



Loch and Load

What to expect at the APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2022

Bringing a steel giant back to life

The National Trust

p10

Igniting an eCargo bike revolution

Colchester Borough Council

p15

A non-chemical romance

Lambeth Council

p16

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Editorial

The road to a just transition



Paul O'Brien
Chief Executive,
APSE

In this special edition of APSE Direct we are delighted to welcome back the 'Aviemore Show', a key event in the APSE calendar which was suspended for two years due to Coronavirus. This major event, hosted by APSE Scotland, once again brings together expert panels across the fleet, waste and grounds sectors in local government, with a major trade show sharing innovations in technologies and design.

This has led me to consider the myriad of issues facing the fleet, waste and grounds sector. As a collective industry, and individually, these services can play a key role in transitioning to not just greener services but greener local economies. However, we have to ensure that these services still deliver for our communities and that fairness is at the heart of the approach.

As the cost-of-living crisis bites hard at our communities, there is an obvious 'bad-guy' in the room in the form of oil and gas companies, who have achieved soaring profits in the face of individual hardships. No wonder then that many APSE member councils are looking to expedite their own plans to remove reliance upon fossil-fuels in service delivery. However, for many services,

the cost of change can be a barrier, particularly when services are restricted by short-term budget setting, not necessarily allowing the longer-term planning for the lifetime cost savings of moving away from polluting fuels to more sustainable alternatives; particularly those that will help improve air-quality for local residents.

So, at this year's Aviemore show, I hope that the sharing of best practice, the approaches to exploring the 'warts and all' of the alternative fuels on offer, and how we can integrate change not just for our services but for our local residents, is at the heart of discussions. There is a natural synergy between how we approach greening our services and how we can support our residents in moving away from reliance on fossil fuels. There is a win-win financial outcome if we can truly develop access to greener transport, greener energy sources and improve environmental quality for our residents. Sharing that journey has never been more critical for APSE member councils.

So, let's drive the changes together and ensure that transitioning to greener services and greener local economies delivers a just transition for all.

Contents

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|
| 4 | Report back
APSE advocacy and events in March and April | 23 | Turning words into climate action
Wirral Council |
| 8 | Looking ahead to Aviemore
APSE Scotland's Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2022 | 27 | Local government at the heart of a just transition
Ellie Radcliffe, Senior Researcher, CLES |
| 10 | Bringing a steel giant back to life
Duncan Laird, Head of Urban Places, The National Trust | 28 | Sutton's Age Friendly Journey
Sutton Council and Age UK Sutton |
| 12 | Using the planning process to unlock behaviour change initiatives
Claire Fleming, Travel Plan Officer, Swindon Borough Council | 29 | The importance of securing the future of Meals on Wheels
Angeliki Papadaki, Senior Lecturer in Nutrition, University of Bristol |
| 14 | Igniting an eCargo bike revolution!
Emily Harrup, Transport and Sustainability Joint Lead, Colchester Borough Council | 33 | A new home for Easter: Tenants move into modern new homes for older people
Stroud District Council |
| 15 | Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO): Can it be a stepping stone before going fully electric?
Patrick Taggart, Fleet Service Manager, Falkirk Council | | |
| 16 | Lambeth Council's non-chemical romance
Ian Ross, Head of Parks and Leisure Services, Lambeth Council, | | |
| 18 | Energy Local: APSE's Big Energy Summit
Charlotte Banks, APSE Energy Principal Advisor | | |
| 21 | Breathing new life into cemeteries and crematoria services
Matt Ellis, APSE Communications Officer, reports back from the APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar 2022 | | |

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Report Back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events



[L-R] Outgoing APSE National Chair, Cllr Arwyn Woolcock; APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien; and outgoing APSE Scotland Vice Chair, Cllr Les Sharp, pictured before the APSE National Council Meeting in London on 18 March 2022.

Thank you and farewell: APSE National Chair, Cllr Arwyn Woolcock, and APSE Scotland Vice Chair, Cllr Les Sharp

The APSE family would like to say a fond farewell to two councillors who have been long-standing friends and advocates of APSE: Cllr Arwyn Woolcock and Cllr Les Sharp.

Serving his third term as APSE National Chair, Cllr Arwyn Woolcock retired as a councillor following the May Local Elections. A councillor for over 20 years and former Deputy Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, Arwyn has also been the Chair of APSE Wales for over 10 years. Cllr Andrea Lewis, Deputy Leader of Swansea Council, will kindly be taking over as APSE National Chair for the remainder of the term.

Also retiring as a councillor after the May Local Elections is Cllr Les Sharp. First elected as a councillor for Clackmannanshire West in 2012, Les also served as Leader of Clackmannanshire Council from 2014-16. Les is the current Vice Chair of APSE Scotland, having previously been APSE Scotland Chair from 2017 to 2021.

We wish both Arwyn and Les a long and happy retirement, and thank both for their many years of service to local government and to APSE.

Save the date

Wednesday 14 – Thursday 15 September

APSE Annual Seminar 2022 in Swansea, Wales (including the APSE AGM and APSE Annual Service Awards Charity Dinner). Bookings now open online!

Local by default - What next for the Commission?

On 29 March, the APSE Local Government Commission met in London to reflect on the progress of the Commission's recommendations and to discuss next steps. It was decided that, in addition to hosting online summits throughout summer to engage stakeholders and witnesses, the Commission would also aim to hold parliamentary launches across the UK. The Commission's final report 'Local by default' can be download for free from the APSE website.

Creating active environments for all through Active Travel

APSE was delighted to join Commissioner of Active Travel England, Chairman of Sport England and Olympic gold medallist Chris Boardman MBE to provide a local government perspective on the issues surrounding active environments and active travel policy. APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey was invited to the session and made the case that the public have yet to be fully convinced of the merits of Active Travel, and that more needs to be done to win hearts and minds.

Our call for litter payments to form a key component of the forthcoming Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) reforms

APSE has partnered alongside other organisations to urge governments across the UK to make the right decision to include litter payments in EPR; holding the packaging producers to account on litter. This will contribute to necessary measures such as cleansing and infrastructure, and will also help raise funds that put prevention at the heart of any plan for a litter-free nation. For more information, please visit the APSE website.

Farewell Paddy!

On 31 March, APSE Senior Consultant Patrick Knowles bid farewell to APSE to enjoy his retirement. After 41 years of excellent public service to local government, everyone at APSE would like to thank Paddy for everything he has done for the association over the past six years, he will be sorely missed.

The Annual Associates Away Days, another success!

On 28-29 April, Head of APSE Solutions, Andy Mudd (pictured below), hosted the Annual Away Day for APSE's Associates who support APSE member councils as part of the team's ethical consultancy and interim management service. The event involved discussions on emerging public policy issues, the findings of the APSE Local Government Commission as well as sector challenges. The Associates are uniquely placed to understand the needs of APSE member councils. The two-day forum was supported by Emma Taylor, our recently appointed Senior Recruitment Consultant who supports APSE members with their interim management needs, new recruit to the team, Nathan Horrocks working in a client support role, Ben Parsons, one of Solutions' in-house Senior Consultants, and APSE's newly appointed Senior Consultant, Tim Cheetham, who you can read all about on page 5.

Visit the Solutions pages on the APSE website or email Emma Taylor on etaylor@apse.org.uk or Nathan Horrocks on nhorrocks@apse.org.uk to enquire about interim managers or consultancy support.



Housing roundtable

On 22 March, APSE and the TCPA held a roundtable to discuss the findings and emerging recommendations from our upcoming report: 'The role of local authorities in achieving net zero and securing places that are resilient to climate change through housing and planning'.

APSE's National Chair, Cllr Andrea Lewis, and National Secretary, Chris Cutforth, provided an overview of the work being undertaken at Swansea to develop and build new homes in line with the Council's net zero strategy from a political and operational perspective.

This report will be APSE and the TCPA's eighth collaboration to date, and will include an overview of the findings of the survey, case studies from local authorities who are using innovative approaches to achieve net zero in housing and planning as well as recommendations. APSE are delighted to confirm that the report will be launched on 24 May 2022 and will be available to download from the APSE website. Visit the APSE website to book your place.

APSE joins the Sport Environment and Climate Coalition (SECC)

APSE, alongside several other partner organisations including Sport England and Active Partnerships, have recently called for the creation of a Sport Environment and Climate Coalition (SECC), to lead and coordinate the sector's efforts on climate change and environmental sustainability. For more information visit the APSE website

Announcing the winners of the Highways Innovation Awards 2022

APSE is delighted to announce the winners of the 2022 Innovation Awards for highways, street lighting and winter maintenance services. These Awards celebrate outstanding local councils that use innovative ideas and solutions to tackle the current challenges facing their frontline services. The winners were presented with their awards at the APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar in Blackpool on 24 March. For a full list of this year's finalists and photographs from the event, visit the APSE website.



Scotland

Scotland can do local by default

On 21 April APSE's Paul O'Brien wrote an article for the advocacy group 'Scotland Can' calling for a new constitutional settlement for local government to end the UK's creeping centralisation. Reiterating the points made in the APSE Local Government Commission 2030 report 'local by default', Paul argued that rather than the current system of powers being held centrally, or occasionally regionally, powers and responsibilities should sit at the local level, unless there is clear evidence and sound reasoning to suggest otherwise. To read the full article online, visit www.wecan.scot



APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey joins Olympic gold-medallist and Commissioner for Active Travel, Chris Boardman, to provide a local government perspective on the issues surrounding active environments and active travel policy.

Scottish Conservatives Spring Conference

APSE Scotland hosted an event at the Scottish Conservatives Spring Conference in Aberdeen with Louise Melville APSE Principal Advisor for Scotland, and Rob Bailey, APSE Principal Advisor, addressing the Conference on the outcomes of the APSE Local Government Commission 2030 followed by an audience Q&A.

Happy retirement

Following the May Local Elections, the following councillors and APSE Scotland Chairs have retired and we wish them a long and happy retirement: APSE Scotland Soft FM Chair, Cllr Jim Roberts; APSE Scotland Transport and Mechanical Chair, Cllr Jim Fletcher; and APSE Scotland Waste and Recycling Chair, Cllr Peter Craig.

Meet our new member of staff!



Tim Cheetham, APSE Senior Consultant

What is your professional background?

I've been working in Local Government for the last twenty years or so. For the last sixteen I've been an executive member at Barnsley MBC holding most of the portfolios at one time or another. Starting

with the core services and then moving to children's and finally regeneration. I've also been working for the LGA for most of that period across a number of roles, board member and peer reviewer/mentor mainly, though also on a few joint committees and special projects. I've also specialised in innovation, both on the old regional and national RIEP boards but also with the LGA and other bodies, including one of the cabinet office committees.

What is your role at APSE?

Here at APSE my role is as one of the senior consultants with APSE Solutions, so I'll be one of the focal points for consultancy projects and service support across all the service areas. Working with our associate pool, we'll be able to put together the bespoke offer of support and guidance that APSE is famous for.

What is your favourite thing about your role?

My Favourite thing? Pretty much everything! I've been a huge fan of APSE for years and am delighted to join the team. I've always enjoyed working with local government colleagues across other authorities and sharing the wealth of skill and knowledge we have in the sector to make all our services as good as they can be. It is such a diverse and ever-changing landscape in local government and the more we can work collectively and pool our experience the better we all get, it's a thrill to be a conduit for that in this role.

Where can APSE members meet you?

I'm based at the Manchester office, though I hope to get around the various local government events and keep in touch with what's new. Anyone can get in touch with me at TCheetham@apse.org.uk.

The pressure on plots: APSE on BBC Breakfast

On 25 April, findings from APSE's latest State of the Market on Allotments were cited on a news item for BBC Breakfast. Filmed on location at an allotment site in Derby, BBC journalist Nina Warhurst looked at the pressure on allotment plots across the UK.

During the pandemic, local greenspaces become sanctuaries for tens of millions across the UK. As lockdown restrictions took their toll, interest in gardening and growing our own fruit and vegetables increased significantly, reflected by the fact that 94% of local councils surveyed by APSE reported an increase in demand for allotments in 2021. Local people made good use of the benefits of allotments as places to meet in the open air, enjoy the exercise of gardening and build friendships within the community in what felt like a safe-space during lockdown.

APSE's survey also found 37% of councils reported they have over 1000 people on waiting lists for allotments. As a result of these waiting lists, over a third of councils are looking to increase the number of allotments that they provide and almost 60% of respondents now include the provision of allotments in their health and wellbeing and food growing strategies.

As the cost of living crisis squeezes household budgets and drives up food insecurity, councils can expect interest in allotments to remain sky-high. From encouraging sustainable food production to boosting biodiversity, from fostering healthier lifestyles to bringing communities together, the need for high-quality and plentiful allotments has never been greater.

For a better understanding of the state of UK local authority allotment provision - waiting lists, budgets, facilities - please download APSE's latest State of the Market on Allotments from our website.

Green light for the Traffic Commissioners

Kevin Rooney, Traffic Commissioner for the West of England, will discuss operator licensing and compliance at the forthcoming Transport Seminar at the National Conference Centre in Solihull on 23 June, whilst Claire Gilmore, the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, will provide a keynote address at the APSE Scotland Fleet, Transport and Waste Seminar in Aviemore.

A 'Royal' treat for parks and gardens

On 30 March, APSE members were treated to the inside view on the development of the stunning RHS Bridgewater, cited in Salford, with a key note address from Marcus Chilton-Jones, Curator of RHS Garden Bridgewater, from the Royal Horticultural Society.

Marcus Chilton-Jones, Curator at RHS Garden Bridgewater, discusses the creation of the RHS Bridgewater Garden at the APSE Parks Seminar in Old Trafford, Manchester, on 30 March.



Feedback on the current state of Ash Die Back

APSE is receiving regular requests for information on the current state of Ash Die Back and how it is affecting local authorities. APSE is therefore undertaking a short survey to consider the main impacts on tree numbers, costs of the disease and approaches to managing the problem, including replacing lost trees and the implications this may bring re species type, biosecurity etc.

All information received will be anonymised but if you could give an idea of the region your authority falls within this would be helpful in establishing a national picture. Visit the APSE website for more information. •

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Loch, stock and thought-provoking panels

Surrounded by lush Highland scenery, Aviemore remains one of Scotland's most charming locations. APSE is therefore delighted to once again announce we will be returning to the picturesque town as part of APSE Scotland's Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2022. The event features Scotland's largest trade exhibition of its kind, as well as ample opportunities for learning through our panel discussions.

Our Seminar sponsors...



Against the glorious backdrop of the Cairngorms, local government specialists in fleet, waste and grounds services will gather with the UK's leading suppliers to debate the future of these services and to explore new and exciting innovations within the industry.

The annual event – our first since 2019 – features Scotland's largest trade exhibition of its kind with over 120 exhibition stands confirmed. Delegates have the unique opportunity to question suppliers about their latest products and pricing.

However, Aviemore is far more than just an exhibition. The Seminar – kindly sponsored by ACL Hire – draws in a wide variety of highly influential and knowledgeable speakers; offering attendees a fantastic opportunity to network and bounce ideas around other members of local government.

We will also be holding four discussion forums – Transport; Parks, Streets and Grounds; Waste; and Litter Managers – so that delegates can debate the latest challenges and opportunities in each sector.

The Seminar will open with the keynote session: Transport responsibilities and alternative fuels – the first of two sessions on the topic over the two-day event. As the momentum for decarbonising road transport continues to grow, we are delighted to confirm that Scotland's Traffic Commissioner, Ms Claire Gilmore, will open the event on Wednesday 18 May and discuss compliance with Local Authority Transport Managers (LATMs). Joining Ms Gilmore on the opening panel will be: Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive; Pam Walker, Waste and Recycling Manager at Aberdeen City Council; and André Lagendijk, Sales Manager at HYZON Motors.

Drawing on APSE's latest research and surveys, Paul will detail the opportunities and challenges for local authority transport teams as the sector grapples with net zero targets, spiralling fuel prices and recruitment difficulties. Pam Walker will provide a case study on how her Council has introduced the UK's first hydrogen RCV; the initial barriers to implementation and the benefits the project has wrought so far. On a similar note, André Lagendijk will offer a second overview of Aberdeen's system, as well as a more general look at the future possibilities of hydrogen.

Scotland's revised National Litter and Flytipping Strategy is at the top of the litter management agenda in Aviemore. Delegates interested in litter picking will be able to pick the brains of our expert panel of speakers, providing their perspectives regarding the new revised strategy and what the provisions will mean for local authorities. The panel includes: Paul Wallace, Campaigns and Social Innovation Manager at Keep Scotland Beautiful; Craig Fraser, Policy Officer, Scottish Environment Protection Agency; Kim Young, Manager – Litter and Flytipping Prevention, Zero Waste Scotland; and Stephen Egan, Head of Parks and Streetscene, Glasgow City Council.

On Day Two of the event, delegates interested in streetscene management can also hear from Debbie Sutton, Amenities Manager at Highland Council on undertaking a strategic review of play areas, along with Debbie Johns, Head of APSE Performance Networks, who will be shedding light on APSE's Land Audit Management System (LAMS); a quality inspection app-based system for local authorities to monitor grounds maintenance and/or street cleansing.

Meeting the ongoing challenge of reducing food waste is arguably one of the most pressing issues currently facing local authority waste collection services so we hope our dedicated food waste session will give delegates something to chew on as they attempt to find solutions to the issue – 10 years on. Alison McKinnie, Project Manager Organics at Zero Waste Scotland, will provide a general overview of the progress of food waste recycling across Scotland. Andy Sheridan, Team Manager of Collections and Street



Cleansing at Aberdeenshire Council, will present a local perspective on the matter - information on the Council's collection method and how it allows them to collect from their whole area despite much falling under the rural exemption. Delegates can also hear an islands-perspective on the issue, as David MacLeod, Head of Municipal Services at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, will discuss the vital role food waste plays in the Outer Hebrides Local Energy Hub.

Waste data and technology will also be a focus at the event. Mark Heggie, Senior Policy Officer at the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency will provide an in-depth look at the aims of a UK wide digital waste tracking service. With South Ayrshire Council investing in a bin app, John Morrison, Coordinator of Waste Strategy and Paul Dougall, Waste Management and Recycling Team Leader, will outline the motivation behind adopting the app and evidence of its success. Fife Council's new in-cab technology will fall under the spotlight at Aviemore with Sandy Anderson, Service Manager of Waste Operations and Shaun Kenyon, Team Manager for Waste Operations, outlining the benefits of an integrated telematics and camera solution for accident investigation.

For the final session of the Seminar, we return our attention to alternative fuels for transport. Pat Taggart, Fleet Service Manager at Falkirk Council, asks whether Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil can be a stepping stone before going fully electric, outlining the progress of his Council's trial. The reliability, ethics and running costs of electric fleets will be explored in detail by Dr Euan McTurk, Consultant Battery Electrochemist at Plug Life Consulting. For those delegates who are curious as to how to they can access funding for fleet decarbonisation, Gordon Manson, Programme Manager of Technical Projects at the Energy Saving Trust, will be on-hand to offer an overview of the support available to local authorities and any relevant funding.

The annual event – our first since 2019 – features Scotland’s largest trade exhibition of its kind with over 120 exhibition stands confirmed. Delegates have the unique opportunity to question suppliers about their latest products and pricing

The Seminar will take place at the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort on Tuesday 17 to Friday 20 May 2022. It is an extremely valuable resource for local authorities and is not to be missed

Besides providing ample opportunities for learning through our Seminar sessions, APSE Scotland's Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar is a key event for local government decision-makers and heads of service to come together and share best practice, while providing the opportunity – via the largest Scottish trade exhibition of its kind - to get to terms with the latest technological developments in fleet, equipment and ancillary supplies; from salt spreaders to asset management software. It is a space in which new partnerships can be developed with a view to transforming and enhancing local government frontline services.

As well as a chance to share best practice and network, the event in Aviemore is also an opportunity to recognise and reward excellence in the sector. The APSE Scotland Striving for Excellence Awards will take place at the end of Day Two at a dinner ceremony. The Awards were established to celebrate the hard work and commitment of individuals within local authority services in Scotland and this year over 30 submissions were received across the three categories – the largest number since the Awards were first introduced over 10 years ago. These categories include:

- Parks, Grounds and Street Scene Award (sponsored by Brigade Electronics)
- Waste and Recycling Award (sponsored by Zero Waste Scotland)
- Fleet Award (sponsored by Geesinknorba Ltd)

Entry to the awards are now closed.

The Seminar will take place at the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort on Tuesday 17 to Friday 20 May 2022. It is an extremely valuable resource for local authorities and is not to be missed.

- *To learn more about the APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar please visit the APSE website or contact Louise Melville on 01698 459051*

Bringing a steel giant back to life

Duncan Laird, Head of Urban Places at the National Trust, talks reimagining Manchester's Castlefield viaduct; Creating a cultural, heritage and greenspace amenity in the heart of the city.



National Trust

From July 2022 you'll be able to visit Castlefield Viaduct for free as part of a 12-month pilot opening. During this time there'll be plenty of opportunities to not only explore part of the structure, but to find out more about the viaduct's heritage

A 330-metre-long steel viaduct sits proudly in Castlefield, the oldest part of the city of Manchester. It's an area steeped in rich history: once the site of the Roman fort of Mamucium, and later a hub of the Industrial Revolution criss-crossed by canals and bridges.

Built in 1892, Grade II Listed Castlefield Viaduct was designed by Heenan and Froude, the engineers who developed the iconic Blackpool Tower. The structure once carried three parallel rail lines along which steam locomotives thundered carrying goods and passengers until its closure in 1969. For the last 50 years the structure has been left unused under the management of the Historic Railways Estate (HRE).

Working with HRE and local partners, including the Castlefield Forum, the National Trust (NT) has a vision to reopen the viaduct to the public as an elevated urban park and new cultural and heritage destination for the local community and visitors from further afield. The project is part of delivery of the NT's urban places strategy where we aim to improve access to nature history and beauty for people in towns and cities.

The project has been in development over the past two years and has quickly moved from an initial business case through to design, planning approval and construction. The project team comprises both in-house National Trust experts and external consultants providing specialist support.

From July 2022 you'll be able to visit Castlefield Viaduct for free as part of a 12-month pilot opening. During this time there'll be plenty of opportunities to not only explore part of the structure, but to find out more about the viaduct's heritage, the city's long relationship with plants and trees and even pick up some urban gardening tips.

Trees, flowers and shrubs will be planted across half of the deck, creating a green space for visitors and the local community to explore and unwind in. The new planting will be made up of many species including cotton grass, Manchester's county flower. The variety of plants being added will help attract more birds and pollinators to the viaduct. A section of the viaduct will be left untouched to provide a sense of how nature has reclaimed the space since the site was closed in the late 1960s.

As well as free daily guided visits, we'll also be running special events throughout the year, including takeovers by partner organisations and the local community. While you're here you can also visit our 'partner plots', where four local organisations will be creating their own urban gardens and works of art.

During the course of the pilot phase, we will seek views and feedback from people on and off site about what the long-term vision of the viaduct could be. This will be bigger, bolder and incorporate both the viaduct and areas around. For example, it could provide a new walking and cycling link supporting active travel in the city and provide increased access to much needed nature and green space for the local community.

By taking a phased approach with extensive 'hands on' engagement during the pilot phase we can ensure the more permanent vision for the viaduct has been truly shaped and owned by the people of Manchester. The phased approach also helps to de-risk delivery and generate confidence and momentum for what is a complex project with challenges around planning, funding, heritage re-use and ownership.

Castlefield Viaduct has the potential to become an iconic urban heritage re-use project of national significance and the NT is extremely excited working with partners to bring this majestic steel giant of the industrial revolution back to life and delivering benefit to the nation.

Further information about the project can be found on the National Trust website - <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/castlefield-viaduct>

- *Duncan spoke on this topic at the APSE Parks Seminar on 30 March. You can download Duncan's presentation from the APSE website.*

After



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Using the planning process to unlock behaviour change initiatives

Claire Fleming, Travel Plan Officer, provides a closer look at how Swindon Borough Council is securing travel plans for new developments, and encouraging sustainable and active travel.

Travel plans have been around since the 1990s, but at Swindon Borough Council, we realised that the issue has often been the lack of effective implementation. As a planning authority, we have a different agenda to the developers, who understandably want to complete the development and move on to the next one. Therefore, having a five to ten year travel plan hanging over the site isn't ideal. In a workplace context, the travel plan responsibility is transferred from developer to new occupier(s) and these businesses rarely have the motivation to carry out the travel plan to the local authority's satisfaction.

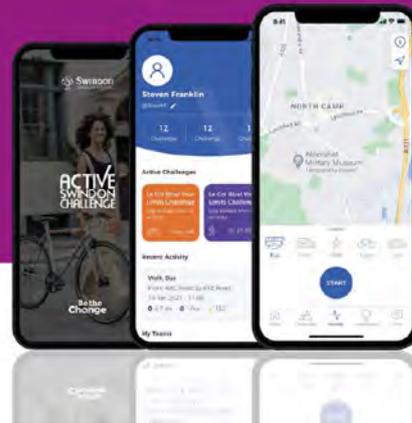
The other issue has been around consistency of quality contained in the travel plan. Without guidance secured as an adopted piece of planning policy, developers negotiate where the minimum levels lie in their travel plan. Historically, this has led to differing standards between developments.

It was also a challenge for a travel plan officer in the council to monitor the implementation. Contacts would move on, promises made in travel plans weren't kept, and travel plans became ineffective pieces of paper filed away.

As a solution to these flaws, Swindon Borough Council developed a supplementary planning document (SPD) that secures travel plans for new developments. Whilst many councils already have something similar, Swindon went one step further and obligated developers to fund a minimum level of initiatives; either by paying a S106 contribution to the authority for the council to resource the implementation of the travel plan, or by way of a bond, which is released when the developer fulfils the requirements of the obligation. This funding is crucial to the implementation of many sustainable travel initiatives to influence behaviour.

It took over a year to fully prepare the SPD and secure its adoption through the planning committee. The investment is now beginning to pay dividends with three developments already paying their contribution to the council to implement the travel plan initiatives, and numerous other sites coming over the horizon. Developers have welcomed the opportunity to make the contribution because it allows them to focus on their core business, whilst the council now have the resource to roll out behaviour change initiatives long term.

Swindon obligated developers to fund a minimum level of initiatives; either by paying a S106 contribution to the authority for the council to resource the implementation of the travel plan, or by way of a bond, which is released when the developer fulfils the requirements of the obligation



Join the
Active
Swindon
Challenge



The funding coming from developers is being used:

- To provide staffing to implement the site-specific travel plan.
- To set up working groups with community stakeholders, transport operators and the developer.
- To provide travel information packs for new residents / employees.
- To develop bespoke maps for new areas.
- To provide a "bike loan scheme" so that residents can borrow a bike to see whether they would use one more often.
- To provide bus taster tickets.
- To run initiatives that promote active travel - such as roadshows, guided walks / guided bike rides, training (such as bike maintenance courses, or cycle skills courses), car share coffee mornings (to match people up with neighbours travelling the same way).
- To involve the local community around the new site and spread the benefits further.
- To provide information online - the website swindontravelchoices.co.uk has been enhanced to include a journey planner and interactive maps, as well as a section dedicated to each new development for tailored information.
- To maintain an "Active Swindon Challenge app". Whilst the initial development was funded through the Government's Active Travel Fund, the ongoing prizes and flash challenges have been enabled by the developer funding.
- To give schools, developers and organisations free use of the Modeshift STARS system, which is a nationally recognised travel plan accreditation scheme. Pitting the sites against each other gives developers and organisations motivation to reach higher levels of accreditation.
- To monitor the impact across new developments.

As more developments come forward, the delivery team will expand, and adapt to emerging technologies and new initiatives that are proven to reduce reliance on the private car.

It is still early days, so we don't yet have data on the effectiveness of the travel plans we are implementing, but we have started to monitor behaviours. We also anticipate a change in the way we monitor success, with more emphasis put on carbon neutrality rather than simply reducing trips by car.

- For more information about local authority sustainable travel schemes, contact APSE Principal Advisor Rob Bailey at rbailey@apse.org.uk.

Go Plant Fleet Services plans to double the size of their Rental Solutions Fleet

Go Plant Fleet Services are delighted to have brought new management focus and drive to the rental solutions team.

Go Plant Fleet Services are delighted to have brought new management focus and drive to the rental solutions team as well as confirming vehicle orders to add nearly 200 vehicles to the fleet over the next 12 months. Jason Maddern - Rental Solutions Manager has brought on board Lee Hodge as Business Development Manager and as a team they will ensure our vehicles are available to new and existing customers, assisted by our professional Rental Solutions Team.

Mark Gallimore, Managing Director Go Plant Fleet Services commented, 'It is vital to our rental solutions business to have Jason and Lee on board giving us the focus we need to grow the business. Given the particularly long lead times from manufacturers we can work with Authorities in advance of the usual replacement program dates to achieve required delivery timescales or utilise our existing hire fleet in the interim. Our relationship with the major suppliers and our funding ability has meant we placed orders to secure the soonest possible delivery for our fleet and our customers.'

'This is an exciting time for us all,' said Jason Maddern. 'To be able to head up the rental solutions business for Go Plant Fleet Services in challenging times and be part of growing the fleet with so many new refuse collection vehicles, sweepers, caged tippers and gully tankers coming on board gives us a great starting point. All our vehicles will be euro 6 and to FORS Silver Standard with our refuse collection vehicles having the advantage of full manufacturer servicing support from Dennis Eagle.'

Jason and Lee, both of whom are well known within the industry, will be contacting everyone over the coming months so if you are experiencing challenges around fleet replacement and availability, they can discuss how we are best placed to assist you.

For more information on how Go Plant Fleet Services can support your Authority contact Jason or Lee via enquiries@gpl-hire.co.uk or call our rental solutions team on 08444 230000.

Go Plant Fleet Services are a leading provider of rental solutions to Local Authorities including Contract hire (with/without maintenance), short-term hire, vehicle finance and maintenance only services.

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Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO): Can it be a stepping stone before going fully electric?

Recycled vegetable oil is already being used to heat homes in Scotland as an eco-friendly solution to combat carbon emissions. APSE Direct interviewed Patrick Taggart, Fleet Service Manager at Falkirk Council, to discuss whether HVO fuel is a viable carbon-friendly option for fleet and transport managers.

What was the catalyst behind the decision by Falkirk Council to trial Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs)?

Working towards the Scottish Government deadlines of 2025 (< 3.5t) and 2030 (> 3.5t) to change the current vehicle fleet to alternative fuels, we decided to start by focussing firstly on the smaller fleet of vehicles and have so far changed around 30% over to electric. However, it was becoming clear that not all vehicle types are available to change and alternative fuel sources would need to be considered. Through a casual conversation with some colleagues at Scottish Fuels (Certas) I was made aware of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and I was immediately intrigued to see whether that could work for our larger fleet.

What does the Council hope to achieve with this trial?

High replacement costs for hydrogen or electric RCV's meant that we would need to look for funding both to purchase the vehicles and for infrastructure immediately. This identified that it was going to be almost impossible to achieve the changes that would be required for the HGV fleet by that 2030 deadline. Using HVO would reduce Co2 emissions by up to 90% which, would go some way to address the ambitious targets set for Co2 reduction by the Council as part of its

Climate Emergency that it declared in 2019. Using green HVO would allow us to at least project how much savings could realistically be achieved by moving to HVO fuel. Hydrogen has not been ruled out at this stage but I would say that a more concerted effort is being made towards HVO fuel for now. There will be no real improvement with MPG for the fleet using the HVO fuel but it shouldn't be less than we are already achieving with diesel. The main objective was to changeover from Diesel to HVO without causing any engine issues. Discussions were held with our suppliers regarding likely impacts of the change over and all agreed that it should be a seamless one by running down the diesel in the vehicles and merely topping up with HVO. This was exactly what we did and keeping everything crossed as I say this, we have not experienced any issues at all.

What challenges have you encountered with this trial, and what measures have you put in place to help your team overcome them?

Firstly, the main challenge is certainly the cost of HVO fuel. It is more expensive to purchase and it was anticipated that it may be around 10ppl (pence per litre) but with rising costs across all fuels over the last few months, this has seen an increase of up to 20ppl for HVO. This will certainly be an issue as we try to weigh up the importance of reducing Co2 against additional revenue costs for the Council. Let me put this in context, it would cost Falkirk Council an extra £51,000 to use HVO in all of its RCV fleet for one year based upon its current mileages. This is a huge variance in cost but could also generate savings of c600t of Co2 – what would you do? Additionally, it also means making sacrifices with your bunkered fuel sites and there will be cost implications involved in cleaning those prior to running on the new HVO fuel. Collections of grime and sludge in the bottom of the tanks is inevitable as we have been using these tanks for around 20 years, therefore, you should expect to possibly write off c1000 litres from each tank as there is no way it can be avoided – unless of course you want to have grime pumped into existing vehicles as you try to draw them down. By cleaning the tanks, it at least gives you a degree of comfort knowing that the tank is clean and the HVO fuel will work as efficiently as it should.

What next for this project?

Whilst we are running a trial and I am likely to extend it to cover more of our RCV fleet, a report will need to be approved by the Council's Committee seeking approval for a more ambitious move towards having hopefully, all of our RCV fleet using HVO fuel by September 2022. Thereafter, we will change over the rest of the HGV during this financial year and our Co2 savings should be huge for an area that would normally be the most contributed factor for emissions for the Council.

- *Patrick will be discussing this topic in greater detail at APSE Scotland's upcoming Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar 2022. For more information about the event, please turn to page 8.*



Falkirk Council

Using HVO would reduce Co2 emissions by up to 90% which would go some way to address the ambitious targets set for Co2 reduction by the Council as part of its Climate Emergency that was declared in 2019

Colchester ignites an eCargo bike revolution!

Colchester Borough Council has developed an ambitious scheme that pioneers the use of convenient, green electric cargo bikes in the town. Emily Harrup, Transport and Sustainability Joint Lead, provides an overview.

Often called eCargo bikes, these electric delivery bikes have purpose-built storage. They come in different sizes to suit whatever you're transporting- from food to heavy goods.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, recognising that tackling the climate challenge and leading on sustainability was a key strategic priority. This, coupled with the need to address several Air Quality Monitoring Areas in the town centre, was the perfect opportunity and catalyst for our eCargo bike revolution!

In spring 2020, Colchester Borough Council were successful with an ambitious bid to the Energy Saving Trust to trial 25 eCargo bikes and 5 electric trailers in Colchester. Our team and organisation are passionate about cycling, so using eCargo bikes had always been an aspiration.

Prior to our bid's success, we were only aware of one eCargo bike in Colchester belonging to a local doctor using it for work commutes and carrying his ageing dog, so we knew our project had to start from the basics.

We therefore chose to focus on two key objectives, to:

- Break down barriers to eCargo bike take-up.
- Demonstrate that eCargo bikes are a viable alternative to vehicles for local and last mile deliveries.

Using strong relationships with local businesses, we found 10 local enterprises who were interested in using an eCargo bike. We worked with them to identify which eCargo bike was most suitable for their purposes and built this into our bid. We also bid for suitable eCargo bikes for three of our own internal teams and a pool to offer for short-term loans.

Our initial trial comprised of 6 different brands and 11 different types of eCargo bikes and etrailers to cover the diverse range of uses our partners required, ranging from small bikes like the Riese and Muller Packster 40, to the enormous Urban Arrow Tender 2500.

Our champions received their bikes on free long-term loan in exchange for monthly feedback, help with publicity and generally promoting eCargo bikes to help break down barriers to take up by others.

We encountered several challenges in setting our project up, not least the timing – we were finalising our bid just as the UK went into its first nationwide lockdown! Another challenge was that all riders of the eCargo bikes had to have Level 3 Bikeability, which our local provider was unable to offer for much of the pandemic. Finding an insurance solution for short-term loans was also challenging, whilst when we tendered for a suitably qualified maintenance contractor, we found at that time there were only two providers in Colchester with the necessary Bosch certification to work on ebikes (as a warranty requirement).

By Christmas 2020 all of our eCargo bikes had been delivered and our internal and external Champions began using them. In early 2021 we began letting out the pool eCargo bikes on short term loan.

The project has developed and evolved from there. In February 2021 a local partner set up Colchester's first eCargo Bike delivery service and is mixing commercial deliveries, with community work and a contract with Spin eScooters swapping batteries and repositioning scooters.



"Since February 2021 we have ridden over 10,000 miles, supported 8 community groups, delivered 250 food parcels, and supported Spin with up to 250 battery swaps, and 400 scooter moves/repositions a week." Colchester eCargo Bike Delivery service.



"I have replaced two diesel vans with an eCargo trike and an ebike and trailer and saved over £6000 in running costs and 2 tonnes of CO2 in two years." Route 51.

Top tips for setting up an eCargo bike project

- Start small!
- Having a team member or partner who has technical knowledge of bikes/ebikes is invaluable.
- Try before you buy if you can and check warranty obligations.
- Work out practicalities, storage, security, tracking.
- Research your insurance options.
- Make sure you have a suitably qualified maintenance contractor available.
- There is a lot to think about and set up - ensure you have staff resource to run your project.

Our project was initially focused on businesses, but residents (including some from neighbouring districts) started asking us if they could rent bikes too. Based on this feedback we submitted a successful bid to Defra to set up two shared eBike/eCargo bike hire schemes. We are now working towards implementing pay-as-you-go eCargo bike hire for Colchester residents and businesses and are working with several community groups to extend this beyond the town centre.

Further building on this success we have now secured another Defra grant to expand the eCargo bike delivery service to offer a new service to town centre shoppers to support them to walk or cycle in or park in an outlying car park. We will provide a facility to have their shopping delivered home or to a locker in a car park by eCargo bike, allowing them to stay in town for longer enjoying the leisure facilities the town offers. This will help economic growth as well as improve air quality.

The innovative nature of this venture means it has been a steep, but exciting, learning curve and eCargo bikes are a growing visible presence in Colchester. Over 16,000 miles have been ridden on our eCargo bike fleet so far, saving 4.4 tonnes of carbon. We will continue to build on this until eCargo bikes are a normal part of everyday life in our town for both businesses and residents. •

Lambeth Council's non-chemical romance

Ian Ross, Head of Parks and Leisure Services at Lambeth Council, outlines his team's nature-friendly approach to tackling weeds; with a focus on the Council's promise not to use herbicides for routine grounds maintenance except for in instances where there is no alternative.

Autumn 2021 saw the final piece of the jigsaw fall into place for the London Borough of Lambeth being a chemical-free borough, when the Council's new Environmental Services contract began. The journey had begun over five years prior, when as part of the Council's in-sourcing of parks maintenance, the then head of service had sought to restrict the use of chemicals as part of the development of the new service specification.

Things really gathered pace for Lambeth in 2018 when we signed up to the Pesticide-free London pledge – led by Councillor Claire Holland, then Cabinet Member and now Council Leader. The Council's Parks Service were able to confirm that it had stopped all use of chemicals, except for treating noxious weeds such as Japanese Knotweed.

Colleagues in Housing followed the lead set by Parks in 2020 when they stopped the use of chemicals on housing estates and as highlighted above when the Council's new Environmental Services contract started in Autumn 2021, the council could proudly say that all council-maintained areas were herbicide-free.

To formalise the decision taken in 2018, in 2019 the Parks Service produced an Integrated Pest Management Policy, which outlines why the decision was made and how weeds will be managed going forward.

As part of the development of the Integrated Pest Management Policy, staff in Parks tried numerous alternatives to spraying weeds with chemicals (mainly glyphosate). This includes treating weeds with hot water, mechanical weed-rippers, strimming, flame guns, mulching and hand weeding. The Council's experience was mixed but the standout

learning was that all alternatives were resource intensive compared to chemical treatment.

Where parks were lucky was that there was an existing pool of stakeholders happy to assist – this is probably the same across the country for parks. They have been very supportive by adopting specific areas and assisting parks staff with hand weeding.

Contractual requirements stopped the adoption of a chemical free approach on the Borough's streets before the new contract started, however with an ever-engaged population increasing pressure over environmental matters, the Council realised continuing as is would not be acceptable. With this in mind, the Council offer residents an opt-out scheme where streets with a consensus can opt out of having their street sprayed with chemicals. This was a popular option, so much so that even under the new contract where streets are now just mechanically swept once a year to remove weeds, streets can still opt out of having this done.

It hasn't all been plain sailing and there are some emerging challenges that the Council will need to deal with in the coming months and years. One of these is the maintenance of sports pitches where traditionally they would have been sprayed with a selective weed killer. With this no longer happening, the Council is finding sports pitches have an ever-increasing coverage of weeds. Wanting to be proactive, the council engaged the services of the Grounds Maintenance Association to undertake a survey of the council's largest site for sports, Clapham Common, and was also successful in applying to be part of the Football Foundation's Local Authority Grass Pitch Programme.

Another area where the Council has struggled has been with the maintenance of green areas on housing estates. The maintenance service was in-sourced in February 2021, becoming part of the existing and successful in-sourced parks maintenance service. As many of you will know, the summer of 2021 was a phenomenal year for grass growth! This coupled with the residual effect of previously sprayed chemicals wearing off fence lines and shrub beds created a perfect storm. With fence lines and building edges previously treated with chemicals now needing to be strimmed; and shrub beds previously treated with chemicals now needing hand weeding, it is fair to say the first year of the new service was a struggle.

However, like parks, the Borough's housing estates have some committed and engaged residents who want to see areas managed differently to encourage more biodiversity – an approach that has been used over the last couple of years in the Borough's parks. A more relaxed management regime will be rolled out over this coming summer across the borough

with an initial eight pilot sites on housing estates; it is hoped this will free up resource to deal with some of the service deficiencies experienced last year. The council will also be participating in the No Mow May campaign on all housing open spaces this summer.

So, what advice can Lambeth offer to other local authorities considering stopping the use of chemicals? Good communication is key - ensuring residents understand why this is being adopted. Being realistic is another key factor; our experience is there isn't a replacement at the moment that can fill the gap that chemical treatment had, so as a matter of course there are going to be more weeds (wildflowers?) in the public realm.

Our experience is that residents are supportive of this move and from a parks perspective it certainly hasn't impacted on the popularity or resident satisfaction with them, with the Council's most recent resident survey seeing parks voted as the best thing about living in Lambeth.

All the above now also forms a key part of the borough's Climate Action Plan with the Council being ambitious in its desire to tackle climate change and improve biodiversity and ultimately the environment for our residents.

- *Ian spoke on this topic at the APSE Parks Seminar on 30 March. You can download Ian's presentation from the APSE website.*



Lambeth



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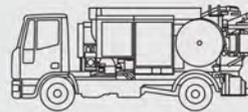
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Range Anxiety

All in your battery or all in your head?

Electric technology is becoming increasingly common all over the globe, with cities from Edinburgh all the way to New York investing in electric road sweepers. Samsara (2020) conducted a survey that indicated 90% of fleet managers believed the full electrification of fleets was inevitable. There are three main issues fleet managers reported to be when asked about their diesel run fleets: reducing fuel spend, reducing maintenance costs and reducing their environmental footprint (highlighted by the Samsara Survey). These three factors are all significantly reduced with the implementation of electric technology, but with this 'inevitable' move to electric technology, concerns have been raised as to whether electric sweepers are as reliable and durable as currently used diesel machines.

Range anxiety is the common fear that the vehicles fuel will run out prior to arriving at the desired destination. This fear seems to have multiplied when considering electric vehicles, Volvo conducted a study that found 58% of drivers are afraid they will run out of power before being able to charge their vehicle.

However, Van den Berg (2020) argues that "it has more to do with psychology than the actual range of EVs or the availability of charging points" meaning, range anxiety is given unwarranted importance when considering the switch to electric fleets.

Through internal testing on a Bucher Municipal MaxPowa V65e electric truck mounted sweeper, findings showed that not only did the machine last a full work day on a single charge, but it came back with battery to spare.

This study analysed the performance of the MaxPowa V65e in transit, carrying out city sweeping and carrying out rural sweeping.

During transit, a full charge of battery lasted for over 220km over the course of 7h20m, completing it with 10% battery remaining.

While city sweeping, the V65e completed a full day's sweep of 6h30m and only used 36% of the battery power.

Even when pushed to the limits while performing rural sweeping (picking up heavy debris, mud, digging out, and kerb sweeping) over the course of 7 hours, the battery remaining at the end of the day was still 20%!

These figures clearly show that in all three instances, the battery charge is perfectly capable of performing to the high-quality standards expected from a truck mounted sweeper.

Whether you are based in a built-up city environment, cleaning town centre streets, out in the rural countryside or putting the sweeper to hard work, the electric powered sweeper is clearly up to the task.

The popularity of electric compact sweepers is also increasing, with cities as far reaching as Zurich, Richmond and Dundee investing in the electric CityCat V20e compact sweeper. The popularity of these compacts speaks for itself, and the performance of the compact sweeper is on par with its truck mounted equivalent. In a recent

case study of a CityCat V20e in West Sussex, there was no question as to its range capabilities. After a full workday of intense sweeping and transit, the electric compact completed all tasks with battery to spare.

The longevity of a single charge on these machines is achieved from just 2 hours on a charging port, meaning that the time it takes a full charge to be completed doesn't hinder operational efficiency. In addition to this rapid charging, these sweepers are compatible with roadside automotive charge points, therefore a small top up can be achieved throughout the day if needed to ease the psychological worries of range anxiety.

With fossil fuels depleting rapidly, fuel prices rising, and climate issues being brought to the forefront of society; electrical vehicles bring a solution to these issues.

Naturally, with the change to electric technology, new concerns arose as the performance and battery life. However, not only do these figures show that with Bucher trucks or compacts there's no need to worry when compared to conventional fuels, but they can surpass the performance of a diesel engine. •

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Energy Local: APSE's Big Energy Summit 2022

One of the biggest dates in the calendar for the energy sector, APSE Principal Advisor Charlotte Banks reports back from this year's seminar.

The APSE BIG Energy Summit, which took place on the 8 and 9 March 2022, focused on supporting local authorities with the renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate change and sustainability agenda. The theme of this year's Summit was 'energy local', with speakers exploring topics such as heat networks, EV charging, green finance, skills & training, community wealth building, engaging with the local community, embedding energy in your Local Plan and many more.

The event saw two days of speakers, workshops and facilitation, with plenty of opportunities for networking with colleagues from local authorities across the UK. With over 150 in attendance, it was fantastic to be back at an in-person APSE Energy Summit, having moved to a fully virtual format for 2021. The event was very well attended, with a vibrant atmosphere throughout, which reflects the organisational and individual interest in the topics of climate change, energy and sustainability and the recognition that local authorities have a significant role to play going forward.

Some of the key themes that emerged during the Summit were the need to address skills shortages in the installation of renewable energy technologies and a focus on increasing public EV infrastructure in order to support the switch to electric vehicles.

Another key theme that was discussed during the Summit was finance, in particular Government funding for local authorities to tackle climate change. It was highlighted that while the rounds of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme have been a welcome boost for some local authorities to decarbonise their public buildings, the nature of competitive bidding has meant that many of the smaller councils with less capacity have missed out on accessing this funding. There is a need for a more consistent source of finance for local authorities to access in order to address this agenda effectively.

Hearing from those who have made progress with projects with all the successes and pitfalls, as well as from suppliers about developments with technologies, was very informative and brings home the benefits of attending his type of event.

Overall, the APSE BIG Energy Summit 2022 provided an opportunity for our members to learn from others across the local government sector, as well as providing a chance for them to showcase the work they have done and the benefits for their local communities and economies. We are very much looking forward to hosting the event again in 2023.

• For more information on local energy projects, contact APSE Principal Advisor Charlotte Banks on cbanks@apse.org.uk.



The nature of competitive bidding has meant that many of the smaller councils with less capacity have missed out on accessing this funding. There is a need for a more consistent source of finance for local authorities to access in order to address this agenda effectively



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APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar 2022

 Thursday 14 April

 Yarrifield Park Training & Conference Centre, Yarrifield, Stone, ST15 0NL

Breathing new life into cemeteries and crematoria services

On 5 March 2022, APSE held its bi-annual Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar in Staffordshire. Matt Ellis, APSE Communications Officer, provides a short summary of the day's speakers and the topics of discussion from a lively event bursting with ideas on best practice.

It was fantastic to see so many faces, old and new, at Yarnfield Park in Stone, Staffordshire, for the APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar. The event, one of the biggest in the sector, offers an excellent opportunity for delegates across the UK to debate the future of these vital services, and to also explore new and exciting innovations within the industry.

The event draws in a wide variety of highly influential and knowledgeable speakers; offering attendees a fantastic opportunity to network and bounce ideas around other members of local government cemeteries and crematoria services, as well as the UK's leading suppliers.

Checking the health of the sector

APSE Principal Advisor Wayne Priestley set the scene for the Seminar by discussing the results of the APSE State of the Market Survey 2022, highlighting some of the key issues facing the bereavement industry. Wayne outlined some of the emerging trends from the Survey including the observations that:

- The impacts of COVID are now levelling off.
- Staff levels have stabilised but concerns remain about future entrants.
- There has been a relatively low level of budget cuts compared to other services.
- Burial space is to become a major issue in the next 5-10 years.
- There are concerns over the quality of cemetery grounds, particularly in relation to improving biodiversity.

You can download the full APSE state of the Market for free from the APSE website.

Operating in a more sustainable manner

Jon Cross, of the Environmental Stewardship Group, was up next to outline the reasoning behind the report 'Climate Change Our Legacy? Reflections on the state of bereavement sector and the climate emergency', a report APSE was kindly acknowledged in. The report is an essential document for the industry whose recommendations will help the sector reduce its carbon emissions and ensure it operates in a more sustainable manner.

A New Cemetery for Widnes – Planning for a Green Future

Paul Wright, Operational Director, Community and Environment at Halton Borough Council spoke about the challenges of creating a new cemetery which includes provision for natural burials. Paul explained how this new service element needs to be accompanied by a cultural change to gain acceptance to this new offer. Paul also spoke about the need to future-proof the cemetery for changing community demands and environmental requirements.

What makes a cemetery 'significant'?

John Moffat, from The Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe (ASCE) was next to the podium to outline the work of the Association; a European network comprising public and private organisations which care for cemeteries considered to be of historical or artistic importance. John provided examples of cemeteries across the UK and Europe, from Oslo to Istanbul, the Association has worked hard to protect, restore and ensure ongoing care and maintenance for over the years.

Skills shortages and recruitment barriers: What's happening within the marketplace?

As documented by APSE in the latest State of the Market, there is a growing problem of recruiting suitably qualified bereavement staff, highlighted during the COVID pandemic. Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions, was on-hand to identify effective recruitment techniques employed by local authority cemeteries and crematoria services across the UK; ensuring staffing problems are kept at a minimum.

What does digital mean for Bereavement Services in 2022?

"The pace of change has never been this fast, yet it will never be this slow again." Niall Adams, PlotBox Solutions Consultant, was up next to explain how, through the adoption of new technologies, services can help to protect their legacy through de-risking and increasing efficiencies in what they do, whilst keeping their customers at the heart of the service.

Creating resilience during COVID

Philippa Reece, Parks & Foreshore Manager at Adur & Worthing Councils, highlighted the various ways her role changed during the recent pandemic, allowing her to support her Council's Bereavement Services. This has resulted in her achieving new skills, abilities and qualifications, bringing both added value to her position and the wider council skills base.

Wilder Churches – making space for nature in burial grounds

Explaining why more than 100 parishes in Somerset have agreed to re-wild their churchyards and graveyards, our penultimate speakers, Dr. Pippa Rayner, Engaging with Nature Co-ordinator at the Somerset Wildlife Trust, and Sara Emmett, Interim Diocesan Environment Officer Bath & Wells Diocese, spoke of the need to help save valuable biodiversity habitats. Their efforts, and the efforts of local communities, have helped secure the long-term future of the flora and fauna which we rely on, providing a blueprint for other UK cemetery managers.

A look at APSE's new Memorial Inspection Safety Tool (MIST)

- Save time and money on inspections
- Fulfil your duty to inspect every 5 years
- Plot memorials using GPS data
- Have more reliable data

Our final speaker, Debbie Johns, Head of APSE's Performance Networks introduced the new Memorial Safety Inspection App, explaining the operational benefits, how it will improve the health and safety of both cemetery staff and visitors, as well as the improvements to the wider benchmarking process.

Breathing new life into services

If one had to identify just one main takeaway from the event, it would be that cemeteries and crematoria managers need to continually monitor and review their services if they are to deliver a green, clean and safe service. Luckily, the extensive APSE network provides an unrivalled opportunity to do just that. So make sure you take full advantage of APSE membership and keep up-to-date with the latest legislative and technological developments.

- *Presentations are available to download from the APSE website.*

Get your organisation front-of-mind with decision-makers in local government

Featuring one of the sector's largest trade exhibitions of its kind, delegates at the APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar had the unique opportunity to question suppliers about their latest products and pricing. From water cremators to probate research, from memorial trees to asset management software, we had all the latest in cemeteries and crematoria solutions.

APSE offers opportunities to exhibit and sponsor events to your local government target market all year round; covering a wide variety of frontline services. For more information, contact Matt Paton at m.paton@spacehouse.co.uk

Turning words into climate action



APSE Training's hugely popular Carbon Literacy course has been a real source of inspiration for Wirral Council, as it aspires to become a net carbon neutral council by 2030.

Wirral Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and since this time have developed an Environment and Climate Emergency Policy and Climate Emergency Action Plan in order to meet our target of being a net zero carbon council by 2030.

The Carbon Literacy course uptake was a key action within Wirral Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan. As part of a risk analysis done by the Climate Emergency Team, areas of the action plan were identified which may be hindered by a lack of experience regarding environment and Climate Emergency. APSE's Carbon Literacy course helped us to fill this knowledge gap as it provides an excellent introduction to climate and environment related issues, helping our council officers understand the key challenges ahead and what can be done to enact change, both within the Council and at a national and regional level.

APSE's Carbon Literacy course has brought more engagement to Wirral Council's Climate Emergency Declaration and Action Plan. Targeting senior level management and councillors to take part in the course we have been able to increase awareness and knowledge to all service areas of the Council, further supporting the Climate Emergency. This has filtered down through the teams and ensured that all employees are considering the climate emergency in their roles.

One action within our Climate Emergency Action Plan is the inclusion of environment and climate emergency implications in committee reports. We are working to ensure all report writers undergo carbon literacy training so that due consideration is given to the environmental and carbon impacts of our decisions.

Part of the course challenges the individual to be more climate conscious in their personal life by setting out a pledge listing environmental activities or actions they can be responsible for at home. The response was well received and really challenged the attendees to think more deeply about their carbon and environmental impact. The feedback we received from the attendees shows a positive reflection of what we originally set out to achieve with APSE, which was a carbon literate and environmentally conscious collection of council officers to support with our 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration.

It has also brought engagement from different council officers who may not have had vested interest in Climate Emergency and environment already but were delighted to receive the training and are now enthused and engaged with the Climate Emergency team to help support the Council's Climate initiative.

To reinforce the learning and keep the climate agenda at the forefront of employees minds, we have also continued communication with employees that that undertaken the Carbon Literacy Course. This is key to ensuring that officers continue to understand the Council's ongoing commitment to the climate emergency and the progress we are making towards our target. The Climate Emergency Team publish a bimonthly Carbon Literacy Alumni newsletter giving important

updates on work that the Climate Emergency Team does, examples of best practice, updates on the wider cross-council Climate Emergency Action Group and Wirral's Cool Wirral strategy of which we are a partner.

In the newsletter we highlight what is expected of Carbon Literate employees in their role in the Council. By communicating bimonthly, it ensures that the Climate Agenda and the aims of the Carbon Literacy course are at the forefront of their minds and in their decision making. The senior leadership team are invested in the Climate Emergency and the newsletter is sent out from Senior Leadership Team to have maximum impact for employees. Our goal of a net carbon neutral council by 2030 is ambitious, so to reach this goal, a cross-council, cross-departmental effort is crucial.

With such a high attendance of council staff, we achieved bronze status certification and are now aiming for silver status, helped by APSE's support and deliverance of the course. We are confident that having more climate aware and carbon literate employees will assist in Wirral Council reaching their net zero carbon targets. •



Help to forge a sustainable future for your local authority and area by booking a place on our carbon literacy training course!



Carbon Literacy for Local Authorities

£178+VAT (APSE members) £289+VAT (Non-members) *This course is also available as an in-house option*

This highly interactive course will help you:

- Understand and be able to explain the basic science of climate change and how climate change will affect us both globally and locally.
- Evaluate the climate change objectives in local authorities and analyse the impacts.
- Construct your own strategies to take action on climate change.

This course is run online as a full day or as two half-days. An additional two hours of individual work is required to achieve the Carbon Literacy Award. This will include a video link prior to the training and a self-assessment of learning, which is submitted to the Carbon Literacy Project. For more information, please contact Head of APSE Training, Fiona Sutton-Wilson on fsuttonwilson@apse.org.uk



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For more information on how The CDS Group can help, please phone us on +44 (0)1525 864387 or visit our website.



Discover what's beneath.

AceOn: Supporting social housing energy

Richard Partington, Managing Director of AceOn Energy, an APSE Energy Approved Partner, explains why we are at a tipping point when it comes to the climate emergency and why the time to act is now.

Last year, the UK Government launched its Net Zero Strategy, which set the plan for decarbonising all sectors of the economy to meet the net zero target by 2050. In addition, most local authorities have set Climate Action Plans and many industries have new regulations to increase the use of renewables and improve energy efficiency. Yet, fuel poverty continues to be a national issue — and is now being compounded by a severe cost of living crisis.

We are facing an immeasurable challenge when it comes to climate change and, in some respects, the UK is leading the way in facing those problems.

Over the last three decades, the UK has reduced emissions by 44 per cent. Petrol and diesel car sales will be banned from 2030 and by 2035 the UK will be powered entirely by clean electricity.

But it is actions on the ground — and roofs — that will make a significant difference, right now, to the challenges facing us as a nation and as individuals.

With solar PV alone, 28-30 per cent of solar energy generated can be consumed directly within a home. This figure rises to 70 per cent when adding in energy storage systems.

From our experience of working with the social housing sector, we have developed an offering that will enable a local authority or housing association to recoup some, or all, of their investment in solar energy generation and energy storage.

Partnering with national energy supplier, Rebel Energy, AceOn can offer an exclusive green deal, which encourages investment in renewable power to meet carbon targets, all while cutting household bills and offering an additional revenue stream.

It was important for us to find a partner that shares our values and the values of APSE member authorities — and Rebel Energy is the only regulated energy supplier with a stated social mission to help tackle fuel poverty.

Through the scheme, homes will be fitted with solar panels and battery storage systems to allow tenants to generate, store and use their own clean electricity.

Combining AceOn's knowledge and experience as battery specialists with Rebel Energy's OFGEM-regulated offering enables a 'win-win' to the social housing sector through:

- Reducing a tenant's bill now and in the future — helping to tackle fuel poverty, protect and insulate tenants from the full extent of future rises in energy prices and enabling a household to pay their rent and other living costs more easily.
- Providing a revenue income stream for social housing suppliers — assisting the investment in renewable energy and other housing measures and turning capital into revenue to fund services, including for tenants who cannot benefit from the programme.
- Helping to tackle climate change — helping to decarbonise a social housing provider's housing stock and reduce the carbon footprint of each home. Our system helps to reduce the tenants' running costs to support the installation of 'environmentally-friendly' heat pumps.
- Supporting the local community — retaining more money in the local economy and potentially sharing the financial benefit with those tenants whose homes are unsuitable for solar PV.

We really understand the social and affordable housing landscape. We are working with several local councils and housing associations, APSE and the National Housing Federation and — organisations at the forefront of delivering Net Zero targets, and we want to support them.

We hope that by teaming up with Rebel Energy, we can make their decisions to invest in solar PV, batteries and other renewable technology for social housing stock a little easier.

Our aim is to deliver the technology at an affordable price point while also transforming the investment into a sustainable revenue stream that can be used to support other housing services and the operation of the housing provider overall.

We believe that our technology is ideal for both retrofitting to existing houses as well as new builds — and it's even possible to add battery storage to homes with Solar PV panels already installed.

Tenant engagement is also crucial in the rollout and installation of energy efficiency and renewable technology in social housing accommodation. We want them to understand, see and feel the benefits.

We want as many social housing providers as possible to know about our model and its benefits too.

We launched the model at the APSE Big Energy Summit on 9 March 2022 and we are now having discussions with several councils and housing associations who see the potential of our offering. We are hopeful that some announcements will be made in the summer around our early adopters.

However, we are taking nothing for granted. We aim to offer the best products and services we can and to work as positive partners to social housing providers and their tenants.

Our approach is truly collaborative.

The timing is right in terms of climate change; the greater need for energy independence and security in the UK; and the increasing costs of living and energy prices.

- For more information about the AceOn group visit: <https://www.aceongroup.com/>



Local government at the heart of a just transition

As the energy price cap rises today, CLES Senior Researcher, Ellie Radcliffe, reflects on her recent visit to the APSE Big Energy Summit and considers the role of local authorities in balancing climate and economic justice.

Nearly three years since three hundred local authorities began to declare climate emergencies, the removal of the energy price cap today arrives as the Big Six energy companies have recorded over a billion pounds of profits. This is just part of the picture, with oil and gas giants BP and Shell spending over £147 billion in stock buybacks and shareholder dividends since 2010 – seven times more than what would be needed to keep households' energy bills at a manageable level.

Such profiteering hits to the heart of why we need an approach to decarbonisation which changes the fundamental building blocks of economies, making them work for ordinary people and our places, as well as the planet. At CLES, as at APSE, we advocate for community wealth building as a pathway towards this just transition, with local government at its heart.

It has taken time for national policy to catch up with the intent demonstrated by local government on climate change. Westminster only recently outlined how it views the role of local authorities, while councils are now working to turn their Climate Action Plans into reality.

Climate and sustainability officers have become key players in implementing these changes and, attending the APSE Big Energy Summit on 8 and 9 March, I was fortunate enough to hear from many of them. What became apparent is that – while there was no lack of imagination, ambition or experience among the officers in the room – they face significant challenges. Most notably, officers recounted the barriers they faced in bringing others into the picture, including colleagues in economic development teams. Yet, if we hope to tackle the climate emergency, councils must enable a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach.

Environmental breakdown is an issue that permeates every element of our lives, and it should subsequently be factored into every element of council policy and practice. The issues of environmental breakdown and economic inequality, for example, are intrinsically connected. Both must be addressed if we are to achieve a just transition.

As a case in point, the cost of green technologies in the UK means only the most well off are able to afford them, with a significant risk that the UK's net zero targets will be compromised by the government's focus on the most affluent. Meanwhile we are witnessing the real time impact of rocketing domestic energy prices meaning that 4.5 million more households could be pushed into fuel poverty by the end of the year.

Clearly, there is a lot at stake if we do not bring action on climate and the economy together – further evidenced by the lasting impact of unjust transitions past. The experiences of deindustrialised



communities – many of which are now the focus of the government's levelling up agenda – demonstrate what happens when a transition is set in motion without concern for the social consequences of economic policy. The sheer scale of job losses in industries such as shipbuilding, textiles, steel and coal – and the absence of policy to manage this transition – left up to three million people unemployed between 1983 and 1986. The subsequent decline of former industrial towns and cities had immeasurable social and cultural consequences, still felt today.

With this in mind, as we seek to transition towards a greener future, we need an approach which ensures this shift delivers social and economic justice, not only for workers, but for people in those places which are suffering within the current system.

Currently there are twenty-two separate funding streams local government can either access or are required to distribute which will contribute to the decarbonisation of our local places. We need to ensure that this investment sticks in our localities and delivers a just transition for our people. Community wealth building can help us to do that, by ensuring that – for example – the development of local retrofit supply chains circulate wealth back into wages for local people. Community-owned energy generation projects too, are known to deliver seven times more value back to the local economy than similar commercial ventures, and the public sector can act as a key procurer of this energy to support their development. Similarly, our recently published community wealth building energy transition toolkit demonstrated that municipal ownership of infrastructure, such as district energy schemes, can drive the profit generated back into the local economy – potentially using it to fund energy efficiency measures which could help tackle fuel poverty.

These are just some examples that demonstrate that a shift in ownership – from profit extracting big players to wealth circulating community-led organisations – is fundamental to a just transition in the energy sector. Other sectors, such as food, will also be essential in tackling environmental breakdown, and prioritising the creation of more generative solutions in these sectors will be critical in rewiring local economies so that they build community wealth. Climate officers have the technical expertise to identify those actions which will have the fastest and greatest impact on carbon reduction. But we need to join the dots to achieve a just transition. At a minimum, economic development practitioners should seek to work with climate colleagues to determine how to create green local economies that both build community wealth and support decarbonisation.

Ultimately, to deliver an inclusive economy hardwired for climate justice, everybody needs to pull in the same direction to rewire our economies so that we can move beyond carbon-fuelled growth.

• *Ellie's presentation from APSE's Big Energy Summit on 8 March is available to download from the APSE website.*



CLES
the national organisation
for local economies

Sutton's Age Friendly Journey

Sutton Council and Age UK Sutton are working together to support older people in the Borough with the shared ambition of more people enjoying a good later life.



On January 2020, Sutton became the 40th member to join the UK network of Age Friendly Communities, part of a World Health Organisation initiative which has more than 1,000 members worldwide

Three Pilot projects have been developed in collaboration with local older people - improving feelings of safety at home: Feeling Safe, working with local businesses to make the high street more welcoming: Feeling Welcome, and encouraging take up of volunteering opportunities: Feeling Connected.

The project is a vital part of the recovery from the pandemic, reducing social isolation and connecting older residents back in with community life. It adopts the principles in the partnership way of working in The Sutton Plan which enables organisations in the Borough to come up with a shared vision and work with each other to improve the quality of life for residents.

Background

In January 2020 Sutton became the 40th member to join the UK network of Age Friendly Communities, part of a World Health Organisation initiative which has more than 1,000 members worldwide.

This network aims to ensure that older people are valued, supported, and recognised in communities, under eight evidence-based domains.

Sutton chose to use these domains to develop into the three cross cutting themes for the pilot following a year of engagement with the local community. The engagement period included listening exercises that were representative of older people in Sutton by collaborating with BAME and faith groups. They held virtual listening events with the involvement of more than 200 residents to provide in-depth feedback which allowed the identification of practical steps to make a difference for older people.

Why become age friendly

Sutton has an ageing population with 27.5% of Sutton population 55+ (56,886 people) and 7.4% over 75 (15,270 people), and projections are that the proportion of those over 55 will continue to increase, therefore they believe that it is right thing to do to build a stronger community. Furthermore they have learnt from using the Age Friendly lens and looking at the borough through the eyes of the older population, that Age Friendly practices tend to benefit everyone. For example by increasing the accessibility of businesses for older people, will, in turn do this for the rest of the population.

Progress so far

The first pilot involved engaging with local businesses to identify areas where they can make improvements to help older people feel more welcomed. A group of older people are then going to act as mystery shoppers and carry out reviews of the business and then develop suggestions for improvement. After this they hope to develop an accreditation scheme.

The second strand of work focuses on safety at home. Trained volunteers have been working with older people to assess their home environment, looking at a range of risks and issues, including physical risk, psychological wellbeing, and connection to the community.

Finally for the third strand, Age UK Sutton and the Council will be developing a campaign to encourage and support later life volunteering in the borough, including challenging stereotypes of the skills and interests of older people.

Future work and impact

As they are in the pilot stage of this, they are still in the process of collecting evidence of impact and stories from the programme, but they will be producing a report this summer that will inform steps next year. So far it has been extremely beneficial learning from residents and looking at the work and activities that have been carried out through the eyes of this demographic. It will help feed into and inform future work, in particular around equalities.

- On 15 March, Fern Barber, Sutton Council, and Nicola Upton, Age UK Sutton, spoke on this topic at the APSE Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Seminar 2022. Their presentation is available to download from the APSE website.

The importance of securing the future of Meals on Wheels

New research showcases the benefits of Meals on Wheels, but also the challenges faced by the service, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Angeliki Papadaki, Senior Lecturer in Nutrition at the University of Bristol, examines the lessons that were learned from researching two local authorities in South West England.



The continuation of Meals on Wheels by local authorities could save councils and service users thousands of pounds (costing an average of £40/week for a two-course meal), compared to the costs of residential (>£600/week) or nursing care (>£800/week)

Soon after the first national lockdown started in March 2020, my next-door neighbour told me about the difficulties she faced leaving the house to get food; she was considering requesting help from Bristol City Council through their Meals on Wheels service. I was not aware that Meals on Wheels still existed, so I spent the next couple of months reading about the service provision in the UK, but also other countries, like the work conducted by Meals on Wheels America.

Two things became obvious from my readings. First, that people who deliver the meals and coordinate the service in local authorities (and often in private provision, although this is less documented), are an absolute lifeline to people who are in need of care and support. Second, that Meals on Wheels are highly under-researched in the UK. If the ultimate goal of research is to improve people's lives by affecting policies, then we need to make the voices of everyone involved in Meals on Wheels provision heard.

What we did

We interviewed eighteen service providers (drivers who deliver the meals, service coordinators and managers) from two local authorities in South West England. We explored their experiences around the benefits and challenges faced by the service, and how these experiences changed during the first UK national lockdown.

Key findings

1. Meals on Wheels offer essential benefits to service users: encouraging clients to eat and keep physically active, carrying out welfare checks and household chores, tackling isolation and loneliness, and helping older adults remain independent in their homes and communities.
2. Meals on Wheels assume an emergency response in challenging situations and should be considered the 'fourth emergency service': they coordinate a response from other emergency agencies to ensure clients' wellbeing; meals are delivered 'come rain, come shine, come pandemic'.
3. Meals on Wheels employees obtain their own benefits: working for the service brings a sense of pride; the social interactions and relationships they develop with clients are mutually rewarding.
4. The service is essential for reducing pressures on families, who might not be able to provide meals or support for their relatives, particularly during the pandemic.
5. Meals on Wheels experience many challenges: funding cuts, ongoing threats of closure, lack of appropriate publicity, a need for more human resources to allow drivers to spend more time with clients who need it the most.
6. There was uncertainty of how the service would cope in future pandemics or if lockdowns continued. The future of Meals on Wheels would highly depend on support received from local authorities and the national government.

What does this mean?

An increasing number of local authorities are withdrawing their Meals on Wheels provision, contract the service to, or only signpost to a list of, external providers. Yet, demand for the service increased during the pandemic, and is likely to increase further due to an ageing population. Our findings show that it is crucial for Meals on Wheels to receive enhanced and ongoing support from local and national governments to keep up with the need for the service.

The wider recommendations include:

1. Social care policies should acknowledge the value of Meals on Wheels as a central emergency service, with a crucial preventative role in maintaining the wellbeing and independence of adults who are in need of support during the pandemic, and beyond.

APSE Transport Seminar 2022



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2. Local and national governments should protect, enhance, or revive Meals on Wheels, by allocating appropriate funding and resources to allow effective continuation of the service.

The continuation of Meals on Wheels by local authorities could save councils and service users thousands of pounds (costing an average of £40/week for a two-course meal), compared to the costs of residential (>£600/week) or nursing care (>£800/week).

What next?

The network of Meals on Wheels in the UK is extensive, with many providers and organisations (e.g. APSE, NACC, and Sustain) advocating for its crucial role in the community. Yet many potential service users still do not know that the service exists, or the extensive support it provides. We need to consider a coordinated approach and provide more high-quality evidence to sustain and enhance this important service. If you: 1) have ideas on how to enhance Meals on Wheels or what research we need to conduct to advocate for the service; 2) would like to share your experiences with the service; or 3) are interested in the development of a Meals on Wheels network or in supporting future work, please get in touch with me by email (angeliki.papadaki@bristol.ac.uk) or, follow me and send me a message on Twitter (@AngelikPapadaki).

Further information

The publication of the study is free to download from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/hsc.13634>.

- *For the latest news and developments in local authority meals on wheels services, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk*

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CASE STUDY



Working with Keep Scotland Beautiful and Zero Waste Scotland, Renfrewshire Council talks about how in 2021 their 'Team Up to Clean Up' incentive went!

Across 2021 Team Up volunteers collected over 1,700 bags of litter from Renfrewshire streets and open spaces. Volunteers were out 5043 times, 762 volunteers asked to hang on to their own litterpicker and hoop!

Team Up to Clean Up is a grassroots initiative, building resilience, pride and capacity within Renfrewshire communities through community clean ups. The Campaign launched in October 2017 with a £2.5M investment, litterpicking, Renfrewshire Council boosted its flytipping response, gully cleaning, litterpicking resource and street/road sweeping too.

From the outset we made an honest plea to communities "We're doing our bit, but we need your help too!".

An unforeseen consequence of the pandemic saw a significant increase in volunteering activity. Team Up's online Facebook membership trebled from Feb 2020 to date with over 3.6k members supporting, litterpicking and celebrating volunteers work. Engagement and activity soared as individuals reconnected with their communities and surrounding nature.

"Renfrewshire has been transformed by volunteering activity, our towns, villages and open spaces are more appealing and the real sense of community created is undeniable. Volunteers enjoy sharing stories on our social media group (Team Up to Clean Up - Facebook) and celebrating one another's successes."

"Helping Hands litterpickers are used for group activity and also gifted to our more active pickers. The kit provided by Helping Hands is a superior quality we find the pickers to be far more durable than cheaper alternatives. The HandiCart lite has also been supplied to many of our volunteers who are using them daily and feedback they are a great assistant to them."



RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

"Renfrewshire has been transformed by volunteering activity. Not only does Renfrewshire towns, villages and open spaces look better but the Campaign has created a real sense of community. Volunteers enjoy sharing stories on our social media group (Team Up to Clean Up - Facebook) and they all celebrate one another's successes."

"Helping Hands litterpickers are used for group activity and also gifted to our more active pickers. The kit provided by Helping Hands is a superior quality we find the pickers to be far more durable than cheaper alternatives."

The HandiCart lite has been supplied to many of our volunteers who are using them daily and feedback they are a great assistant to them."



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Renewable Energy Loans for climate retrofit measures

Home Improvement Loans for general repairs

Disabled Facilities Loans to top-up DFGs and support independent living at home



"Lendology provide a vital option to homeowners who are struggling to finance house repairs and improvements. The direct and flexible support that is provided offers a huge benefit to our residents."

Torrige District Council



"It's a really beneficial partnership and solution to the provision of funding for the renewal and improvement of local housing stock."

North Somerset Council

"It was very helpful to us and our current circumstances. They provided a solution that was easy to understand and flexible."

Lendology Borrower



For more information and to discuss your housing objectives, contact Emma Lower, CEO at Lendology CIC on emma.lower@lendology.org.uk 01823 461099 or visit www.lendology.org.uk

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A new home for Easter: Tenants move into modern new homes for older people

The project supports Stroud District Council's Plan to build affordable, energy efficient homes and its commitment for the district to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Nine bungalows for older people have been built within a popular Stroud District Council Independent Living scheme.

Five of the properties in Broadfield Road in Eastington were built on the site of a former communal lounge and ex-wardens flat, with four being built on unused space at the scheme.

The homes are all single storey, with wheelchair-accessible doorways, and wet rooms. They were offered to people aged over 55 at an affordable rent.

Built by construction-firm Beard, each property is highly insulated, fitted with solar panels and an air source heat pump, resulting in an energy-efficient EPC rating of A.

New tenant, Andrew Wilson was the first to move into the development. He said: "Moving here has given me a new lease of life. Since I had a hip replacement, I've struggled to get around as my old house was on a hill. It's all flat here, including the walk to the local shop, so it will be much easier for me.

"As soon as I walked through the door, I said 'yes!'"

Cllr Mattie Ross, Chair of SDC's Housing Committee, said, "I'm proud that we are providing good quality homes for older people with features that will meet their future needs.

"Nationally it is expected that there will be a significant increase in the number of older people over the next 20 years, and we are committed to invest and deliver the programme to modernise our Independent Living homes for older people."

The project supports Stroud District Council's Council Plan to build affordable, energy efficient homes and its commitment for the district to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Jamie Harwood, director of the Swindon division of Beard, said, "These new properties are much more than bricks and mortar. They will provide vital affordable housing and will enable the residents to benefit from living in homes that are warm and energy efficient.

"At Beard we strive to always add value and exceed expectations, and it is a source of pride that we were chosen to build these bungalows that are designed for the future."

The homes in Broadfield Road are the second of three new-build sites Stroud District Council will be completing this year, which will result in a total of 36 affordable homes in the district.

Seven homes were completed in Summersfield Road, Minchinhampton in March, and 20 units on the site of a former sheltered housing scheme in Nailsworth which are scheduled to be completed in May.

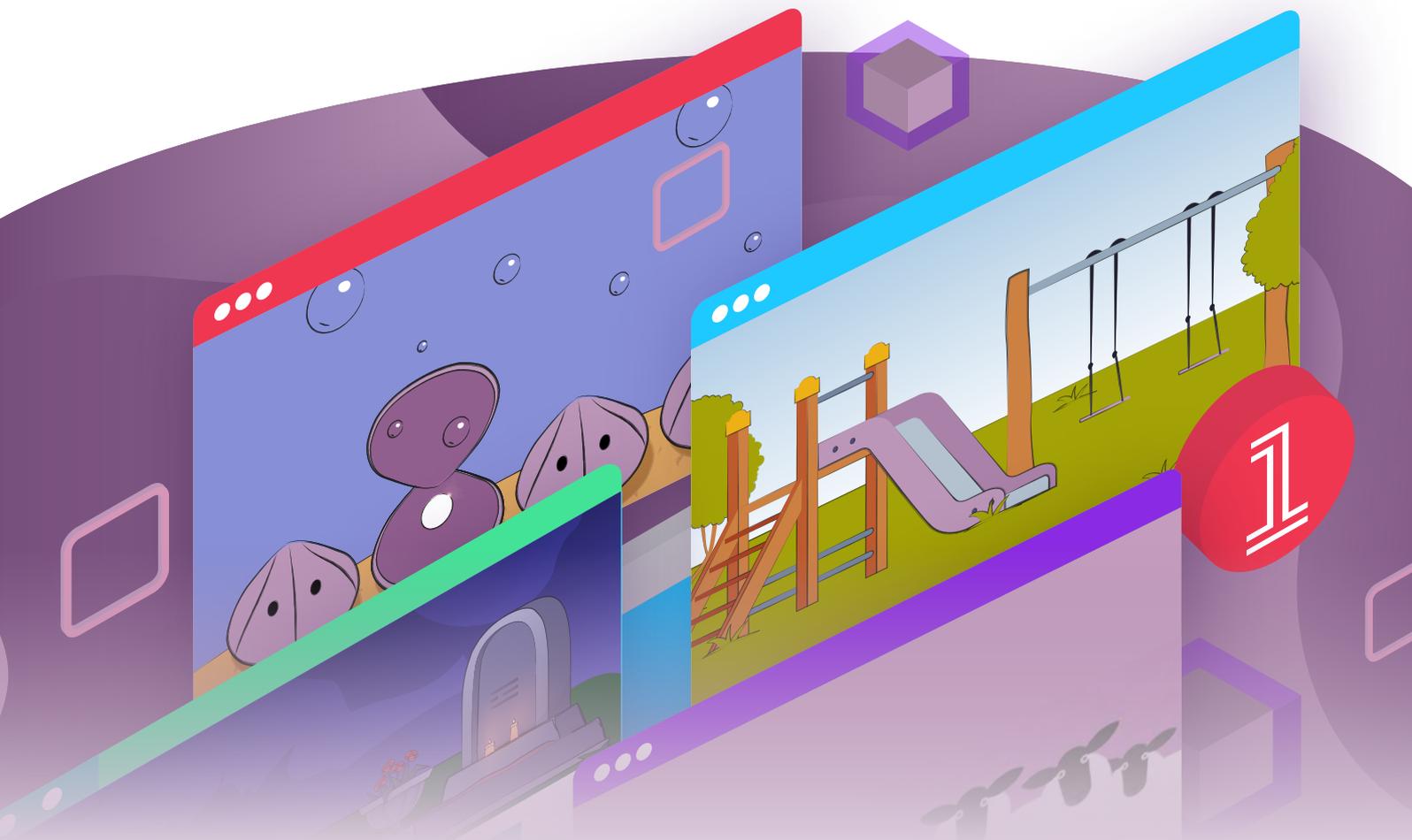
Stroud District Council is the only local authority in Gloucestershire which still owns and manages council houses, with the others having transferred them into other social housing organisations.

• For the latest news and developments in local authority housing, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk.



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