Network News

Performance Networks Awards

Huge congratulations to all of our award finalists and winners from the Performance Networks Awards held in Blackpool, December 2024. Click here to see the full list of winners.

More from our winners

This year, as well as collating case studies from our award winners which are published in the Spring, we have asked for more personal reflections on what winning has meant to them.

East Riding of Yorkshire

Beverley Leisure achieved two wins in Most Improved and Best Performer categories of sports and leisure facility management, announced at the APSE Awards ceremony.

Chris Armstrong, East Riding Leisure Beverley General Manager said: "These awards are testament to the combined efforts of all staff within the centre and across the wider Health, Wellbeing and Business Commissioning teams. We're incredibly proud of this recognition of their successes to date and will continue to develop the service for the benefit of our growing community and local partners.

The team at East Riding Leisure Beverley is committed to promoting excellence and takes pride in delivering outstanding service to their valued customers. They are all thrilled to receive the wins in this year awards."

Wakefield Council

"Being members of performance networks ensured we had valuable benchmarking data to compare with other Environmental Health teams from across the UK, giving positive reinforcement that our strategy is on the right lines. Benchmarking is not the end of the process, we have used the APSE network to learn from other Councils regarding performance improvements, IT software solutions and income generating ideas.

APSE's events and performance monitoring has been a fantastic resource this year."

Jill Edmondson, Environmental Health Service Manager, Wakefield Council

If you are a recent award winner and have testimonies or images you would like to share, please contact jstanley@apse.org.uk

*Images from Wakefield Council

Developments

You should by now have received your performance networks calendar which gives you notification of some of the important dates coming up in the year. If you have not received your calendar or would like another, please contact the team performance.networks@apse.org.uk

The second batch data collection deadline is fast approaching. All services need to be submitted by 14 February 2025. This relates to anyone who did not submit for the first batch data collection period at the end of 2024. If your data has changed, you can resubmit for this second collection period.

Dates for your diary:

The next round of meetings to review the data analytics in the templates and in the reports will be held via Microsoft Teams between January and March. The purpose of these meetings is to review the data collection requirements for the new data collection year and look at ways in which the data is presented, including the development of the new Power BI reports.

The meetings are technical, data focussed meetings and we are encouraging members to attend who wish to be actively involved in the conversation. To book onto the next meeting please visit the website here.

Some of the Data Analytic Review Meetings in the list have been scheduled to coincide with the APSE Networks (formerly known as Advisory groups) to make this more convenient for members to attend both meetings in the same day. APSE Networks are informal meetings, free for APSE members, that allow local authorities to share service specific best practice and to network. The following services have APSE Networks in the morning followed by the Data Analytic Review Meetings in the afternoon.

Building cleaning
Cemeteries and crematoria
Refuse collection
Sports and Leisure

To get more information on the specific APSE Networks being held in the mornings, please click on the links above.

Service	Date
Building Cleaning	5 March - 2pm-3pm
Building Maintenance	13 February - 10am-11am
Catering services	10 February - 10am-12pm
Cemeteries and Crematoria	14 March - 2pm-3pm
Core Highways	11 February - 2pm-3pm
Environmental Health	26 February - 10am-11am
Parks, Street Cleansing and Street Scene	28 February - 10am-1pm
Refuse Collection	6 March - 2pm-3pm
Roads and Street Lighting	11 February - 10am-12pm
Sports and Leisure	29 January - 2pm-4pm
Trading Standards	26 February - 2pm-3pm
Transport	12 February - 10am-11am

Northern Ireland Project: Data Analytic Review meetings

The annual data analytics review meetings (previously named working groups) will be in-person events held in Antrim to review APSE's benchmarking. The meetings will also contain a forum to discuss relevant topics beyond the data and there will be the opportunity to raise discussion topics on the day. To book your place, please click on the following link.

Venue: Space Antrim, Floor 1, 55-59 High Street, Antrim, BT41 4AY
Please note that these meetings require physical attendance (there will be no online option)

Monday 3 February
Refuse Collection / Street Cleansing 1:30pm

Tuesday 4 February
Economic Development 10:00am
Building Control 11.30am
Environmental Health 2:15pm

Wednesday 5 February
Corporate Services - Finance / OD / HR and Training 10:00am
Corporate Services – ICT / Environment / Registration / Complaints / Customer Satisfaction 2pm

Thursday 6 February
Parks / Cemeteries 10:00am
Sports and Leisure 2:00pm

Friday 7 February
Community Development / Arts and Heritage 10:30am

If you wish to contribute but are unable to attend the meeting, you can email responses to performance.networks@apse.org.uk
(by 28 January at the latest please).

Forthcoming meetings

APSE Roundtable: Defining and measuring productivity in frontline services

Friday 21 March, 11.00 - 12.30, MS Teams

FREE networking meeting for members

Led by Debbie Johns, Head of APSE Performance Networks, Jen Woolford, Director of Public Policy Analysis, Office for National Statistics (ONS), and Richard Heys, Deputy Director and Deputy Chief Economist, ONS.

'Productivity' measures gained some momentum recently, particularly in England with councils being asked to submit 'Productivity plans' by the 19 July 2024 despite the General Election taking place on the 4 July. Although it has since been announced by the new government that Oflog will be closed, the theme of productivity and an ending of 'waste in public services' remains a key theme of government. But what are considered good measures for productivity and how can these be defined? Join local authority colleagues from across the UK to discuss best practice and overcoming challenges.

Topics include...

• What measures are used nationally to assess productivity levels?

• How can these measures translate to a public policy context?

• What are the challenges with productivity measures?

• Despite budget reductions and an increase in demand for services, how is local government performing in productivity across key frontline services?

To book your place, please click on this link.

Collaboration updates

Sport England

APSE have been working with Sport England to reduce data input times for benchmarking leisure centres and provide a level of synergy between the APSE and the Sport England Moving Communities data systems. This collaboration was strengthened in 2024 to now include financial data in addition to participation, facility usage, and facility management data. To expedite the process for APSE performance networks members, we have created an agreement which allows members to authorise Moving Communities to release this leisure centre data directly to APSE, therefore eliminating the need to input this data in the annual data collection templates.

Emma Bernstein, Strategic Projects Lead at Sport England, said: "The collaboration with APSE is an important milestone in supporting a journey of performance monitoring and continuous improvement across the public leisure sector. The work that we can do together will drive quality and increase confidence and we are thrilled to work in partnership to minimise duplication across the sector. It will help and support facilities to demonstrate the positive impact they have on their local communities."

A review meeting was held with Sport England in January 2025 and we will be further building on this collaboration for the forthcoming year.

Power Data Associates (PDA)

Since 22/23 APSE has been collaborating with PDA to reduce data input times for benchmarking streetlighting and provide a level of synergy between the APSE and the PDA data systems. There is now the opportunity for APSE performance networks members who use PDA for their lighting stock and energy consumption to opt in to collaborate with PDA to support with the completion of the lighting benchmarking data. We have created an agreement which allows members to authorise PDA to release this data directly to APSE, therefore eliminating the need to input this data in the annual data collection templates.

David Lewis, Account Manager for PDA said "PDA is delighted to collaborate with APSE in the provision of our customers performance network data. In today's busy world it's not easy for you to find the time to retrieve, review and validate the data required for benchmarking, so why not let PDA take the strain and provide your relevant data direct to APSE."

NABMA

APSE continue to collaborate with NABMA and have been commissioned to produce the analysis on the latest Markets survey 2024. Members of APSE performance networks who contribute to the survey can also receive their own comparison report with the average data set upon request.

Updates

New benchmarking module on Climate Change

We have successfully completed a pilot and the full rollout of a new benchmarking model on benchmarking climate change at a corporate level. This compliments the data that we're currently collecting within service areas and the new module collects overall corporate data on measures such as emissions. New Power BI reports have been created to display the data with the function to interact with the data and create customised groupings.

New report types: Power BI reports

We have successfully piloted Power BI reports for building cleaning inspection data and climate change data which allows members to access interactive online reports. This is part of our commitment to reduce printed materials, which members have requested from the consultation, and to replace this with more interactive on-line reports. Draft Power BI reports for the main benchmarking services have been consulted on with the service-specific groups and are now being rolled out. These will supplement the current report set which will be predominantly produced in PDF.

Facing re-organisation? Use your data to establish a baseline for change

Many English councils are now facing the prospect of reorganisation and the ability to share frontline service data, providing a legacy baseline from which to continually improve services under a new authority, represents a best practice approach to the integration of service delivery. APSE encourages all its performance

networks members to complete their data submissions to provide this legacy data in advance of reorganisation. For more information on how we can support you to develop data reports for your own council through APSE performance networks, please contact the APSE office.

Local Government Frontline Data Roundup 2024

A publication has been produced which includes the key findings for the last data collection year (2023-24 financial year) from APSE performance networks. Analysis has shown improvements in some aspects of performance and a deterioration in others. The analysis presents a clear picture of the challenges and opportunities facing local government front line services. The effects of the continuing budget reductions with increasing demand for services, together with cost pressures from energy, overall inflation and labour and supply cost increases, continues to present an increasing challenge for local authorities seeking to provide a high level of service delivery. The ability to recruit and retain staff has been problematic across a range of different service areas. Another major challenge for local authorities is local plans to address the global threats of climate change and energy price increases. However, investment in service changes tends to lag behind corporate ambitions.

To read the publication in full, please click on this link.