at the use of smart controls to test load shifting for the purpose of heat generation. This work has focused on shifting traditional energy demand by a time period of between one and two hours by relying on the thermal mass of buildings.

Dr Trehwella added, "Our next step is to develop methods of storing energy to load shift up to

Demand for heat pumps is expected to increase from 20,000 to 250,000 a year over the next 10 years.

24 hours to take advantage of excess overnight capacity. The L&G financing allows us to substantially ramp up our investment in R&D staff to continue this work in parallel to our more traditional product evolution."

Legal & General invests its capital in clean energy assets, businesses and technologies which will help accelerate the UK's progress to a low-cost, low-carbon economy. The partnership with Kensa complements Legal & General's existing clean energy investment portfolio, which now includes low carbon heat, transport and power generation. The investment from Legal & General will enable Kensa to grow rapidly in a post global pandemic environment, and supports the partnership's ambition to form part of the UK's solution to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Alongside offering an alternative low carbon heat solution to existing and new build houses across the UK, the partnership opens up Kensa's offering to Legal & General's extensive ecosystem, as it works with local authorities, government and key industry players to create scaled solutions.

Simon Lomax, CEO of the Kensa Group, said, "This is a significant investment not only for Kensa, but also for the low carbon economy and our region. Legal & General's support will deliver vital employment opportunities in Cornwall and bolster UK manufacturing in the wake of Covid-19, as attentions return to combatting the effects of climate change and meeting the UK's 2050 net zero carbon target. Together with the delivery of our expanded manufacturing premises, Kensa's partnership with Legal & General aims to install 50,000 ground source heat pumps in the mid-term; a weighty contribution to quickly tackling carbon emissions, air pollution and fuel poverty. Our longer term ambitions will see the large-scale decarbonisation of the UK's energy infrastructure with smart cities embracing harmonious low-carbon technology."

- For more information visit: www.kensaheatpumps.com

To learn how your organisation can benefit from becoming an APSE Energy Partner, please contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk

Equipping members, officers and trade unions with modern skills:



Introduction to Parks Management

£169+VAT (APSE members)
£279+VAT (Non-members)

Professionals are showing resilience, determination and innovation and this is being captured in a new course being offered by APSE Training online.

This preliminary course provides an introduction to the key issues and principles of parks management. If you are looking to move towards a more senior position, or you want to grow the skills to understand, develop and cope with the demands faced by managers, this course will provide a robust overview. [Click here for more information.](#)

Advanced Parks Management: Sustainable Finance

£249+VAT (APSE members)
£429+VAT (Non-members)



This particular course is the first in what is expected to become a suite of advanced modules for senior parks professionals. Focussing on sustainable funding, it provides an insight to the key issues and best practice techniques to create a more sustainable basis for future funding.

The course includes: Commercialisation, business planning, risk management, Alternative funding sources; Income generation, traditional sources vs blue sky thinking. [Click here for more information.](#)



Health & Safety - Working on Highways and Verges (CPD)

£249+VAT (APSE members)
£429+VAT (Non-members)

APSE is pleased to be bringing our popular Health & Safety on Highways and Verges course to our virtual classroom. This course was designed in response to network query requests from councils seeking guidance for roads, highways, street scene and transport. The updated content will also help local authorities to assess risk and adopt safe practice in their R2W plans, operating within Government Covid-19 guidelines.

This course provides an opportunity for those managing or delivering these activities to step back from the pressures of their 'day job' and take an overview and an update on key issues, together with sharing experiences and good practice. [Click here for more information.](#)

& many more courses!

Protect the frontline by networking online

To support frontline services, APSE is running a series of online events - free for APSE members - with local councils across the UK throughout summer.

This busy calendar of high-quality online events is open to all professionals who are interested in local government. These events cover the latest topics affecting council services; focusing on the latest issues, service transformation, and innovation and income generation.

Delegates will be provided with access to expert speakers within local government, APSE industry experts within the sector and guest speakers from member local councils, who make up the panels.

The online events will be conducted using Microsoft Teams and those signing up to join the meeting will receive an online joining link. Any PowerPoint slides and a link to any research will be made available to participants after the event. The chat function will also be available for participants to use as well as the opportunity to join in this online event through both video and audio facilities.

Suppliers - want to know how you can get involved with these events? Please contact Matt Paton at m.paton@spacehouse.co.uk for more information.



Leisure Services

'The future of leisure post-lockdown: An event for leisure and sports development directors and managers'

Thursday 6 August 10.30 – 12.00

APSE lead: Rob Bailey

Email: rbailey@apse.org.uk

...free to join for APSE members!



Parks and Greenspaces

'An event for parks and greenspaces services including elected members, directors and service managers'
Kindly Supported by Alliance Leisure

Wednesday 22 July 10.30 – 12.00

APSE lead: Wayne Priestley

Email: wpriestley@apse.org.uk



Waste and Resources

'An event for refuse, waste and street cleansing directors and managers including elected members'

Friday 24 July 10.30 - 12.00

APSE leads: Abi Ademiluyi with Wayne Priestley

Email: aademiluyi@apse.org.uk
wpriestley@apse.org.uk



Soft FM

'Resilience in school catering, cleaning and janitorial services' an event for Soft FM service heads, managers and elected members'

Tuesday 28 July 10.30- 12.30

APSE Lead: Vickie Hacking

Email: vhacking@apse.org.uk



Sustainable Highways and Street Lighting

'An event for highways and street lighting and technical services directors and managers'

Tuesday 28 July 13:30 - 15.00

APSE leads: Louise Melville with Rob Bailey

Email: lmelville@apse.org.uk
rbailey@apse.org.uk



Building Maintenance

'An event to explore how we ensure quality in future service delivery'

Thursday 30 July 10.30am – 12.30

APSE lead: Vickie Hacking

Email: vhacking@apse.org.uk



Cemeteries and Crematoria

'An event to explore future emerging issues in the bereavement sector'
'Kindly supported by CDS'

Wednesday 29 July 10.30- 12.00

APSE Lead: Wayne Priestley

Email: wpriestley@apse.org.uk





Loving the local

A report back on the APSE policy seminar exploring the future of our high streets and town centres

The newly installed Chief Executive NABMA, David Preston explored how they had responded to the health pandemic with a detailed call for support to markets - many of which included the market operators falling outside of Government support mechanisms.

Chaired by Cllr Mark Pengelly, APSE's national chair, this event was brought online in response to requests from our member councils. Facing the post-COVID world is daunting for everyone but in terms of local high streets and town centres there is an acute sense of urgency as on-going social distancing, changes to work patterns and risks of big household names being called into administration has brought forward multiple challenges.

Opening the Seminar Paul O'Brien, APSE's Chief Executive, explored the financial pressures facing local councils but argued that, whilst developers may be "scared off the park" in a post-COVID world, the wider objectives of councils include acting as stewards of place and supporting local economic resilience. Paul suggested that the future sustainability of local places was intrinsically linked to the viability and attractiveness of local high streets and town centres and therefore, in terms of local economic recovery, they should be a central plank of the any process.

Up next delegates heard from Dr Steve Millington, Senior Lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University and a co-author of the Government commissioned report 'Achieving Change: High Street 2030', who explored the role of place management. Steve specifically highlighted the differences in footfall experienced following a lessening of lockdown. However, one clear positive from COVID-19 has been that people are shopping locally and more in independent shops across all age groups and regions. What is also clear from Dr Millington is that retail as the sole offering locally has, and will continue to, choke off high streets, making a clear case for multiple-use town centres.

"Retail as the sole offering locally has, and will continue to, choke off high streets, making a clear case for multiple-use town centres." Dr Steve Millington.

Owing to the need for social distancing, shop workers are now responsible for marshalling shoppers to keep them safe and being responsible, to an extent, for the behaviour of shoppers. Dave McCrossen, Deputy General Secretary of USDAW, made a powerful case for retail jobs to be regarded as 'real jobs'. Mr McCrossen also revealed the value of retail jobs to local economies with 'bricks and mortar' non-food retailers down £1.8 billion a week in lost sales during COVID and the staggering loss of 6,000 retail jobs from the UK high street on one day alone (Wednesday 6 July). However, during the audience question and answer session it was nice to hear tributes paid to high street workers for keeping local communities safe during the pandemic.

Next up and exploring an event-led approach to reimagining local high streets and town centres was Cllr. Darren Byford, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth at Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. Cllr Byford, responding in some senses to the pleas from Dr



Millington, explained that Wakefield had already adopted an event-led approach to Wakefield's future. This includes the 'sculpture and culture' approach to attracting visitors through the Yorkshire sculpture park but also recognising that for this to work they want to attract people to stay, eat and spend in the local economy.

Whilst much can be celebrated about the growth of café culture on our high streets there is little to celebrate in areas where café culture is more cholesterol culture with an abundance of takeaways selling high fat unhealthy foods. Gateshead Council's Anneliese Hutchinson, who is the Service Director for Development and Public Protection, explained how the Council has tackled this head on with restrictions on takeaways through creative use of planning consents. Gateshead has also linked its vision for healthier high streets into its long-term plan and development goals.

Our final speaker on day one of the Seminar was Richard Roe, Corporate Director of Place at Trafford Council. As many market towns have struggled with reinventing their offering to a new and more discerning customer base, the success of Altrincham has bucked this trend by utilising a USP as a 'foodie' destination. Alongside practical support to businesses, with a Town Centres Business Growth Programme, allowing borrowing for traders setting up in the Town has proven to be a remarkable success. For Altrincham, this has entailed quite the reversal of fortunes, going from one of the highest shop vacancy rates in the UK to a vibrant and bustling town centre.

On day two of the Seminar, discussions were opened up by Mo Baines of APSE who highlighted both the challenges of climate change on our high streets and also the opportunities for shopping locally to be a new 'green' offering for consumers. As companies move away from big office complexes with many embracing home working, there was a discussion on opportunities to develop short hire 'work pods' in empty shop units; both for income generation and footfall but to also serve residents who may not have the luxury of home situations that are suitable for longer-term home working.

And of course, in terms of High Streets and Town Centres a recognised saviour in recent weeks for fresh fruit, vegetables, meats and baked goods has been local markets. Following something of a baptism of fire as the newly installed Chief Executive of the National Association of British Markets (NABMA), David Preston explored how they had responded to the health pandemic with a detailed call for support to markets – many of which included the market operators falling outside of Government support mechanisms. (We would of course encourage you all to follow and support the #MyMarket campaign feed on twitter!!)

In a passionate plea for the value of making places look clean, green and welcoming, Richard Beddard, Markets and Town Centre Cleansing Manager with Stockton on Tees Council, highlighted that for success in town centres and high streets, it was imperative to support high quality

and bespoke operational services. This was especially the case in towns set to embrace event-led opportunities. Ensuring the quality of the service bred confidence in local businesses and the visiting public – enhancing spend in the local economy.

Of course, any discussion on high streets and town centres would not be complete without a discussion on parking! Whether you love it or loathe it, the car it is embedded as a mode of transport in most shopping districts. Alison Tooze of The British Parking Association encouraged councils to think proactively about parking with its dual purpose to both encourage shoppers but also ensure fair enforcement practices to keep traffic and communities flowing where needed. Alison pressed the case with delegates to ensure that they embrace new technologies for smarter parking and encouraging car-drivers to park away from congested areas and embrace the walk into town or the local shops.

Alison pressed the case with delegates to ensure that they embrace new technologies for smarter parking and encouraging car-drivers to park away from congested areas and embrace the walk into town or the local shops.

This line on parking was vigorously supported by Stephen Edwards, Director of Policy and Communications with Living Streets. Exploring the need for places to embrace active walking and cycling routes, Stephen welcomed the many actions being taken by local councils post-COVID in making places easier for pedestrians and cyclists alike. However, he stressed this had to be a longer term and ambitious plan – not simply a short-term reaction to the need for social distancing in light of the health pandemic.

The final special guest speaker of the seminar was Bill Grimsey, retail guru and former chief officer in many high street chains including Wickes, Iceland and Hutchison Whampoa's Park n' Shop supermarket chain in Hong Kong. Bill shared his latest thoughts on the future of the UK High Street but argued that singular use for retail purposes was no longer a viable option. Bill suggested embracing mixed usage for high streets as well as abandoning the love affair with the car. Mr Grimsey suggested that this was not just about the here and now but the future for our children and grandchildren where the climate emergency could not and should not be ignored for the sake of the retail pound. Bills latest updated paper of the future of the high street post-pandemic can be downloaded by APSE members [using this link](#).

For more information about this event, or about high street regeneration, please contact Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk

PUBLIC PRACTICE

Latest recruitment round is open for expressions of interest

At Public Practice we are witnessing local government's critical role in the response to COVID-19 through our network of Associates and Authorities. We have seen local authorities show extraordinary agility, resourcefulness and commitment in reacting to the immediate public health crisis. At the same time, it has become clear that local government - and public planning in particular - will need to play an increasingly important role to tackle the wider social and economic impacts.

These challenges demand different ways of working, and new capacities and capabilities. But difficulties with recruitment mean Authorities have become increasingly reliant on external expertise. Over the longer-term this brings higher financial costs along with costs in terms of continuity, local knowledge, and accountability. Public Practice was established as a not-for-profit social enterprise that places outstanding built environment practitioners within forward-thinking public authorities to reverse this trend. Our mission is to improve the quality and equality of everyday places by building the public sector's capacity for proactive planning.

We do this by recruiting cohorts of talented, motivated and experienced built environment practitioners who want to work for the public good. They bring diverse skills and backgrounds to placements in progressive public organisations; including expertise in regeneration, economic development, community engagement, housing delivery, surveying, sustainability, planning, urban design, architecture, landscape, infrastructure, and digital planning. We are now actively seeking Expressions of Interest from Authorities considering hosting Public Practice Associates starting in autumn 2020.

Expressions of Interest are open to public authorities or organisations based in London, the south east or east of England until 20 July. As we explore the potential to expand to a wider geography in the near future we also encourage Authorities in other regions to contact us with any interest.

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated many of the strengths of local government and highlighted the value of public service. But it has also exposed and exacerbated the scale of the social and economic challenges facing local authorities. In the context of the operational and budgetary challenges facing all Authorities intelligent resourcing and recruitment will be more important than ever. We welcome conversations to explore where the next cohort of Associates may be able to help lead the process of recovery and renewal. •

[For more information visit the Public Practice website](#)

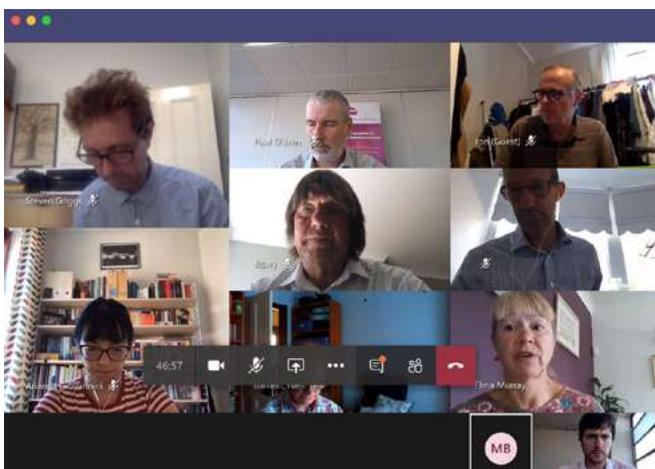
Back to the future of local government

The APSE Local government Commission is conducting an independent inquiry into the future role of local government across the UK. On 25 June, the Commission held an online meeting to discuss emerging principles and proposals. We provide a brief summary of what took place.

Pencilled in for late June, our second tranche of evidence gathering sessions in Central London was unfortunately a casualty of the pandemic; having to be postponed to later in the year. In its place, we were delighted to be joined by our APSE Local Government Commissioners and Executive for a big virtual catch up of what had taken place so far - reminding ourselves of the themes that emerged during our initial evidence gathering sessions earlier in 2020.

The day long session covered a variety of key themes:

- Reorganisation and devolution.
- Finance and taxation.
- Skills, career pathways and representation.
- Transparency and accountability.



Send us your views

To paraphrase the famous political quote: "There are decades when nothing happens, then there are months when decades happen." With COVID and the UK's exit from the EU, one could certainly apply the latter part of this quote to the first six months of the 2020s. Now is the time to take stock and think carefully about how we shape local government.

The Commissioners want to hear from as many different viewpoints as possible, from as many individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in local government and local communities as possible. For more information on how you can share your views on the future of local government [click here](#).

- For more information about the work of the Commission and how you can get involved please email Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk

What have ships got to do with houses?



Head of APSE Energy, Phil Brennan explains why reducing emissions from your housing stock should be a top priority for local authorities.

The principles that apply to shipping also apply to housing - we need to lessen the built in emissions before we can rely on reduced emissions from new homes. The asset class may be different but the message is the same.

As you will know there are articles, papers and studies published on every element of the climate change and sustainability agenda on a daily basis. One caught my eye recently titled 'Shipping and the Paris climate agreement: a focus on committed emissions' from Manchester University. Committed emissions are those emissions built into an asset if it is to continue operating as it has in the past for the remainder of its normal life. Ships are considered long life assets and are vital to the transport of goods especially for an island nation such as the UK. We know that shipped goods have a lower carbon footprint than driven or flown goods - food sector examples make the point with bananas shipped from the West Indies preferable to grapes flown from the Middle East. There are options to reduce emissions from ships including slow speeds, operational and technical efficiency measures, and the timely retrofitting of ships to use zero-carbon fuels.

The average age of a ship scrapped in 2018 was 28 years and the study said ships are so long-lived that policies to cut emissions must focus on decarbonising and retrofitting existing ships, "rather than just rely on new, more efficient ships to achieve the necessary reductions".

Now I realise that ships won't be at the top of the average council's asset register although I'm sure there are a few out there. But replace the word 'ships' in the above sentence with the word 'houses' and you will come to the same conclusion that I have. In other words, houses are long life assets too, they create emissions (a massive amount when looking at the whole stock) and a lot of focus is on the standards for yet to be built homes. Improving standards for new homes will have no impact on the condition or emissions from existing properties.

Local authorities who have retained their stock are making progress with decarbonising their properties but there is certainly more that can be done. Retrofitting and installing generating capacity to homes has many benefits in terms of reducing emissions, health and educational attainment improvements, job creation and increased demand for local supply chain goods. It is a topic all local authorities need to bring to the front of their minds as we enter a pandemic induced recession. It fits with their economic, community, climate change and asset management roles.

The principles that apply to shipping also apply to housing - we need to lessen the built in emissions before we can rely on reduced emissions from new homes. The asset class may be different but the message is the same.

If you are looking for support with reducing emissions from your housing stock please contact Phil Brennan at pbrennan@apse.org.uk.

- *The municipalisation of energy will enable local authorities to contribute to tackling climate change as well as a number of other outcomes and is an essential approach for any council that is declaring a climate emergency and setting a carbon neutrality target.*

For further information about how your council can become more energy efficient, please visit the [APSE Energy web hub](#) - the unrivalled online resource for all things municipal energy-related.

For more information contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk



Reimagining the future of parks

An event for parks and greenspaces services including elected members, directors and service managers



22 July 2020

A free event for APSE members