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Youth Unemployment: Local authorities leading the response



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Editorial

Baroness Thatcher: The local government legacy

Just as direct news was about to go to press, news of the demise of Baroness Thatcher began to emerge. Whether you are in the 'love' or 'loathe' camp it would be impossible to comment on her political legacy without referencing the impact on local government of her years in office.

Many of us lived through the years of compulsory competitive tendering as competition became the new mantra to improve public services. Marketisation in its many guises was portrayed as a means to reduce costs and bring about a more managerial approach to public services. Many disputed this orthodoxy and argued that public services are unique and applying market mechanisms to public services would never work and lead to failing public services. The ideal of rolling-back the state and allowing private growth is an argument which has once again flourished as public sector budgets are cut in response to the global financial crisis.

Many of us in the hazy days of CCT whilst not subscribing to 'competition' in public services did however recognise that public services needed to demonstrate 'competitiveness' – an entirely different concept but one which, like the Thatcher legacy of competition in public services, has survived and grown as a concept. In austere times frontline services are once again under pressure to show that they are better, cheaper, more efficient than their comparators. But some of the old orthodoxy of hard client and contractor splits has thankfully drifted into a wispy shadow of its former perceived management wisdom. In its place we see a more intelligent delivery of public services. A growth of service integration and improvement linked to tangible outcomes and continuous performance improvement. Unlike other areas of the public sector local government can say that it responded better to the challenges which CCT presented and it continues to respond to the current challenges of austerity.

Whatever the views on Baroness Thatcher the policy legacy of marketisation has been tweaked and twisted by successive governments of all political persuasions but some of the underlying orthodoxy still prevails. It is APSE's job to promote excellence in frontline services and where national politicians intervene in local government we will make it our job to critically review those policies and with a voice of reason and operational knowledge of frontline services determine if they will work or not for our members. The shadow of Baroness Thatcher remains and so does the tentacles of many of her policy ideas in local government; whether you view that as a good or a bad thing is of course a question of perspective.

Best wishes

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive



Gisa job

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien looks at how councils can play an ensuring role in tackling youth unemployment.

Gisa a job – I can do that' was the memorable but tragic catchphrase of Yosser Hughes in the 1982 'Boys from the Blackstuff' television drama series which whilst often warm and humorous ultimately took a look at the catastrophic way economics can affect ordinary people.

APSE's latest research 'Youth unemployment; Local authorities leading the response' is far from Alan Bleasdale's writings but it does nevertheless also consider the impact of unemployment and what local councils can do to stop a generation of young people being consigned to life on the dole.

With almost one million 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training, there is little disagreement that youth unemployment is a grave national problem. But our research found that it is a problem which local authorities are well placed to tackle. In many areas local councils are already taking the bull by the horns.

Our research jointly conducted between APSE and De Montfort University, was carried out among local authorities to determine the extent to which youth unemployment is an issue in their area and what they are doing about it. As we might expect in the current climate, 94% of respondents consider youth unemployment a problem locally and 91% believe it has got worse in the past five years. Our mapping exercise indicates that, as might also be predicted, youth unemployment is affecting areas with higher socio-economic deprivation disproportionately.

Whilst the research found that 73% of authorities had a strategic plan to tackle youth unemployment, we also wanted

to establish what practical steps councils are taking to help ensure a generation of young people are not consigned to life on the dole, with all the social and economic consequences this brings. We were buoyed by our findings that on a practical level, 70% are facilitating work experience, 80% are providing in-house apprenticeships and 40% are inserting social benefit clauses into contracts to promote local employment opportunities.

It is clear from our research that local authorities across the UK are playing an active role as local stewards to help address youth unemployment.

In the City and County of Swansea the council's 'Keeping in Touch' scheme provides targeted support to pupils who may be at risk of leaving school without a qualification. The initiative developed by the City and County of Swansea Council and Careers Wales West provides an example of local partners collaborating to develop and deliver an early intervention and preventative strategy for tackling youth unemployment, under three key elements, of identifying, engaging and monitoring. The schemes staged approach provides targeted support and real outcomes for young people.

Another is South Ayrshire's 'Work Out!' initiative to enhance employability amongst young people through work experience and vocational training. The initiative helps 14 – 15 year olds to develop the 'soft skills' which local employers are seeking and provides vocational and core skills training and qualifications. In Bolsover Local Strategic Partnership's 'Raising Aspirations' project works with young people to help develop skills and qualities that will assist them to move into education,

employment and training. There are many more illustrations of good practice in our report Youth Unemployment: local authorities leading the response.

But what more could local authorities do? We have come up with 'four C's' to answer this question. This means:

- ♦ Convening links with local businesses and trade unions;
- ♦ Co-ordinating a response to youth unemployment that joins up information and funding sources;
- ♦ Collaboration with partners and employers; and acting as
- ♦ Custodians of local communities to create opportunities within their in-house services to provide support and employment opportunities for young people.

In APSE's view councils are ideally placed to develop strategies which suit their unique local circumstances which enables them to achieve better outcomes in tackling youth unemployment, and there is clear evidence of them doing so. But recognition by central government of this key role is vital, not just for inter-generational justice, but for our national economic survival. If our young people do not have sufficient skills and experience it will disadvantage the UK in global markets and will cost the national purse dearly in the long term, paying benefits instead of collecting tax on earnings.

Central government departments need to recognise the strategic function of local authorities and invest the necessary funding to enable them to fulfil this important role. Our research shows councils have achieved a great deal in this important area with limited budgets and we are not necessarily

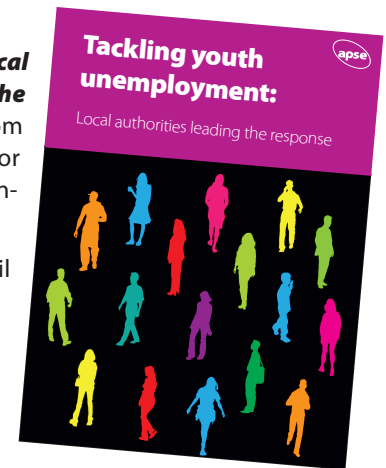
calling for massive additional resources. However, central government does need to invest in the strategic capabilities of local authorities and establish a policy environment in which the multiplicity of schemes, regulations and funding mechanisms are channelled towards local leadership of initiatives that help ensure a brighter future for young people and allow them to contribute economically.

That is why APSE is calling upon central government to give local authorities the recognition and funding required to help save a generation from a life of long-term unemployment. Local authorities are leading the response on youth unemployment but with the right strategic direction from Government so much more could be achieved. We want to develop a generation of skilled, capable young people not a generation to morph into the tragic character of Yosser Hughes.

Contact: po'brien@apse.org.uk

Youth Unemployment; Local authorities leading the response is available from APSE priced at £20 for members and £40 for non-members.

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Creating conditions for growth

Telford & Wrekin Council's leader, Cllr Kuldip Sahota and managing director, Richard Partington discuss their authority's whole council, co-operative approach to driving growth



Growth is key to the economic future of the country and, we believe, to the financial viability of local public services in Telford & Wrekin – and in many other places.

In these difficult economic times, it is no longer enough for local authorities to passively wait for the call from a potential inward investor. Attracting investment is a 'zero sum game' with all local authorities fishing in the same global pool - a pool which is smaller than ever before as banks continue to fail to lend on a scale or on terms which meet the needs of businesses.

Staying focused on the goal of creating the conditions for growth whilst having to manage financial pressures and protect front-line services is a very real challenge for many local authorities. Some local authorities though are achieving this goal.

In Telford & Wrekin we have set the priority of being a 'business supporting, business winning' council, focusing on attracting new investment as well as supporting existing businesses. However, growth doesn't happen simply because you have a 'growth plan' – you need to have a 'whole-system' council approach which underpins the strategy by creating a place where people want to both invest and live – a safe, clean borough, with improving health, good housing and excellent opportunities for learning and skills development. Our services need to be integrated to achieve this.

Our first step was to redesign our organisation to create both capacity and a new commercially - orientated culture. What does this mean? We developed a new Business & Development Charter which sets out how we will do this, including our one-stop-shop for business and planning services providing a dedicated point of contact, free and timely pre-planning advice, the validation of planning applications within three working days of receipt, speedy decisions on all planning applications and discounts on Building Regulations where sought at the same time as a planning application is made, to name but a few changes.

As well as getting our organisational structure right, we have focused on practical actions to take this 'whole council' agenda forward.

The council is leading the transformation of the Town Centre in Telford with some £250m of public/private investment, with council facilities being integrated with hotels, restaurant, retail

and leisure facilities this will create 250 new jobs and safeguard 400 jobs and deliver 150 jobs in the construction phase. Phase 1 will be completed and open during Spring 2014.

We have launched 'TLC' a new Telford Loyalty Card. It is free to residents and visitors and offers a series of discounts in local businesses and council leisure facilities. TLC encourages spending with local businesses whilst encouraging the adoption of healthy, active lifestyles.

Our partners are central to achieving this culture change. To get businesses up and running as quickly as possible we are applying the principle of 'Making Every Contact Count'. For example, where our Business Support Officers identify an organisation that needs support to comply with fire regulations, they will take responsibility and co-ordinate this with Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service.

An innovative new partnership aimed at making local areas even cleaner and greener and more attractive as a place to live has also been established bringing together parish councils and the council to fund new environmental action teams. Each parish team enhances the environmental work that Telford & Wrekin Council already does across the borough such as litter picking and maintaining areas not covered by Telford and Wrekin, and also weeding, planting, leaf fall clearing, repairs to street furniture and cleaning alleyways and underpasses.

As a 'Co-operative Council', we are keen to encourage our residents to be more than just passive recipients of public services. We are encouraging them to be active voluntary participants - 'snow wardens' who take responsibility for clearing paths to key community facilities such as schools, 'street champions' who act as a focus and the voice for their neighbourhood, and all of these are volunteers. Leading by example is an important principle for us. The borough is a 'hot spot' for youth unemployment and we are working with local

business and FE colleagues to address this directly, the council set and achieved its goal of creating 100 apprenticeships by March 2012. The merits of this are two fold - supporting 16 to 24 year olds to experience work - a real challenge in the current climate - and, as importantly directly contributing to training the borough's workforce of the future. Ultimately we are seeing evidence that our 'can-do' commercial approach is working.

Duport.co.uk reports that 603 new companies were formed in Telford last year - our highest annual increase and 16% up on the previous year. More specifically, we have seen 160 new jobs created as a direct result of a planning application being registered within 24 hours and processed within 6 weeks of submission. We saw 800 new homes completed in the Borough last year - one of the highest rates of housing growth across the UK.

As a result of all of this, unemployment overall in the borough has fallen over the past two year by 13% - among the top 10% local authorities for this measure. Equally, we are succeeding in getting our 'open for business' message out. The National Building Group and Building Magazine rank us among the top 10% of local authorities for providing a 'positive economic and planning environment for investment'.

Despite the disproportionately high level of cuts which local government has received from Government, local authorities are successfully creating the right conditions for economic growth. But, critically, growth is not an end in itself. Economic growth means jobs and this means that we can support our vulnerable and most deprived communities to 'narrow the gap' and achieve a good standard of health, housing and prosperity for all. This is our core agenda.

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Managing demand

Calderdale Council's Director of Communities, Robin Tuddenham, discusses its pioneering council-wide approach to demand management



It makes sense that by reducing demand for services, local authorities can reduce the cost of those services. But at Calderdale Council we view demand management as much more than a response to budget cuts. We see it as a way of transforming services and changing the relationship between citizens and service providers. That is why we are taking a whole organisation approach and embedding demand management within our entire organisational culture.

Demographic pressures such as rising numbers of older and vulnerable people were already prompting a need to think differently about public services before austerity measures kicked in. Severe budget reductions across local government

have made that need for creative thinking all the more urgent. As an authority, we have saved £40m in the past three years and need to save a similar amount in the next three years. We have achieved savings so far through reducing back office, management, administration and facilities costs, but there is a limit to how far these can be pared back. Demand management offers a more innovative approach, which means changing behaviour or early intervention to remove some of the need for services.

The first step is understanding what drives demand, which entails examining; expectations and choices; systems and processes; and individual behaviour of staff and residents. The next step is changing behaviour through a combination of; preventative work; early intervention to limit or avoid long-term dependency; and integrating disparate services around people and places. This can then be followed by redesigning, restricting and re-sourcing services where appropriate.

We are a year into our demand management journey at Calderdale. We used management consulting firm impower to help examine the way in which services are delivered. We began by testing the idea of demand management out on a specific service to enable us to take an evidence based approach before applying it more widely.

We looked at home to school transport initially and found we had created a dependency on specialist buses among people who may be able to travel in other ways. By putting in place travel training and intensive support with children, vulnerable

adults and their families we have been able to enhance their confidence and independence. We identified that behaviour change was more likely to be influenced by doctors and teachers and engaging these professionals proved valuable. We can potentially save £600k a year as a result, but service users and their families also report that, rather than taking something away from them, making these changes was a positive experience.

We are now rolling out demand management across the council in conjunction with the next round of budget planning. Everything that has potential for demand management is being tested. A lead officer has been given the remit to analyse where demand management has worked in other public services, establish a 'demand management network' comprised of key people within the council and ensure they are properly trained and supported in applying its principles.

Adult social care will be one of the largest areas we will look at in future. We will consider ways in which personal budgets can be used in conjunction with demand management as a way to enhance self-reliance among service users. The implementation of welfare reform also means our revenues and benefits systems will require radical review and may be fertile ground for a demand management approach. We recognise, however, that no one size fits all and demand management will be more applicable to some services than others.

We are clear that this is not just a way of dressing up budget cuts and we need to communicate carefully with our residents to demonstrate that. Decisions will be taken with support and involvement of service users and their insights will be mobilised in order to find creative solutions where possible.

We have learned that some aspects of demand management are down to simple things. For example, we examined how we can manage demand by improving communications with residents. We found that making the content of letters clearer means reducing the number of subsequent contacts with the council that can arise.

We are trying to maintain investment in the key areas of children's social care, economic development, jobs and channelling resources into preventative services in order to stop problems arising in the first place. We have introduced new commissioning processes around early intervention and, in early years services in particular, are identifying youngsters who are at risk sooner.

We are working with the borough's strong voluntary and community sector and seeking ideas from frontline staff working in local communities. This is not just good community engagement; it's about building on local networks to re-balance the relationship between the authority and local residents. An obvious example is using local knowledge and resources to provide support for an older person in their own community, rather than ten miles away at a day centre on the other side of the borough. Focusing support and rewarding behaviour change can promote community resilience by building upon the strengths that exist within a place – and its people.

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Fairer for all

Blackpool Council's leader, Cllr Simon Blackburn, discusses why a Fairness Commission has been established in the town and what it hopes to achieve

It is now nearly a year since we set up the Blackpool Fairness Commission, which aims to make Blackpool a fairer place for everyone in the town. Statistics show that inequality is growing right across the UK and we are aware that Blackpool is a place of contrasts – with high levels of poverty and social problems alongside the huge opportunities that exist in a regenerated seaside town with thirteen million visitors a year. We believe that making Blackpool fairer will improve quality of life for all who live, learn and work here.

This is a new way of working in partnership which replaces the Blackpool Local Strategic Partnership. It considers the fundamental question: 'Is Blackpool a fair place to live, work and learn?' While celebrating the good work that is currently taking place, the Commission aims to narrow the gap between the richest and poorest members of our society. We hope to do so by engaging with local people from all walks of life, listening to their views and using this to inform decisions and priorities for the town.

The thinking behind the Fairness Commission stems from research by social epidemiologist Professor Richard Wilkinson of Nottingham University. In the bestselling book *The Spirit Level: Why Equality Is Better For Everyone*, Professor Wilkinson and Professor Kate Pickett show that, throughout the world, the more unfair a place is, the more social problems are experienced by everyone there. Citizens in more unequal societies (in terms of the gap between those earning the most and the least) experience more violence, less trust and more social estrangement. Greater equality rather than more growth in wealth are what matter to well-being, according to their research. Making a place fairer therefore improves quality of life for everyone - not just the worst off.

Islington Fairness Commission was the first body of its kind to be established and Commissions have since been set up in Liverpool, Newcastle, York, Sheffield and Tower Hamlets, as well as Blackpool.

Divisional Commander at Lancashire Police, Richard Debicki, was chosen as the first chair of our Commission. A steering panel has been set up to help to shape and promote its work. This will mean identifying practical ways of making Blackpool a fairer place and working collaboratively across sectors to reduce inequalities. The panel will meet four times a year to report on ways to increase equality in Blackpool.

The role of Blackpool's band of Fairness Commissioners is crucial to the success of the Commission. They have been recruited to help promote the group, bring forward ideas to help establish fairness in the town and give feedback on initiatives. Following its launch in May 2012, over 100 people from across the community signed up to become Commissioners. They will attend meetings to discuss issues, engage with local people, undertake reviews, produce recommendations and take responsibility for implementing those recommendations in the areas or organisations they represent.

One of its the first tasks of the Blackpool Fairness Commission will be to establish a vision for fairness in the town. This will be a vision for our future whereby everyone is entitled to a good quality of life and can access services and opportunities regardless of where they live, their background or their particular economic circumstances. Residents were invited to ask the important questions to Blackpool's leaders at a public meeting held by the Fairness Commission in January.

The first meeting, titled 'Our Blackpool – Your Voice' brought public and voluntary sector bodies, businesses and local residents

together to meet the Steering Panel. The meeting was well attended and gave residents an opportunity to ask those burning questions, which ranged from licensing restrictions on the towns pubs and clubs to questions on how the panel thought that the Fairness Commission could help raise the aspirations of the young people of the town.

The day after this event we launched our free breakfast pilot that provides every primary school pupil in Blackpool with a free breakfast and milk every day. This offer is available to every resident, helping everyone from job seekers to the low income working families. Since then we have also implemented the Living Wage for all staff across the Council and are commending it through the Fairness Commission to all our partners in the Town.

The Panel have met three times now, and as a result a number of cross cutting task groups have been established to work on three key themes of the Commission. The working groups seek to be both cross cutting in subject matter and in representation, with public, private and voluntary, faith and community representatives coming together to address key issues that face the town and seek to pool resource and commitment in a climate where each of the individual organisations are facing cuts and financial pressure.

We are aware that fairness does not happen over night, especially in an era of budget cuts and financial austerity. But we believe that putting fairness explicitly on the agenda for our town – and bringing people together to consider it seriously – is an important first step.

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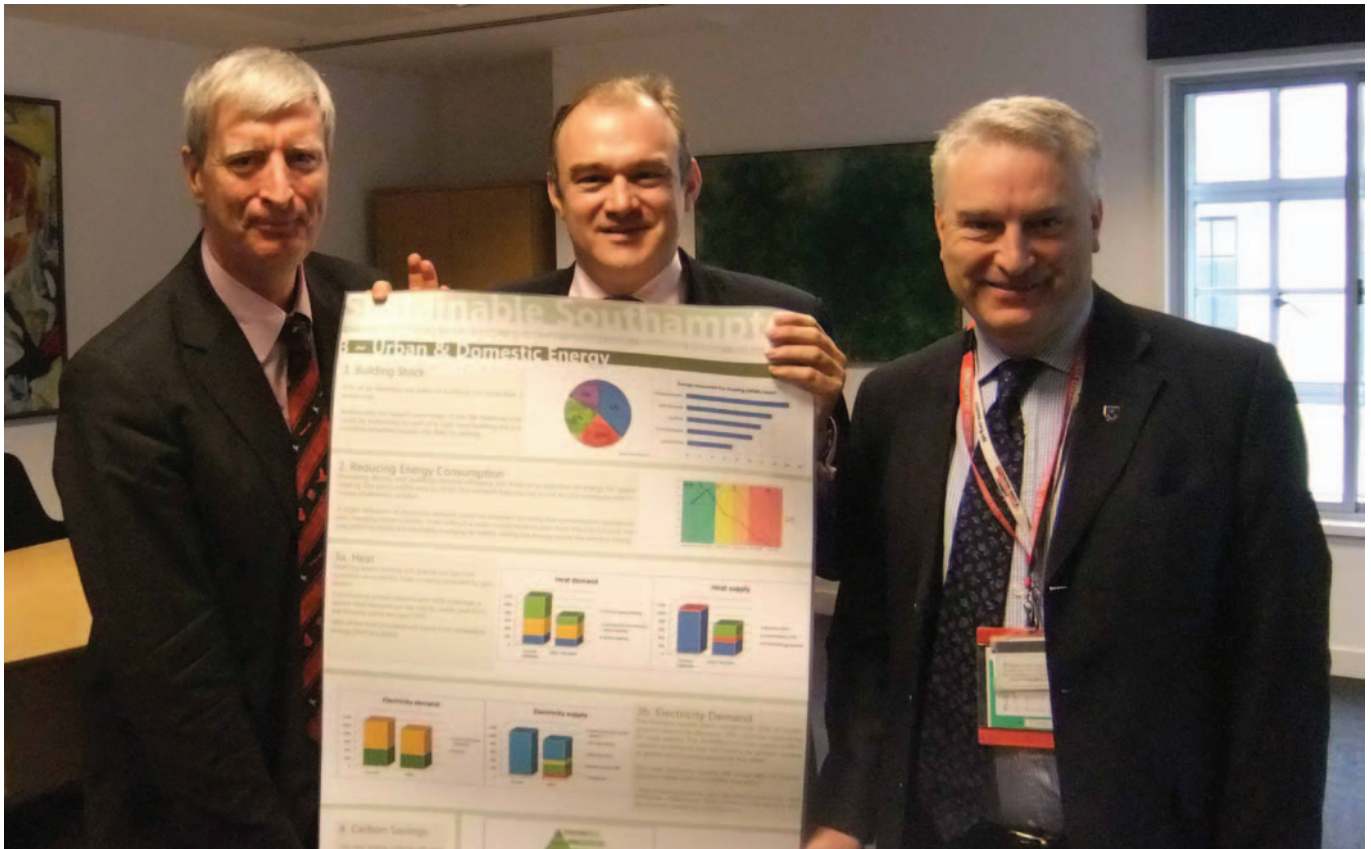
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Left to right: Cllr Richard Williams, Leader of Southampton City Council, Ed Davey, Minister for Climate Change and Cllr Gerald Vernon Jackson, Leader of Portsmouth City Council

The municipalisation of energy:

A big ambition but one proposed to be achieved in collaboration. Cllr Richard Williams, leader of Southampton City Council explains

OFGEM have warned recently that energy bills will continue to rise as the UK becomes more susceptible to world energy prices with the closure of outdated coal fired power stations. We therefore need to actively pursue a step change in our thinking about local energy generation, efficiency and supply. As the cuts continue to bite, the social and economic context of our local areas get more complex and staffing levels in Local Government lower, it's sometimes hard to see if there is light at the end of this tunnel at times. However, I believe that the challenge posed by energy for Local Government gives us the perfect opportunity to put us:

- 1) at the forefront of the drive to address the country's energy needs;
- 2) tackle social deprivation and fuel poverty, create much needed new jobs and businesses and;
- 3) generate new sources of revenue to sustain local public services.

Local Government's increased involvement in this agenda also ticks the subsidiarity box. Local energy efficiency works and the generation of energy from renewables is best delivered at the most local level to the residents and businesses that will benefit from it. Local infrastructure projects, using local work force, creating a financial, social and environmental benefit to local people - that is where Councils working in this agenda can really add value.

Local infrastructure projects, using local work force, creating a financial, social and environmental benefit to local people - that is where Councils working in this agenda can really add value.

So it was from this stand point that a group of 22 officers from 15 different local authorities came together for a working day in February to bring clarity to the concept of a Local Authority Energy Collaboration. Elected member representatives from a number of these local authorities then attended a round table event in the evening receiving a report of the day's discussions. All elected members and officers attending the event recognised that there were opportunities afforded to Local Authorities by greater collaborative working in the green energy agenda, identifying the benefits of increased capacity, expertise, confidence and 'clout', in addition to financial savings through joint procurement and finance raising through accessing greater levels of funding to deliver bigger projects with the benefit of shared risk and return.

Consensus gathered around 3 aims for the collaboration:

1. To deliver the local municipalisation of energy, where by we mean the public ownership and managerial control of local energy generation and distribution networks.
2. To address social objectives and deliver community benefits such as reduction of fuel poverty and increase in local jobs and skills
3. To save money and make money for Local Authorities

There was broad agreement that there were two streams of work for the collaboration. The first around the delivery of 'Services'- expertise, networking, procurement, bid writing, marketing- and the second around the delivery of 'Infrastructure'- local energy generation schemes, large scale energy efficiency works, local energy networks. With the opportunity to be less risk adverse in collaboration as risk and reward are shared, officers were keen for the collaboration to support test schemes encouraging innovation and the establishment of local green economy services and industry.

There was consensus that the long term vision of the municipalisation of energy would need to be achieved in 'chunks' recognising the pace of change in differing localities, maximising on wider opportunities and access to funds. There was general consensus that large capital outlay projects with longer payback periods and schemes where there was a perceived lack of market solution, such as large scale retrofit and district energy, were where a collaboration approach could really add value. In addition the collaboration would act as a single voice for multiple Local Authorities publicising the local green economy model, influencing policy and negotiating with the Big 6 energy companies.

As the day progressed into conversation on how the collaboration would look to achieve the shared aims, it was recognised that there may be up front costs to get the collaboration up and running but that the long term ambition should be financial self sufficiency. Conversation established that there were plenty of pots of money out there for projects but that time and expertise to bring proposals up to oven ready level was lacking. From this officers agreed that the collaboration should start simple and then evolve, acting initially as a hub and clearing house, supporting feasibility and business case development, coordinating procurement and raising finance, for projects to be delivered locally.

The day ended discussing what the collaboration could look like; what structure it could take. Officers identified that the collaborative model would need to be agile, flexible and durable and that the structure might evolve over time from something informal or administrative such as a joint committee, to something more contractual such as an ESCo (Energy Savings Company).

So what is happening now? A core group of officers from 11 Local Authorities are working with APSE to continue the work started at the workshop and develop a business plan for the collaboration. Local authorities have been asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to formally show their commitment to the outline vision and financially contribute to kick start the work. The wider group is coming together again in August to finesse the business plan taking it back through their Local Authorities discussion making structures with a view for the collaboration to be formally constituted and delivering work on the group by winter. So just when the nights are getting darker again, it is hoped that the shining light of opportunity this Local Authority Energy Collaboration represents, will only be getting brighter.

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Reactec, the UK's leading hand arm vibration and tool tracking specialist, highlights the latest cost and welfare benefits within the public sector.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) is the result of over exposure to vibration equipment - such as power tools, diggers and grass cutters - and can include painful and disabling injuries of the blood vessels, nerves, joints and muscles in the hands. However, it's not just the health and safety of workers that's at stake. For employers, it results in hefty compensation claims and reduced productivity through sickness and absence.

So how can local authorities and public sector bodies effectively monitor this exposure and minimise the risks of highway operatives developing Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)?

And what of the benefits for employers from effective monitoring? Business will benefit from a healthier workforce, but will also realise cost savings from more efficient tool allocation, worker productivity and the reduced risk of injury claims.

Getting HAVS management right

Many organisations struggle to maintain a HAV management policy due to its complexities or even keep it on their to-do list as it is seen as a lower risk than other issues.

Testing and tagging your plant for vibration output; health screening, training and educating employees on best practice

and why they should support HAV monitoring is only the beginning.

The challenge is to create a procedure to monitor and manage HAV that is supported by all individuals and is realistic and reliable. Implementing a HAV monitoring system is a key part of this, while maintaining the quality of a monitoring system is paramount in supporting workforce welfare, meeting HSE guidelines and reducing business risk.

The cases of local authorities paying the cost are numerous. Last year, for example, a road worker sought compensation after being diagnosed with HAVS. The condition made it difficult for him to pick up small objects. In addition to this, the disease is also made worse by further use of vibrating tools, meaning that the 46 year-old was unable to continue in his field of work. Because his employer had failed to follow correct procedures in the management of HAVS, it was found in breach of regulations and instructed to pay a £10,000 compensation settlement, and potentially much more in legal fees.

Ensuring buy-in to your HAV monitoring procedure from all levels of management is essential and clear procedures are required to support the flow of exposure data. Each group of stakeholders, from procurement and finance to health and safety, will have different benefits and the formats to convey these benefits will also differ.

Employers should emphasise that it's not a big brother exercise, but better protection for employees against contracting the disabling condition. Using imagery displaying victims of HAVS is a powerful and memorable format to highlight the risks of living with the consequences of poor monitoring. And it shouldn't just be an employer responsibility. Reminding operators that they are partly responsible for their welfare is important. The more accurately they record tool usage the longer they can work whilst better protecting them against HAVS.

Operators tend to over-estimate when guessing tool usage at the end of a shift or even fabricate the data to get it out of the way. Inaccurate data can result in operators being removed from tools that have higher levels of vibration and inhibit their ability to continue working during a shift or project, thus increasing the time of completion.

Many of the above benefits also apply to a team and Site Managers who wish to minimise workforce interruptions and additional workload. They are required on a daily basis to support exposure monitoring and collation of records.

More accurate data can mean not having to replace skilled personnel that overestimate their exposure levels resulting in delays and ultimately extending project timetables and cost.

So good record data can be obtained by informing all stakeholders of the benefits in helping create and maintain a good HAV welfare solution.

Reaping the rewards of effective HAVS management

This last point is an important one. Effective monitoring of HAVS has always traditionally been viewed as a health & safety solution, but it can provide employers with so much more, particularly when it comes to improving tool allocation and workforce productivity.

Knowing which tools have been used and for how long during a project helps Project Managers refine requirements over time for certain projects. Creating efficiency in plant allocation can dramatically reduce unnecessary tool, servicing and transportation costs. Accurate reporting on tool trigger time usage and performance provides a clearer overview to help plan efficient tool allocation and service requirements.

Being able to monitor operator tool usage and work practices can provide a company with invaluable intelligence to improve working performance and project strategy, resulting in potentially shorter project delivery timescales and cost reductions. Paper-based systems can disrupt operators and require significant administration resource and cost. Also using a paper-based system typically over-estimates operator exposure by up to 4 times, resulting in lower productivity. More accurate data improves workforce practice resulting in potentially shorter project timescales and tool requirements.

And last but not least, improving access to tool usage can reduce the incidence of tool theft, particularly on larger sites.

Taking all these benefits into consideration, the case for more effective HAV monitoring is compelling. It's not just a case of mitigating against the risk of over-exposure, it's about providing organisations with information that can help deliver significant cost benefits whilst ensuring worker health and safety.

For more information on how the HAVmeter can solve your HAV management requirements, visit www.reactec.com

By Jim O'Hagan, Managing Director at Reactec.

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Llanelli Joint Burial Authority

Burials and Cemetery

Within Llanelli's Burials and Cemetery departments, there was a high percentage of workers using machine tools such as brush cutters and strimmers. Staff manually recorded their own levels of Hand Arm Vibration which were then passed to management each day to assess. However, the process was time-consuming and they wanted a more fool proof way of monitoring HAVS which was user-friendly at all levels.

The Burials and Cemetery departments as well as the Rural department turned to the HAVmeter in 2012 and are still using the system following a successful trial period.

Graham Williams, Cemetery Manager said; "The HAVmeter has provided the authority with a user friendly way of monitoring HAVS, helping us monitor levels in a more streamlined fashion ensuring our workers are not over exposed to vibration.

"The efficiency of our work force has also improved, producing clear operational benefits for the authority For example, where previously, it was commonplace for an operator to book six hours against strimming, I could see that the actual trigger time was significantly less than that at around 4 hours or less.

"We're also able to evaluate productivity by comparing operator trigger times working in the same area operating the same types of equipment. It's not surprising that when the operators were made aware of the availability of this information the average daily trigger times increased significantly.

"We now have a user friendly piece of equipment which is widely used and understood by our staff in monitoring the exposure levels of vibration."

Hyndburn Borough Council

Parks Department/Cemetery and Crematorium

Hyndburn Borough Council identified a gap in their health and safety at work systems, when they realised that they had no way of effectively monitoring HAV for operational staff, particularly those covering grounds and tree maintenance. In an attempt to address the issue, they adopted a simple routine of rotating work machinery, but no measurements were taken.

Realising that they needed to monitor rather than simply estimate exposure to HAV, the council turned to the HAVmeter.

Craig Haraben, Parks and Cemeteries Manager said: "HAVS management has been one of our key Health and Safety management priorities for the past 4 years"

"The HAVmeter has plugged a gap in our health and safety at work systems, allowing us to monitor staff HAV levels and help us amend any poor work practices. The HAVmeter system was very simple for the operatives to use and provided us with a cost effective monitoring solution.

"One of the main benefits of the system has been its ability to help us amend and identify which tools are used the most/least and which tools are of high vibration. This information in turn has helped us refine our buying decisions."

Perspectives on re-organisation

At a recent APSE Northern Ireland event looking at local government re-organisation, two councillors gave their views on the issues that will arise as the 11 new councils emerge in 2015.

Councillor Angus Carson from Ards Borough Council

When I first saw the title of this seminar, 'Local Government Reorganisation - Are we there yet', I thought it could be the shortest event in history, because we can answer the question very easily - no, we're not.

But if we ask 'Are we going to get there?', Yes, we are. It may not be pretty, but we will make it across the line in 2015 and embark on a new era in local government in Northern Ireland.

Of course some of us feel like we've been 'doing' local government reform for a long, long time. We certainly marched up to the top of the hill last time round and then had to march back down after yet another delay.

That was undoubtedly frustrating and it left some of us with mixed emotions about reform – ranging from those who are confident and comfortable with the process to those who are at best, sceptical and at worst, disengaged.

I don't believe, however, that any elected members, can afford to sit back and let reform 'be done to us'. We have a responsibility, I would go so far as to say a duty, to our residents and our staff to embrace reform and to lead the process.

Strong, decisive and strategic leadership has never been more important. If councillors can't provide leadership, then 2015 and subsequent years will be very, very messy and very damaging to our staff's morale and motivation.

So, in my view, as councillors we need to do three things:

1. Draw a clear line under the past – what's done is done.
2. Commit to a programme of planned transition work – and stick to it. And on that point, we have some very heavy lifting to do, appointing chief executives and senior management teams, addressing convergence issues, including key matters such as pay and terms and conditions, and deciding on service models, even temporarily. Because, remember, on day one of each new council, bins must be lifted, leisure centres must open, people must be buried and we cannot afford to drop the ball.

And the third and final thing we need to do:

3. Prepare for a brave, new local government world.

That last point is crucial. In the midst of managing transition, we can lose sight of the fact that this change is not just about geography and different boundaries. Yes, we will be working across larger areas and that may bring its own challenges, for example, in terms of new rural and urban splits in population. However, this change is also about broader service provision and new responsibilities.

Planning is, of course, 'the biggie' in terms of transferring functions, quickly followed by community planning. However, other functions will also transfer to local government and, while I have never believed in the summary description of council work as 'bins, bogs and burials' our traditional roles and in some cases, our traditional approaches and preoccupations, will have to change.

I'm not saying that we will no longer be concerned if Mrs Smith's bin isn't emptied or a public toilet isn't maintained to a high standard. What I am saying is that too often we get caught up in the small stuff and forget the big picture. We need also to focus on new issues:

- What kind of a new council do we want to be? High quality regardless of cost? Or low cost?
- What is our strategic direction going to be? What are our key services? Economic development? Leisure? Community? Tourism?
- What will our values be?
- And how are we going to use our resources to deliver these services? What service models will we develop?

This is our opportunity to start afresh, to do things differently, to introduce better ways of working and better models for delivering services. It is our opportunity to focus on the people we serve, our customers and community, and not on ourselves or our officers – as important as we and they are!

How often do we get the chance to influence the shape and development of a brand new organisation? I'll tell you, once in a generation at most.

So, I will simply say in summary to all my councillor colleagues across Northern Ireland: don't carp and complain about reform, roll up your sleeves and grasp the opportunity. Lead by example and you will lead your new council to success.

Councillor Gareth Sharvin from Down District Council

Having only been a councillor for a short time, less than 2 years, I come with a different perspective from some of my councillor colleagues with many years of service in our councils. Nonetheless I can see some tough issues on the horizon. Many of those issues are relevant to my own area where Down Council and Newry and Mourne Council look to come together. Down is a very rural area with three main towns and a number of villages and hamlets whilst Newry dominates our neighbouring council. These geographical differences are amongst the first we need to consider and how we address different needs across our new areas. Equally we need to look at the practicalities of delivering services – do we have adequate number of vehicles and equipment, are they the right vehicles for the job and do we have the right staff with the right skills. As a group of councillors are we ready to embrace the political changes that will emerge as power moves between different political parties.

On a wider point, the provision of funding to support the re-organisation process will help inject more momentum into transition teams to deliver on the change and transition responsibilities with local transition committees being put on a statutory footing after regulations are considered and approved by the assembly. They will be expected to translate the relevant tasks into local implementation plans and

take these forward at cluster levels. However I for one am not convinced that the funding made available for the shadow councils, capacity building, councillor severance schemes, new ICT and rates convergence will be adequate to see us through to the new councils.

Clearly councillors will have to take on a more strategic role to match the new scale of the councils which I expect will also mean less of a hands-on approach at the operational level. The size of the new authorities will also have an impact on the councillor-officer relationship and on the role of the chief executive as the nature of the organisation and its functions change and develop.

Furthermore the transition phase will mean joint working with new councillors in a context we are not used to, followed by a further phase of change as the new authority looks to start work, settle down and, no doubt, endure some teething trouble.

But change and development are natural and something we have been talking about with regard to local government for a long time, so we can hardly say we didn't see this coming. As a relatively new elected member I can see a bright future for councillors and local people under the emerging councils and I look forward to getting stuck into the hard work that will make them happen.

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A forward focus on APSE Scotland's fleet, waste and grounds services seminar 2013



kindly sponsored by Zero Waste Scotland

The APSE Scotland 'Aviemore' event is now the principal trade show in Scotland for fleet, waste and grounds services but as well as a huge outdoor and indoor trade exhibition delegates will debate the key issues for the sector in Scotland

The on-going crisis in the Eurozone and the recent bail-out package for Cyprus is a stark reminder to the UK that the Eurozone economies are not yet out of the woods. Whilst the beaches of Cyprus may be a big contrast to snowy peaks of Aviemore the impact of the Eurozone is surprisingly similar. The public sector is facing the on-going austerity programme introduced across Europe with Governments cutting back on public sector spending. The fleet, waste and grounds services are certainly not exempt from the programme of austerity.

So with less money to spend councils need to get more for less, stop providing some services or provide those services to a lesser standard or frequency. Unsurprising then the theme of this year's Aviemore event is 'A vision for the future'.

'A vision for the future' will explore how Scotland's local authority services in the field of fleet, transport, street scene and grounds maintenance can respond to the on-going budget pressures. Continuing to simply do what they have always done is not a realistic option so the seminar will look at innovative new practices, how fleet services can support other council services and drive efficiencies and of course better procurement of the fleet and equipment needed to deliver good local services in the sector.

So what is it that strapped-for-cash councils are trying to do? APSE has worked with a number of local authorities that are looking at their current budget situation as a means to develop a programme of service transformation, using tools and techniques, such as demand management, and integrating new policy ideas, such as resource efficiency, councils are trying to drive efficiencies through every stage of their operations. Whether this is refuse collection services which need to deliver on fuel efficiencies through better fleet and better driver training, or help their council achieve stringent targets for carbon reduction and reducing waste to landfill, integration of efficiency across the service will help councils meet their budget. And many services face similar challenges for example in grounds maintenance there is always the temptation to compromise on the quality or the

frequency of the services by assuming that it is a 'non-essential' service but as most grounds managers will testify reducing quality in the short-term can often have underlying consequences for the longer term. So instead APSE is seeing councils looking at better design, better planning of public-spaces and even behaviour change on the part of service users to help maintain good public realm, without of course increasing costs beyond those set in tight budgets. Right across frontline services the pressure is on but solutions are being sought.

With budgets under pressure councils are also demanding better deals from their suppliers. Fleet that can incorporate new innovations that save time, money or both will be popular amongst local authority purchasers as they seek to reduce fuel spend, maintenance costs, and down-time. Client local councils are also determined to find ways to support a greener local agenda; that means using plant, equipment, new technologies and new techniques, that minimise or eliminate waste from operations or provides effective recycling opportunities. And yes they also want cheaper goods – but not cheap goods; authorities are increasingly looking towards consortia purchasing arrangements to see where volume purchasing can drive savings. Although the public sector will always seek to pay a fair price for its goods and services those supplying the sector will see demands increased to generate added value from goods and services. Councils simply want 'more bang for the public buck' in times of austerity.

But with all the talk of doom and gloom on budgets it is important not to forget the need to invest in the future of the service that goes beyond investing in plant and equipment. APSE will launch its new 'Rising Stars' awards to recognise the talent amongst upcoming service managers and officers. It is these new managers that will take forward the 'vision for the future'. APSE's believes that the Aviemore event provides an ideal backdrop to celebrate the new industry talent upon which the future of local public services depends.

Contact: Louise McMillan is the acting principal advisor for APSE Scotland; for details contact Louise on lmcmillan@apse.org.uk

Advertisement feature



Cut your marketing spend and make money!



A leading vehicle graphics company is encouraging Local Authorities to make the most of the marketing opportunities offered by their refuse fleets and save money while communicating effectively with their residents.

Lawrence Craig from Spedian, the company behind the first 'invisible frame' signage for vehicles, is encouraging Local Authorities to recognise the benefits of clear, clean and easy-to-change signage on refuse vehicles – one of the best-value marketing opportunities available to councils.

He said: "All councils have many key messages to get across to their residents. With budgets being squeezed, perhaps conventional 'bought' media such as local radio, bus-backs, leaflets and poster sites are less affordable. We're encouraging councils to look to their fleets of vehicles as perfect platforms for eye-catching and effective mobile marketing across all their communities with the added potential of generating third party revenue."

He continued: "Of course, the medium has to be of high quality as does the message."

The Spedian System is the only vehicle signage system with invisible frames which is guaranteed to stay as clean as the vehicle and can be changed as often as required.

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Spedian, which provides signage across the UK, Europe and USA and names Coca Cola and McDonalds amongst its customers, developed the Spedian System to be cheaper, lighter and more easily maintained than any other systems on the market.

It is more cost-effective in use too; a Spedian System for a 28 foot van will weigh only 800gms and is very low profile, minimising impact on fuel consumption.

Spedian launched its revenue generation model at LARAC, where it was well received.

The Spedian System is adaptable to all shapes and sizes of vehicle. The system was developed in conjunction with 3M offering truck graphics which require no bolts, rivets, screws or welds.





Shedding light on good procurement

Andy Clark, street lighting manager at Denbighshire County Council describes how twenty eight local authorities have joined forces to make resources for highway lighting go further.



Finding new ways of working and making limited budgets stretch further is of paramount importance if public services are to be maintained.

This principle has seen twenty eight local authorities come together in a joint highway lighting procurement initiative led by Denbighshire County Council. We are pleased to report that the All Wales and AGMA Highway Lighting Procurement Partnership was recently short listed in Procurement Collaboration category of the Welsh National Procurement Awards 2013.

What is now a far-reaching project was aided at the outset by an approach to APSE, whose network queries system enables councils to raise questions with others nationwide in order to learn from each other. In 2007 Denbighshire County Council led on a collaborative procurement exercise on behalf of the six North Wales local authorities to establish a

framework agreement for the supply of highway lighting materials. This project produced a range of significant benefits to the partners and Denbighshire was asked to lead on an All Wales agreement in 2011.

During the lifetime of the original agreement we had also received requests from a number of English authorities, who asked if they could also join the agreement if we were to establish a new framework. A project group led by senior procurement officer, Stuart Andrews, and myself, under the guidance of strategic procurement manager for Denbighshire, Arwel Staples, was established to set the agreement up. The intention of the group was to develop an agreement for the supply of the full range of lighting materials and led to the requirement being advertised in OJEU with eleven different "Lots" covering all materials procured for highway lighting. The agreement was advertised as being for a period of four years with an estimated value of £40m. The agreement was also advertised as having twenty eight partner authorities (located throughout Wales and within the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities region, including AGMA associate members in the North West of England) who all expressed an interest in using the framework when it was established. The key aim was introducing improvements to service delivery and considering new initiatives to facilitate further efficiencies.

This tender process was undertaken using the Proactis e-Sourcing system used by Denbighshire County Council. This process brought significant benefits to the project where evaluation could be done remotely by users. Both buyers and suppliers were able to upload documents to the system and the system is fully secure and transparent.

Collaboration between such a large numbers of authorities on a procurement exercise of this size was not necessarily an easy task. A huge amount of time

was spent in getting the specification drafted and agreed due to the numerous requirements of the various authorities involved. We also had to overcome the resistance to change from certain manufacturers' products to other more cost effective ones. A fear of collaboration also had to be addressed as most of the partners had not entered into such a large project previously.

The hard work as been well worth it, though, as a significant number of benefits have been generated in terms of cashable and non-cashable savings, process and operational changes to working practices. These include an average 14% reduction in material costs to date, which could generate possible savings in the region over £5m over the lifetime of the agreement. Another benefit is that we now have greater control of prices due to the terms and conditions of the agreement fixing prices at a maximum allowed level for longer periods, which allows engineers to plan their budgets for longer periods.

The rewards are not just financial. Setting up the framework has been a benefit through the sharing of experiences of both technical and procurement officers across the region. There is now an excellent network of support both technically and commercially. The collaboration provides scope for the group of authorities to continually evaluate and review operations to identify and exploit new and more efficient ways of working.

This is a whole new approach to procurement and we believe it will enable the authorities involved to stretch their diminishing budgets further while also transferring knowledge and skills. It is a collaborative way of working, which we believe could be applied to other services and other councils.

Contact: andy.clark@denbighshire.gov.uk

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Building an In House improvement system

Harrow Council is among the fastest improving local authorities in the country. It won Best Achieving Council at the MJ awards in 2011, is one of the safest London boroughs and has a recycling rate of 50%. Over the last three years staff satisfaction levels have shot up from 50 per cent to 63 per cent, and sickness levels have gone down by 30 per cent. Environment Services has in particular seen a huge turnaround in achievements, due mostly to a new in-house improvement system. Cllr Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety, explains how the department got back on the track to success.

Back in 2007, we had the lowest Comprehensive Performance Assessment score in London, with a rating of just two stars. Following a string of overspends, the authority's reserves fell to £1.3million. Morale amongst staff was at a low, and there was a high level of staff sickness. To top all this off, resident satisfaction levels were amongst the lowest in London and the 35,000 refuse complaints we had that year caused a meltdown of the call centre. Harrow was described by the Audit Commission as "stagnant".

So how did Harrow's Environment Services transform? We took it back to basics and did our research. We held focus groups with residents, staff and young people and consulted 1,000 residents. Our findings were very interesting. There was strong support for residents to become volunteers, with 68 per cent of them willing to help elderly neighbours. One third said they would like to help with community clean up events and 45 per cent said that they would join their neighbours to keep their areas clean. Some residents felt that our recycling system was too complicated and rules on contamination lacked flexibility.

We invested £2m in the council's environment services as part of the council's wider transformation programme. We wanted to give a boost to recycling in Harrow, but we wanted to keep it simple. After consultation and consideration of the feedback we received, we settled on a system of three wheeled bins for the 70,000 households in the borough – a brown bin for food and garden waste, a blue bin for recyclable waste and a green bin for residual waste. Against the flow of the hostile national

press we went for an alternate weekly collection of the recycling and residual waste bins, but kept a weekly collection of the potentially smelly food and garden waste. We made recycling compulsory but we have succeeded by persuasion and never embarked on enforcement.

At the council, changing to a paperless office, with electronic records, allowed for all sorts of gains to be made. Modern waste services are significantly more complex and need improved management tools to plan and manage. Crayons and a paper map are not up to the task anymore.

In 2009, Harrow's strategic change partner, Capita, designed a new and improved waste management system for crews, our call centre Access Harrow and managers. The system wirelessly connects waste collection crews and Access Harrow in real time. Each lorry cab has a touch-screen computer with a GPS link. Crews log various events on their rounds, for example when they start and finish collecting in a specific road or if they encounter un-collectable bins. They can even upload pictures of problem areas or contaminated bins, which are sent wirelessly to the central depot and Access Harrow within four minutes.

If a resident calls to say a bin has not been collected, Access Harrow pulls up a user-friendly screen with information showing if the street's collection is completed and if there were any contaminated bins reported. Also on view is the resident's 'history' with the council, i.e. previous calls, photos of missed bins, and letters sent out about recycling.

With the new system, customer assistants are resolving 95% of queries first time, meaning a better service for residents. It is very simple to see if it's a genuinely overlooked bin – the street will be logged as 'complete' and the resident's bin will not be reported as contaminated. In this case, the assistant can correct the error by issuing an electronic 'missed bin' ticket to the crew – often before the vehicle has even left the road – and they can return to collect.

Electronic records also mean managers know at any given moment where all the lorries are, plus the amount of fuel used, time taken, streets completed, rubbish collected and contamination levels. Residents can check online why their bin wasn't collected, and could soon receive an automatic text or call to let them know if their bin was contaminated.

We can identify which people are not recycling or are using the wrong bins. We can then carry out door knocking campaigns, to deliver the message accurately. Harrow is a diverse borough with many different languages spoken and the new system also helps identify where the message needs to be translated. English may not be a first language and residents might therefore be missing the information on how to recycle. By dealing with any language barriers we are helping residents to get the correct information.

Harrow Council was then able to roll out similar technology into other public realm departments, like park and street cleansing. Staff were given mobile devices which they would receive their work schedule on. They could then record what work was done and when, and managers would be able to easily identify what progress had been made. The success of this allowed the council to measure service performance and drive down costs.

The success of these innovations had led Harrow Council to become the first local authority in the country to use cutting-edge technology to fully merge on-street based environmental services – saving £1.8million over the next two years

The Public Realm Integrated Service Model (PRISM) will bring together Community Safety Services, Highways, and Public Realm Services such as street cleaning, in a new and improved environmental service underpinned by innovative technology. The technology implemented through PRISM will include a handheld device that enables council teams to multi-task across a broad range of on-street services including checking potholes, parking enforcement, basic trading standard spot-checks, broken street lighting, and flytipping. The model removes barriers which currently exist between the three service areas and will enable on-street council staff to become the 'eyes and ears' of the Council by working across the entire division rather than one specific area. When problems are identified the information will be sent digitally from the handheld device to specialist council staff to resolve. It means skills and expertise will be coordinated in a much more targeted way.

As a result of these innovations, we have happier residents and a much improved service. We are reaping the benefits in the form of a better customer satisfaction rate and a cleaner, greener borough, which will continue long into the future.

Contact: For more information contact:
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Busting the myths of 'elf and safety'

From banning jubilee bunting to three-legged fun races at a school sports day 'elf and safety' takes on a mythical quality in the press which loves to berate local councils but what is the reality behind health and safety myths and local authority activities?

Local authority managers provide a plethora of frontline services and managing health and safety risks across such diverse public services presents major challenges. Senior managers responsible for decision-making in local councils have to achieve a balance between the interests of the community, their staff and the local authority. It is no easy task in a climate where there is the ever-present threat of litigation and as some would argue a 'claims-culture', insurance considerations and civil liberties, which thwart the efforts of local communities to get on and do things without undue interference from, as the media would have it, council bureaucrats.

But what is the reality of health and safety laws? Well the law itself is clear - a proportionate approach is needed and this is the approach that many local authorities are already keen to take. Rather than waste resources and effort worrying unduly about low risk activities taking a more proportionate risk allows resources to be freed up to concentrate on those areas where more serious risks can be identified and addressed. Where Councils get this right, the local community reaps the benefits of innovative and enabling activities. This requires a balanced approach to risk, steering a middle path between an unnecessary policy of risk aversion at one extreme, and an inability to identify and address genuine risks at the other.

Tackling the myths is also vital and it is perhaps both timely and helpful that the HSE has set up a Myth Busters Challenge Panel. The Panel aims to tackle disproportionate approaches to risk and so far the panel has responded to over 150 cases. Many of these involve local authority decisions and many are based on media stories ridiculing action taken in the name of health and safety.

The HSE wants to see senior managers in local authorities and across public services in general to take a stronger lead in promoting a culture of sensible, proportionate health and safety decision-making across their authorities; and learning from the Myth Busters Challenge Panel is one way in which this can be done. HSE has analysed the first cases to help managers challenge over-the-top decisions that take attention away from the real aim of health and safety law which is about managing risk proportionately.

The HSE has distilled its main findings into four useful 'top tips' to challenge over-zealous or inappropriate applications of health and safety law:-

- ♦ Find out if it really is a health and safety concern
- ♦ Look for health and safety solutions that help you deliver your services – not for health and safety obstacles to stop them
- ♦ Ensure that all your health and safety precautions pass the test of being sensible and proportionate
- ♦ Communicate all your risk management decisions clearly and honestly

Whilst health and safety regulations remain important the aim remains no more and no less than to protect staff and members of the public affected by significant risks created by work activities. Perhaps a useful message for local media to take on board as well!

To visit the latest Myth Buster Cases visit: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/>

Contact: mbaines@apse.org.uk

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Advertisement feature

East Renfrewshire Council uses TomTom to reduce their Fleet CO2 Emissions

East Renfrewshire Council has joined the growing number of Public Sector organisations to deploy TomTom Business Solutions Telematics technology, supplied by Vtec Solutions Ltd to measure their fleets CO2 emissions.

WORKsmart™-Eco monitors and tracks driving styles across the fleet, giving East Renfrewshire Transport team, headed by Gordon Moffatt, Transport Manager the insight needed to identify those vehicles which are damaging the environment and costly to the Council.

Andrew Corry, Head of Environmental Services, Roads and Transport for East Renfrewshire Council commented "Following a recent tender process, East Renfrewshire Council requested Vtec Solutions to deploy the TomTom Telematics system in December 2012. The Council have been hugely impressed with the quality of data being received and the ease of use of the system itself". Gordon Moffatt, Transport Manger added "I am particularly

interested in monitoring our fleet's emissions in line with our carbon reduction commitments. The WORKsmart™-Eco system allows me to very easily monitor the carbon foot print, miles per gallon and time that the vehicles spend needlessly idling".

Other Public Sector organisations utilising TomTom Technology include, West Dunbartonshire Council, Fife Council, Falkirk Council, Perth and Kinross Council, Scottish Borders Council, Chesterfield Council, SEPA as well as NHS Ayrshire and Arran. Vtec Solutions will soon be deploying TomTom Solutions throughout the Inverclyde Council fleet.

Energy Saving Trust Scotland currently offers heavily reduced FuelGood driver training sessions for £10 + VAT per driver (for more details call 0800 512 012). If fully

implemented, the techniques from the training can result in a fuel consumption saving of 15% and annual cost savings of £200-£250 for the average driver. Currently they are monitoring the progress of training provided to a number of Scottish Councils via the internet based TomTom WEBFLEET® fleet management solution, as provided by Vtec Solutions.

Evidence shows that a stable, fluid driving style is more fuel-efficient and eco-friendly than speeding or stop-start driving in heavy traffic. WORKsmart™-Eco delivers information on the driving style, speed, carbon footprint and idle time of every vehicle you have on the road, straight to your PC. With such detailed information to hand, you can see at a glance what needs to improve. You can then develop a green driving policy for your company, setting out the advice and guidance your drivers need to be more fuel-conscious on the road. It will also help in keeping with the safety of drivers, by encouraging a driving style that reduces their exposure to risk. Monitor your progress TomTom WEBFLEET® uses the mileage and fuel consumption data for each car, van or truck to calculate the carbon footprint of individual vehicles and the entire fleet. The information can be viewed in real time as a KPI on the WEBFLEET® dashboard. You can then compare vehicles according to their fuel efficiency, idle time and fuel wastage. As a result organisations can also set targets for each KPI and measure individuals or teams against them, to ensure everyone's doing their bit for the environment.

To find out how Vtec Solutions can assist in reducing your fleets CO2 emissions contact us on 0845 603 7832, email vtec@vtecsolutions.co.uk or visit our website at www.vtecsolutions.co.uk





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Report back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events on behalf of our members

March and April proved busy months for APSE with a range of conferences, meetings and advocacy activity on behalf of APSE members.

England

Space waste

APSE hosted an event on waste at the National Space Centre Leicester on 27 March. A discussion on the value of joint and flexible procurement of fleet was hosted by Carl Miller of Lincolnshire Council. Other speakers included Webaspx on route optimisation and Kevin Pegg, of Blaby Council on recycling WEEE products.

Central regions AGM will be held in June on municipal entrepreneurship. Contact Rob Bailey for details on rbailey@apse.org.uk

Resource efficiency

Parliament was the backdrop for the launch of APSE's latest research on 'Resource Efficiency' a new publication developed in association with leading green author Philip Monaghan. The event on the 18th April was well attended with delegates hearing contributions from a panel of speakers including an opening presentation from Alan Whitehead MP and from the report author Philip Monaghan.

On the circuit...

APSE chief executive Paul O'Brien attended the PPMA conference in Bristol on 18 April

The 19 March saw APSE national chair Cllr John Kerr Brown attend the Centre for Public Scrutiny tenth anniversary lecture on the state of democratic accountability held at LGA House London

APSE's strategic forum on the environment and sustainability was hosted by Rochdale council Leader Cllr Colin Lambert on 25 March within Rochdale alongside chief executive Jim Taylor.

APSE chief executive Paul O'Brien attended the public sector 100 event with cost sector catering in London on 4 April

Co-production

The TUC hosted an event on Co-Production on 10 April with speakers including APSE chief executive Paul O'Brien, Rick Muir of IPPR and Heather Wakefield of UNISON debating the concept and practicalities of co-production.

United we stand

APSE delegates at the national Parks seminar 2013 were treated to an insight into the grounds maintenance arrangements for the premier champions from Sir Alex Fergusons Groundsman Tony Sinclair who outlined to Parks delegates his hints and tips on getting a perfect pitch.

Beautiful south

The new south / south west service delivery models group was held in Bristol on 7 March with speakers from both South Gloucestershire Council and the London Borough of Lambeth with the new Sports and Leisure group held at Oxford City Council with Vision Redbridge.

Waterloo

The Queen Street Neighbourhood Centre at Waterloo will host an Innovation Seminar on 23 May for the South and South West region

and will incorporate the regional AGM 2013. For details contact Helen Burkhalter on hburkhalter@apse.org.uk

Knowsley Knowledge Share

Knowsley Council hosted an APSE event on trading and charging with over 100 delegates attending from local councils throughout APSE's northern region sharing knowledge and ideas on income generation.

Wales

Building up knowledge

APSE Wales hosted a Building Maintenance group on 21 March at Llanrindodwells with speakers exploring the operational delivery issues in building maintenance services.

Transformation Wales

APSE Wales will host two events on service transformation with discussions on 24 April held in Neath and again in Flintshire on 25 April. For details contact Debbie Johns on djohns@apse.org.uk

Dishing up changes

APSE Wales will host a discussion for soft facilities management in catering and cleaning on 30 April at Llanrindodwells to explore the future of performance management and FM services in a Welsh context. Contact Djohns@apse.org.uk for more details

Scotland

Fleeting Scotland

Aviemore will once again host the APSE Scotland Fleet, waste and grounds seminar 2013, as featured in this edition of direct news. The seminar is kindly sponsored by Zero Waste Scotland

Party lines

APSE Scotland attended the labour party conference in April hosted at Inverness and also attended the SNP conference on 22-24 March also at Inverness. The Liberal Democrat conference hosted in Dundee was on 15 -16 March and COSLA at St Andrews on 7-8 March all provided opportunities to promote APSE's services and research programme to delegates.

Northern Ireland

The Local Government (NI) Awards winners announced

The winners of the Local Government (NI) Awards were announced at Derry / Londonderry with APSE sponsoring the Best local authority service team which was awarded to Antrim Borough Councils Customer Service Team. The team were presented with their award by presenter and broadcaster Sarah Travers.

Local government reorganisation

The most recent APSE Northern Ireland meeting was held in Down Civic Centre to discuss progress with local government reorganisation. Key note speaker Linda MacHugh, director from the local government policy division of the DoE Northern Ireland Assembly, spoke about progress, the legislative schedule, funding and the responsibility on local councils to move the agenda forward

Advertisement feature

Riverside Truck Rental.

More than Truck Rental.....

Colin McMorine is General Manager at Riverside Truck Rental Scotland, at Clark Way on the Bellshill Industrial Estate in North Lanarkshire. "We acquired the facility in January of 2012, and it is great for us and our future growth plans". "We have a seventeen bay workshop and we are just commissioning three ovens and paint bays. This gives us the capacity we need to deliver all of the familiar RTR services to the Scottish market, from what is probably the best possible location for our kind of operation anywhere in Scotland."

Riverside Truck Rental was established in 1996 and in 2006 was acquired by its shareholders, led by Sid Sadique who had previously managed sixty-five fleet depots up and down the country as Fleet and Pre-Treatment Director at Biffa.

"RTR was established to provide vehicles and plant on long term contract hire to private sector companies, central and local government. As local authority budgets tighten, it has become clear that there was an ever-growing need for councils to have access to a wide range of vehicles on a more flexible basis than direct ownership. Today, our fleet includes a full range of waste handling trucks, large plant, commercial vehicles, cars, heavy plant and other modes of equipment. Since 1996 we have grown our business by demonstrating a thorough understanding of local authority operations, the vehicles they use and the unique demands placed on those vehicles in the provision of statutory and non-statutory services." "We understand completely the challenges that go 'hand in hand' with mixed vehicle fleet operations and vehicle supply"

"So much so, in fact, that we have now taken on many total fleet management contracts for councils up and down the country".

"All of the directors at Riverside come from within the industry, so they all understand how the business works. Workshops, fleet management, fleet maintenance are all key areas of expertise for the RTR Management team."

"In Scotland, We are already working with virtually all the local authorities and many large commercial operations on a spot-rental and contract hire basis, but we are much more than simply a rental operation, as we offer all of the fleet and workshop management services that the company already delivers to councils all over England.

We already maintain all of Viridor's vehicles in Scotland, and we work with a number of other private sector companies. We specialise in municipal equipment on rental, but on the contract and maintenance side we supply a complete range of vehicles and plant including; cars, vans, trucks and trailers. We recently delivered two sixty-ton dump-trucks on contract with Viridor.

Our new body shop facility is equipped with 2 commercial (22 metre) and one car paint bays, dealing with Insurance companies and accident management companies, in addition to end user fleets as well.

We are probably the biggest and best-equipped RTR site in the UK, and we have room to grow here. And that is my intention.

We want Riverside Truck Rental Ltd to be recognised as the number one in this business in Scotland. We have the people, the facilities, and the determination, and we are part of one of the strongest companies in the specialist vehicle provision market.



Events diary

Date	Event	Venue
May 7 – 10	Scottish Fleet, waste & grounds seminar	Aviemore ●
May 13	Green Deal & the new ECO	Leeds ●
May 15	Cemeteries & Crematoria Supervisory Skills	London ●
May 15	Soft FM	Giffnock ●
May 16	Handling Difficult Conversations with Frontline Staff	Glasgow ●
22 May	Managing Contractors Safely	Glasgow ●
23 May	One day Innovation and Entrepreneurship Seminar	London ●
23 May	APSE South/South West AGM	London ●
May 31	Scottish Annual General Meeting	Hamilton ●
4 June	Handling Difficult Conversations with Frontline	Manchester ●
5 June	Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs - Supervisory Skills	Liverpool ●
11 June	Health & Safety in Waste & Environmental Services	Glasgow ●
12 June	Transport Advisory Group	Manchester Town Hall ●
12 June	Supervisory skills for the Building maintenance and repairs sector	Glasgow ●
June 20	Green Deal & the new ECO	Leeds ●
19 June	Parks & Ground Maintenance Advisory Group	Manchester Town Hall ●
24 June	Event Management	Stafford ●
June 25	Highways and Street Lighting	Manchester Town Hall ●
June 26	Building Maintenance Advisory Group	Manchester Town Hall ●
June 26	Leisure, sports and culture - supervisory skills for team leaders	Sefton ●
June 28	Catering Advisory Group	Manchester Town Hall ●
June 28	H&S in leisure centres	Dundee ●
July 2	Sports and Leisure advisory group	Manchester Town Hall ●
July 4	Building Cleaning Advisory Group	Manchester Town Hall ●

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