

Briefing 14/53

December 2014

Land Audit Management System (LAMS) summary of the pilot scheme

To: All APSE Contacts

Key Issues

- APSE's performance networks service has conducted a new Land Audit Management System pilot based on previous work completed by South Lanarkshire Council and a number of other councils in Scotland.
- Participating pilot authorities have submitted data for 3 rounds – June, August and October 2014.
- The pilot will be rolled out to all other APSE performance networks members from within parks and street cleansing services wishing to take part for 2015.
- Local authorities interested in this new service can contact the performance networks team at performance.networks@apse.org.uk or 0161 772 1810 for further information

1.0 Introduction

APSE's performance networks is the largest voluntary local government performance measurement and benchmarking service in the UK. Formed in 1998, it has over 180 local authority members covering 15 front-line local authority services. It has a wealth of performance data covering the cost, efficiency and quality of public services.

APSE has a strong record of partnership working with a range of organisations in developing approaches to benchmarking. In Scotland, APSE has worked closely with the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) in developing an approach to benchmarking roads and street lighting based on looking at the whole asset, following on from the Audit Scotland report *Maintaining Scotland's Roads*. This year, APSE have developed a benchmarking service for Environmental Health including areas such as Food Hygiene and Health & Safety which has been endorsed by The Society of Chief Officers for Environmental Health Scotland (SOCOEHS).

In 2012, South Lanarkshire Council approached APSE to see if there was a potential to continue the work of the authority and other councils in Scotland in relation to LAMS and integrate it within the APSE performance networks model. This is their monitoring system for measuring grounds maintenance standards in terms of quality for parks, open spaces and horticultural services.

2.0 Background to the Land Audit Management System

South Lanarkshire Council has participated in APSE's performance networks for parks, open spaces and horticultural services since the pilot project in 1999. The information generated by APSE's performance networks includes a set of key performance indicators, agreed by the network members, which is gathered from both financial and management data. This is used to generate performance indicator scores and statistical information allowing managers to identify how they are performing, where they are going and how they are going to get there through sharing good practice amongst the network.

In 2002, South Lanarkshire Council began work on putting together a Quality Performance Indicator which would relate directly to what could be seen on the ground. Adopting the principles of the Local Environmental Audit Management System (LEAMS) used in street cleansing, a similar system was piloted during the summer of 2003 for grounds maintenance work in parks and open spaces. Using LEAMS as a template helped to reduce the amount of work in the lead up to the final agreed system but it also ensured consistency with a measurement system already known to elected members and council officers.

LAMS is a quality based performance indicator focusing on service delivery. Like LEAMS, the system is based on a series of surveys of randomly selected locations. In order to ensure consistency and objectivity the surveys are a simple visual inspection which can be used in any location irrespective of the nature or amenity of the area being surveyed e.g. cemeteries, public parks or areas around civic buildings, housing estates, road verges, general open space, wild flower and biodiversity areas.

In recent years, the system has been rolled out to other authorities in Scotland and a series of cross-authority checks have been undertaken. A number of benefits have been identified including the demonstration of continuous improvement, identification of training and equipment requirements as well as enabling the best use of any investment opportunities.

3.0 How does it work?

The system is based on a series of surveys of randomly selected locations. All areas maintained are allocated a zone type:

- Zone 1 – High amenity
- Zone 2 – General amenity
- Zone 3 – Low maintenance

Areas are graded and awarded points:

- Grade A – 3 points
- Grade B – 2 points (acceptable standard)
- Grade C – 1 point
- Grade D – 0 points

Grading is based on a visual inspection with full photographic guidance provided and inspectors simply indicate the grade that each transect is assessed at. This data is input into a simple spreadsheet which allocates points and calculates the overall score. The system is designed so that it has a low-resource intensity and inspections can be conducted by existing staff such as chargehands.

4.0 APSE pilot project

Following discussions with South Lanarkshire Council, it was agreed that it would be of great benefit for LAMS to be rolled out as a national quality indicator through the UK-wide infrastructure is provided via APSE's performance networks. A pilot of the performance system was proposed to take place during the summer of 2014. Representatives from South Lanarkshire Council provided training to a number of APSE members on 29 April 2014. This training session included background information to LAMS as well as details of how the surveys should be completed and the methodology for scoring ([click here for the presentation](#)).

Following the training session, 8 local authorities agreed to participate in the pilot. Whilst some authorities decided to concentrate on green spaces, other pilot authorities decided to extend the inspections to 'whole public realm' and therefore include streets within the scope, so that the quality inspections covered both grounds maintenance and street cleansing.

Each local authority received an information pack for data collection which has taken place over the summer/ autumn months (June, August & October) and included a guidance manual and inspections form. APSE performance networks have reported the results after each data collection round (bi-monthly) with comparative performance data across each zone and by grading.

There will be a review meeting held for the pilot group in January 2015.

5.0 How to get involved

Should your local authority already be signed up to performance networks and you are interested in participating in this new service please contact the performance networks team on 0161 772 1810 or email performance.networks@apse.org.uk for further information. To find out more about performance networks please visit the APSE website on www.apse.org.uk

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