



# direct news

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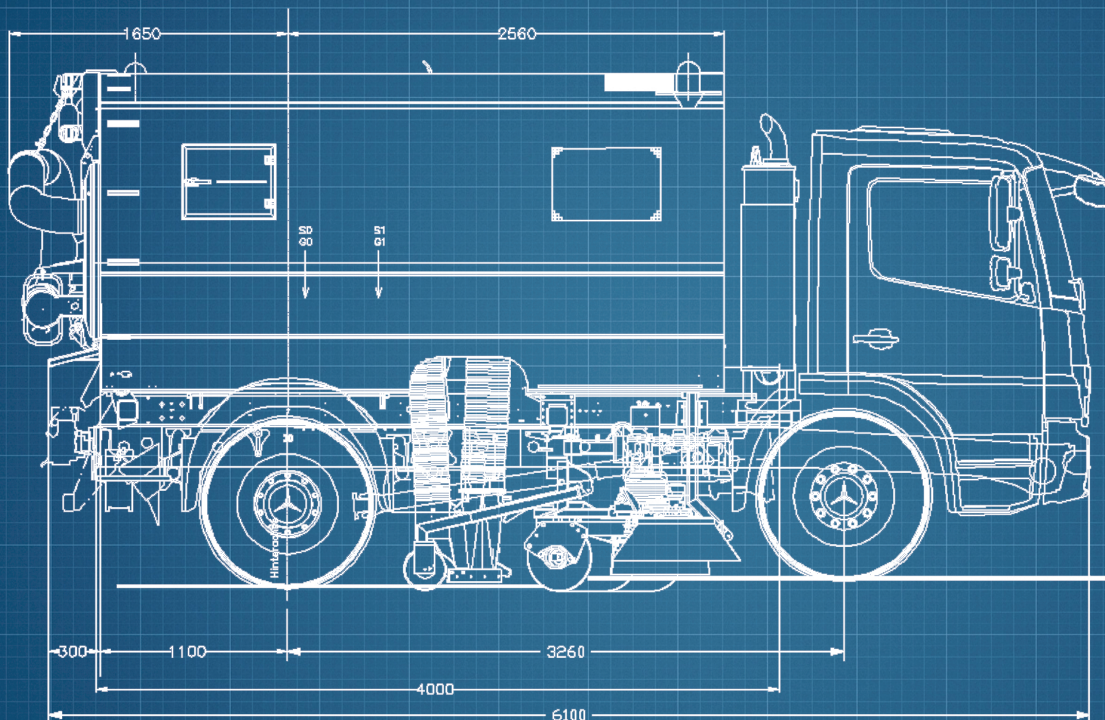
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Solutions

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A photograph of a residential construction site. In the foreground, there is a dirt area with some construction materials and a metal barrier. In the middle ground, several two-story brick houses are under construction, with extensive scaffolding and rebar visible. A yellow crane is positioned on the left side of the site. The background shows a cloudy sky.

# How does the Housing White Paper affect you?

# The blueprint for...



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## Councillor Van Coulter

**17 April 1959 – 13 March 2017**

It is with great sadness that we announce APSE's National Chair, Cllr Van Coulter, passed away on Monday 13 March 2017, in his home city of Oxford, at only 57 years of age.

Van's early life was in Northern Ireland with his loving parents and brother, and so Van was delighted when APSE hosted its annual seminar in 2016 in Derry/Londonderry; it was very fitting that in Northern Ireland, the place he fondly regarded as 'home' he became APSE's National Chair. He succeeded Cllr Martin Reilly, who handed over the reins whilst assuring APSE's delegates that they would be *'in safe hands with Van at the helm of APSE'*.

Van's early life shaped a determined character who firmly believed in the value of education, and that everyone in life deserved a second chance; and it was a second chance that saw Van gain a First in Politics and Economics, graduating in 2010 from Ruskin College, Oxford. Indeed his experience as a mature student made him a perfect match for a role he truly relished as a Governing Executive Member at Ruskin, where he collaborated to fulfil the Ruskin vision of a *'A society where everyone has access to quality education regardless of their background, and the opportunity to fulfil their potential'*. These were not just words to Van but the very essence of his passion for everyone to be able to reach their potential.

Tackling inequality and promoting social justice were hugely important to Van and he was well known for his passion for promoting affordable and social housing solutions, discoursing at a national level by telling of the housing crisis in the City of Oxford and what he and colleagues on the Council were doing about this.

As an avid green campaigner, Van was a driving force towards APSE's commitment to develop APSE Energy, recognising the role of municipal energy as both an opportunity to place renewable energy at the heart of local economies and encouraging the switch to a low carbon economy. This meant as National Chair the secretariat had something of a headache - Van didn't just talk the talk, he walked the walk, quite literally. Van's travel arrangements were legendary, insisting on using his Oxford bus ticket to maximum effect and making public transport links and connections in his bid to avoid increasing his carbon footprint. If there was a way to get there by public transport Van knew it (and very soon so did all of the APSE secretariat!)

As a dedicated ward councillor for Barton and Sandhills, Van made it his business to serve his constituents. In spite of his role as National Chair, and also Chair of APSE's Environment and Sustainability Strategic Forum, Van was regarded as a stalwart councillor; a true local champion who gladly combined his ward role with sitting on numerous committees for Oxford City Council.

Van will be remembered by many in our APSE family for his quirky sense of humour and unassuming nature; he was willing to go that extra mile to welcome people to the many APSE events and meetings which he chaired, offering the same grace and good nature to the person who served him a coffee as to a Government Minister. The loss of such a gentleman is felt acutely by APSE but our loss is incomparable to that which must be felt by his family and in particular his dad, Tom, and his son Daniel, of whom he was immensely proud. Dan was the person he spoke often of, and he fondly reminisced about childhood antics with a warmth that only a Father can truly portray.

Van you will be missed by all but, as they say, 'thank you for the memories'.

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## Editorial

### Housing need: Time for genuine localism?

It was not so long ago that housing was such an important national issue that political parties across the spectrum made it their number one election issue, openly competing on who could build the most new homes that would make Britain fit for its Second World War heroes. The success of the home building programme was, in no small part, down to the role of local councils. In the early 1950s, local councils built almost 250,000 homes, with the private sector building around half of that number. By the early 1980s, council builds had dropped to the tens of thousands and all but disappeared through the 1990s onwards. The private sector growth in new build leapt in the mid-1980s to a record peak, building over 200,000 homes, yet council builds had all but disappeared.

It is now clear, in hindsight, that reliance upon one sector in the housing marketplace would never be enough to ensure the delivery of the numbers and mix of new homes required to meet demand. It has since been recognised that the profit driven housing market may have actually created the conditions whereby building new homes for social rent became unattractive to investors. Moreover, the lack of social homes for rent has forced rental costs up with private landlords, which in many cases has led to further burdens on the welfare bill in the form of housing benefit payments.

In this context, the Housing White Paper is a refreshingly honest admission that the housing market is in crisis. It is also welcome that the Minister has clearly referenced local councils as part of the solution to delivering new homes, particularly for social rent. This is an area where APSE has been campaigning for many years, to allow the development of bespoke solutions. However, the Yin and Yang of political policy making means that alongside a role for local councils in delivering new homes is a suggestion that wholly owned local authority housing companies should be fettered by central diktat from Westminster on what terms and conditions apply to tenancies and issues of Right to Buy. Whilst no one is arguing against decent tenancies and routes to enable tenants to move into purchasing a home, this should be determined locally. Westminster can't claim to be localist and then impose the wishes of central government on these innovative models that are already delivering the new homes so desperately needed.

*Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive*



# The Housing White Paper

*We take a look at the new Housing White Paper and what it means for local authorities.*

In introducing the Housing White Paper to Parliament, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government reported that the issues in the housing market are one of the biggest barriers to social progress in the country.

Our current supply of quality, affordable housing is not meeting demand. Relative to population size, Britain has had Western Europe's lowest rate of house building for three decades. To meet demand, between 225,000 and 275,000 homes need to be delivered every year. The White Paper, published on 7 February 2017, sets out the Government's proposals to increase the number of homes and introduce measures to improve the affordability and security for people to buy and rent property.

These proposals are the Government's response to the issues, and are designed to remove the barriers to house building, get more houses built in the right places, and meet the needs of local communities. Each of the four chapters set out their proposals and provide details of areas of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that are part of the consultation associated with the White Paper.

## **Planning for the right homes in the right places**

The White Paper emphasises the role of the local planning authority and the community, setting out the need for councils to play an active part in meeting the Government target of building 250,000 homes each year. The White Paper is calling for the local planning authorities to take the lead, be ambitious and demonstrate strong leadership. However, the Government reports that, to date, only a third of local planning authorities have an adopted plan in place, leaving communities vulnerable to unplanned development.

## **Building homes faster**

As the gap in demand for housing and the rate of delivery continues to widen, the Housing White Paper addresses the need to deliver homes faster in order to meet the well-published target of 250,000 homes per year. The methods proposed to achieve this include boosting capacity in the market, providing more certainty for local communities and councils, and looking at the appeals process.

## **Diversifying the market**

This chapter of the White Paper sets out how new providers will be supported to achieve the development targets, including support for housing associations and local authorities to play an active role in delivering houses themselves.

Innovation is a strong theme of the document and the creation of joint ventures and Local Development Corporations are welcomed to enable innovative developments of mixed tenure housing sites.

## **Helping people now**

The measures proposed to fix the broken housing market are long term solutions. The 'Helping People Now' chapter outlines support that can be provided immediately. These include; continued support for people to buy their own homes with existing products such as Help to Buy and Starter Homes; investment in the Affordable Homes Programme; and introducing further measures in a bid to prevent homelessness.

There is also an intention to amend the NPPF to ensure that a minimum of 10% affordable home ownership units are included in site development plans and it will be mandated that brownfield site developments will contain a higher proportion of starter homes.

## **Where to next?**

APSE will be responding to the White Paper and consulting with our member councils. APSE is keen to ensure that councils are placed at the heart of delivering new homes that are genuinely affordable, and we believe the role of councils will be pivotal in delivering new homes for social rent. Make sure you keep updated by checking our website for housing briefings and signing up to our housing advisory group. Contact Vickie Hacking to add your comments to APSE's White Paper response.

---

*Vickie Hacking is the APSE Principal Advisor for Housing and Building Maintenance. Contact her on [vhacking@apse.org.uk](mailto:vhacking@apse.org.uk) or call 0161 772 1810.*

# Six steps to success in Luton

*Trevor Holden, Chief Executive of Luton Council, explains how the Council changed strategic focus last year with the Luton Investment Framework (LIF), which is now making a positive, tangible difference to the area.*

Luton is changing at a remarkable pace. We are working with partners to create a positive climate for inward investment and are on schedule to secure investment to transform the town and create thousands of quality jobs for local people. We are providing strong leadership and delivering high quality services to improve the life opportunities for our people and to ensure Luton is dynamic, prosperous, safe and healthy.

These are all being achieved through the Council's six strategic priorities:

## **Building economic growth and prosperity**

In April, the Council launched Luton's £1.5 billion investment potential with national, regional and local partners.

Construction projects worth £200 million are in progress, including the £110 million transformation of London Luton Airport.

Major development proposals brought forward include a £600 million landmark mixed-use scheme.

Plans to invest in a £200 million Mass Passenger Transit, linking the airport with mainline Luton Airport Parkway station, were announced.

## **Enhancing skills and education**

With a growing economy and thousands of new jobs coming on stream, the skills agenda was revamped to benefit local people.

Notable achievements include Ofsted-rated provision so high that 92 per cent of students attend a secondary school that has been rated good or better. GCSE results have improved and 75 per cent of students studying at sixth form or equivalent are going onto university.

The Council is working with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) to encourage businesses to provide mentors to schools, focusing on ways to improve employability skills, learn about jobs and careers, and motivate learning.



## **Improving health and wellbeing**

The Luton Investment Framework (LIF) ensures wellbeing is central to every Council decision made which is why they transferred responsibility for commissioning and procurement to the public health team in 2016, and Health Impact Assessments are now carried out on all Council policy proposals.

A bid for £1.5m of Arts Council England funding to develop a cultural programme was successful and with the ever-increasing cultural offer, the Council has written a strategy targeting City of Culture in 2025.

## **Developing quality homes and infrastructure**

In addition to the many aspirational and affordable housing developments brought forward in the last 12 months, the Council set up Foxhall Homes, its wholly owned housing company in 2016. It will develop seven housing sites and deliver hundreds of much-needed new homes.

There are also plans for an additional 70 acres of commercial development facilitated by a new 1.6-mile access road.

The Rogue Landlords project, with police and fire services, the Home Office and voluntary sector, has delivered 20 high-profile prosecutions in its first year improving the standard of private accommodation and tenant safety.

### **Supporting safe, strong and cohesive communities**

The Council's leading role in safeguarding children from radicalisation under Prevent has been recognised by the Government. The Prime Minister and Home Office Minister each made visits to Luton to learn more about our work, which also featured on The One Show and earned a handwritten note from the Security Minister.

Our new Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers were officially launched in 2016 with their community safety accredited powers.

### **Integrated, efficient and digital service delivery**

Through robust processes of challenge and prioritisation, £107 million has been taken out of the budget over the last six years, with more than 90 per cent of this achieved through efficiencies, reorganisation, smarter procurement and income to protect the frontline.

The Council Tax collection service already trades with other authorities and is now the third best unitary service in the country in terms of value for money.

Luton Access, a new service offering expert advice from a range of agencies under one roof, brings voluntary sector partners together to provide an innovative and integrated approach to independent advice and guidance.

2016 was a remarkable year for Luton with inspirational achievements across the Council and the town. This fantastic journey has been born out of a true 'one town, one vision' shared by both the public and private sector with strong leadership at every level.

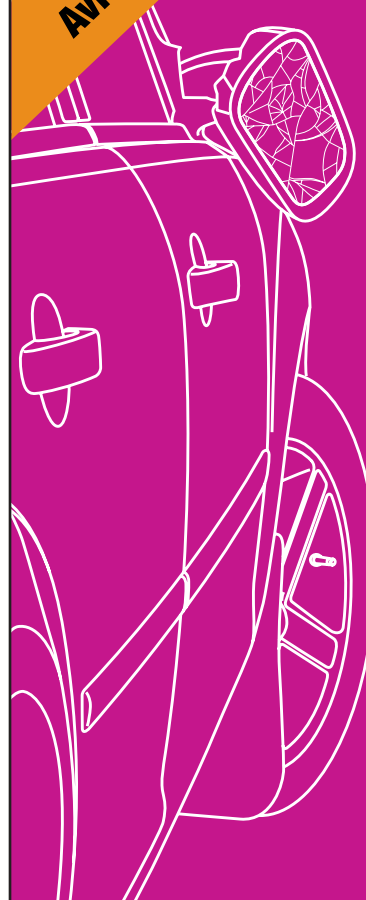
*Trevor Holden is the Chief Executive of Luton Council. Find out more about the Luton Investment Framework on the Luton website: [www.luton.gov.uk](http://www.luton.gov.uk)*

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# On the road to Aviemore!

*It's almost time, once again, for the much-anticipated APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds seminar.*

One of the biggest events of its kind in Scotland, this seminar scrutinises the issues facing local authorities in the fleet, waste, grounds and parks service areas, whilst also offering excellent case studies and best practice to inspire delegates.

The seminar will take place in Aviemore on Tuesday 23 to Friday 26 May 2017 and includes an extensive exhibition, formal dinner and the Striving for Excellence Awards 2017.

## **Fleet**

We are looking forward to hearing from some excellent speakers on fleet and roads, including Joan Aitken, Traffic Commissioner for Scotland. Joan last spoke at this APSE event in 2015, where she discussed the details behind rules on driver conduct hearings, driver licences, and wheel loss. She then went on to demonstrate the importance and consequences of these rules with a detailed case study. This year, she will explore the latest updates surrounding the responsibilities of fleet managers and the current issues affecting the industry.

We'll also be hearing from Steve Ives, Head of Competitions, from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles, who will be exploring Westminster's vision for electric vehicle development across the country.

Steve will be focusing on questions about how Scotland can utilise emerging technology and where the funding will come from, which is carrying on from Scotland's vision that was first announced last year. Future actions will also be discussed, specifically plans from the Office for Low Emissions Vehicles and the future of the Westminster Future Electric Vehicle Funding Grants. Steve will also touch upon the emergence of hydrogen vehicles and their effect on future local authority fleet services.

## **Waste**

Delegates will be given the opportunity to hear an update on the Household Recycling Charter from Adrian Bond, Programme Manager at Zero Waste Scotland. He will also be exploring the importance of good communication to help boost Scotland's recycling figures. Find out more about Zero Waste Scotland's work in an exclusive article on page 11.

Gary Walker and Naomi Ross, from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), will be discussing the Material Quality Regulations 12 months on. Consideration will be given to whether the new requirement of waste producers to separate wastes for recycling have been successful, including lessons learnt so far and the early indications regarding improvements in the quality of recyclable wastes collected.

## Grounds, Parks and Streets

Speaking on grounds and parks, David Barnes, Programme Manager from Zero Waste Scotland, will be focusing on the prevention of litter and waste. He'll also be looking into fly tipping and what local authorities can do to reduce its occurrence.

Debbie Johns, APSE Head of Performance Networks, will also be on hand to discuss the impact of change on street services. She hopes to get councils to think more carefully about what they're getting out of their services and whether their service is following the national trend. In these uncertain times of austerity, she will explore what productivity gains and efficiencies can be expected, as well as considering the outcomes of quality inspections for streets and green spaces.

APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds seminar draws in a wide variety of highly influential and knowledgeable speakers. As well as the seminar, this event is also home to the biggest exhibition of its kind in Scotland. Holding over 100 exhibitors, all of whom are industry specialists in fleet, waste, grounds and streets, this unique exhibition offers individual delegates and companies alike the opportunity to view new technology, and innovative new products and vehicles. It is a space in which new partnerships

can be developed with a view to transforming and enhancing local government frontline services. This exhibition is an extremely valuable resource for local authorities – it is not to be missed!

The seminar will also include the Striving for Excellence Awards 2017, which recognise the hard work and success of local authority services in Scotland and provide an excellent opportunity for councils to put forward their most deserving initiative. The categories this year are:

- Waste and Recycling, sponsored by Zero Waste Scotland
- Parks, Grounds and Street Scene sponsored by Johnston Sweepers
- Fleet, sponsored by Geesink Norba

Entry to the awards is now closed. The winners will be announced on Thursday 25 May 2017.

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*To learn more about the APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds seminar, and to book your place, please visit the APSE website. Alternatively, contact APSE Scotland by calling 01698 459 051 or email [lmelville@apse.org.uk](mailto:lmelville@apse.org.uk).*

**apse**

# Scottish Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar and Exhibition

23-26 May 2017 Hilton Coylumbridge, Aviemore



**Featuring expert speakers, over 100 exhibition stands, discussion forums and networking opportunities. Book now at [www.apse.org.uk](http://www.apse.org.uk).**

## Rochdale's smart gritters hit the roads – thanks to AutoLogic!

Gritters at Rochdale Borough Council have been better prepared than ever to tackle ice, sleet and snow this winter after the council became the first in Greater Manchester to adopt Schmidt's AutoLogic system, the very latest in automatic gritting technology.

The Council operates a fleet of seven of Schmidt's world-class Stratos gritters, all equipped with the AutoLogic system which spreads exactly the amount of salt required so gritter drivers can concentrate solely on the road and not have to focus on the vehicle's spreading settings.



Thanks to GPS technology, the AutoLogic system has been able to identify the Borough's exact road widths and ensure the optimal amount of salt has been spread to maximise the treatments, meaning precious salt has not been wasted.

Particularly hazardous spots have been set to automatically receive additional salt and even if the driver wasn't familiar with the route, the system ensured the gritting was carried out correctly.

Councillor Neil Emmott, cabinet member for housing and environment at Rochdale Borough Council, said the system would make gritting safer, more efficient and ensure Rochdale's roads were always properly treated.

"This state-of-the-art technology means our drivers can concentrate on driving, with the gritting process taken care of and with really clear on-screen route navigation. Dosage, spreading widths and symmetry are taken care of automatically, so that exactly the right amount of grit is dispensed.



"We are one of the first authorities in the country to have this system across the entire fleet," he added.

The AutoLogic system from Schmidt is an easy to use, automatic spreading system with GPS-guided routing, which guides the spreader driver along the correct route. The spreading settings occur automatically, enabling the driver to fully concentrate on the traffic without being distracted by the spreading process, thus increasing road safety.

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# Recycle for Scotland: Communication is key

*We spoke to Iain Gulland, Chief Executive of Zero Waste Scotland, about the communication challenge facing waste and recycling services.*

Together with the promise of warmer weather and lighter evenings, another reason to be cheerful this Spring is the knowledge that Scottish local authorities are continuing to make positive improvements on recycling waste. The latest figures show that Scotland's recycling rate has risen from 42.8% in 2014 to the current rate of 44.2%, with waste to landfill falling by 62,000 tonnes in the same period.

One of the most important factors in helping ensure that this trend continues in the right direction is good communications. Zero Waste Scotland is working in several ways to provide clear and consistent communications support to local authorities, to help keep Scotland on the upward recycling track. With expert advice, campaign resources, case studies, templates and communications toolkits available, there's a wealth of information for local authorities to draw on.

When it comes to improving recycling behaviours, factors such as language, style, tone of voice and imagery are key, as research shows us that people overwhelmingly want to do the right thing but lack the practical and clear information they need. Recycle for Scotland, the national campaign that provides advice and information on how to recycle, has plenty of expertise for local authorities that is readily available and free of charge.

Recycle for Scotland was launched in 2011 by Zero Waste Scotland and is used by all 32 Scottish local authorities and a number of other partners to ensure a consistent approach to communications.

The focus on consistency is key as Scotland moves towards a more uniform approach overall at national level to recycling collections through the Scottish Charter for Household Recycling.

Launched in February 2016, the Charter sets out the voluntary approach for Scotland moving to a more consistent recycling system. It's supported by a Code of Practice, which all signatories to the Charter agree to work to. The Code of Practice sets out specific requirements for councils to ensure that the waste and recycling services they provide to citizens are easily understood and communicated.

Zero Waste Scotland is working closely with councils to design and implement their plans, which can be supported by a suite of communication resources to help

recycle for Scotland

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residents recycle more. The Zero Waste Scotland partners resource library enables free access to consumer tested and piloted brand collateral, including downloadable leaflets, poster templates, web banners, event banner designs, template press adverts and stock imagery. Toolkits in development include a new collateral focused on contamination— assisting communication to householders of correct recycling behaviour, guidance for developing a communication plan and strategy, and artwork to support a reduced residual waste capacity service. All materials are in the final stages of consumer testing and will be available for use in the next few months. Visit [www.zerowastepartners.org.uk](http://www.zerowastepartners.org.uk) to access and download these resources.

*To hear more about the range of communications support on offer, or to sign up to our Local Authority mailer, please contact [jenny.fraser@zerowastescotland.org.uk](mailto:jenny.fraser@zerowastescotland.org.uk)*



# ALARM findings suggest local roads may be in terminal decline

*We spoke to the Asphalt Industry Alliance, who have produced this year's ALARM survey, to find out how local authorities are managing their highways services.*

Within the next five years, one in six of our local roads will need to be repaired, or may even face closure, reports this year's Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey, published on 28 March 2017.

The cumulative effect of an ageing network, decades of underfunding, increased traffic and wetter winters has led to around 17 per cent of all local roads reported as being in poor structural condition, with less than five years of life remaining.

The ALARM survey, produced by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) is now in its 22nd year and is widely respected throughout industry and local and national government as the most authoritative and comprehensive study into local road maintenance funding and condition.

Once again, it reports that local authorities need over £12 billion to bring the network up to scratch – a figure that has remained largely unchanged for four years – and the gap between the amount they received this year and the amount they say they need to keep the carriageway in reasonable order is almost £730 million.

## ALARM survey 2017 quick facts:

**£12.06 billion** – estimated one-time cost to get roads in England and Wales back into reasonable condition.

**£85.7 million** per authority – estimated one-time catch-up cost in England to get roads back into reasonable condition (£21.4 million in London; £26.9 million in Wales).

**£5.0 million** per authority – average annual carriageway maintenance budget shortfall in England (£2.5 million in London; £3.7 million in Wales).

**13 years** – time needed to clear the backlog in England (10 years in London; 9 years in Wales).

**17 per cent** of local roads in England reported as having less than 5 years life remaining (16% in London; 18% in Wales).

**55 years** – average time before a road is resurfaced in England (23 years in London; 63 years in Wales).

**1.5 million** – number of potholes filled in England (72,544 in London; 141,020 in Wales).

Alan Mackenzie, chairman of the AIA, said, "Local authority highway teams do not have enough resources to arrest the terminal decline in the condition of our local roads, and the network is not resilient enough to meet the challenges ahead."

"Despite this, the efficiencies they have achieved in recent years through adopting an asset management approach should be applauded."

"Working smarter, greater collaboration and improved communication are all contributing to their ability to do more with less – though of course there will come a point when there are no further efficiency savings to be found."

A large number of local authorities have also been hit with unforeseen costs (England: 43%; London: 53%; Wales: 56%), primarily as a result of structural failures caused by adverse weather and increased traffic, which have put additional pressure on resources.

The number of potholes filled over the last year has dropped again for the second successive year, but is still high at 1.7 million – one every 19 seconds.

"Almost all journeys begin and end on a local road and we all rely on them every day," said Alan Mackenzie. "They represent an asset worth in excess of £400 billion but, at present, less than one per cent of their value is being spent annually on maintenance."

"Potholes are a symptom of poorly maintained roads and can have a serious effect on road users but spending money fixing them in isolation, although essential, is wasteful. The most efficient way to deal with our crumbling roads is to fix them properly and stop potholes forming in the first place."

"It is time we had a rethink about the future funding of our roads, otherwise we will end up with a network that is just not fit for purpose."

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*The full 2017 ALARM survey will be available to download on Tuesday 28 March by visiting [www.asphaltuk.org](http://www.asphaltuk.org). For more information, email [info@asphaltuk.org](mailto:info@asphaltuk.org) or call 020 7222 0136.*

## £40,000 raised for Parkinson's UK

**A**PSE is delighted to announce that we have recently reached an outstanding £40,000 in fundraising for our corporate charity, Parkinson's UK.

This brilliant amount has been raised through our charity dinners and events, including APSE's annual Service Awards for local authority frontline services, where we continually see an amazing amount of generosity from attendees. We would like to thank all members, delegates and guests who have contributed to this milestone and who helped us to support such an excellent charity.



APSE chose Parkinson's UK over 6 years ago, after a former national chair was diagnosed with the progressive neurological condition. This personal connection has made APSE more determined to contribute as much as possible to the life-changing work carried out by Parkinson's UK.

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, 'The solid support of local government officers and councillors, over a number of years, in helping to raise this fantastic sum of money is greatly appreciated. Support to people suffering from this disease, and research into the condition, is ever more critical so I am pledging our further support to this great charity.'

APSE will continue to support Parkinson's UK at our events, and we welcome any support and donations from our members.



# Off-payroll working: Are you ready for the new rules?

*Sarah Bruce, Senior Associate at Walker Morris LLP, and Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions, look at the new IR35 rules and consider how these changes will affect local councils.*

## The legal viewpoint

*Sarah Bruce, Senior Associate at Walker Morris LLP*

**W**ith effect from 6 April 2017, public sector bodies receiving services from contractors through Personal Service Companies (PSCs) may be liable to account to HMRC for employment taxes in respect of those workers. Public sector bodies will be obliged to consider the nature of any such engagements and, where applicable, deduct employee tax and NICs from the payments they make to the PSC. The public sector body will also be liable for any employer's NICs.

For several years, the government has attempted to reform the intermediaries legislation (known as the IR35 rules - see box on next page) to prevent workers from gaining a tax and NIC advantage by supplying their services through a PSC instead of being included on the payroll of the company or body to which their services are supplied. The government has long been concerned that there is widespread and growing non-compliance with IR35, and that HMRC does not have the resources needed to carry out IR35 reviews on a contract-by-contract basis. It is not unexpected, therefore, that the government is pushing ahead with these proposals, which the government estimates will raise an additional £210 million by the end of 2020-21.

The new rules state that if the IR35 employment status test applies, and the client is a public body, the worker will be treated as having an employment with the person who pays the fees to the PSC. Therefore the public authority (or

possibly an intermediary such as an employment agency) will be responsible for calculating and deducting tax and employee NICs and accounting for them to HMRC together with employer NICs. This contrasts with the current position under IR35, where the person responsible for assessing and accounting for any such PAYE obligation is the PSC company itself.

Public sector body is defined by reference to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and includes government departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies, the NHS, and local, police, and fire authorities, educational establishments, the BBC and Channel 4, and devolved administrations. Private companies and charities carrying out public functions are excluded.

The obligation to operate PAYE and account for income tax and NICs will sit with either the public sector body or, if relevant, an intermediary such as an employment agency. However the responsibility for determining the worker's employment status will rest with the public sector body. They must apply the IR35 tests to the arrangements and inform the person with whom they contract that the arrangement either does or does not fall within IR35. Public sector bodies are required to ensure that they have a clear process in place for carrying out this procedure. If, following a written request from the person with whom it contracts (e.g. an employment agency), the public authority does not provide this information within 31 days, the responsibility for accounting for the PAYE shifts back to the public authority.

The introduction of these new rules is expected to have a

significant impact on contracting arrangements within the public sector. The government estimates that 26,000 personal service companies will be affected by the change. When combined with the changes announced in the March 2017 budget to self-employed NICs and to dividend tax, this demonstrates a clear direction of travel by the government to encourage movement away from self-employed models of working. It remains to be seen what further changes will be implemented in this area.

### The intermediaries legislation: The IR35 rules

The intermediaries legislation (commonly known as IR35) was introduced to prevent workers avoiding employee income tax and national insurance contributions by supplying their services through an intermediary and paying themselves in dividends. Almost from its inception the government has had concerns about widespread non-compliance with IR35 and has introduced further layers of legislation in an attempt to address these concerns.

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing an individual's employment status under the IR35 framework, such as whether the worker is obligated to provide the services personally and the level of control exerted by the engager.

If, on balance, the arrangement is more akin to one of employment, the IR35 rules require the PSC to account for income tax and NICs.

is subject to 'control and supervision' by the organisation engaging them. If they are told where, when and how to carry out their duties they are likely to fall within the scope of IR35 and have to pay tax at the PAYE rate. If on the other hand, they are genuinely self-employed consultants, providing temporary expert assistance, they are free to pay themselves a low salary and make their income up from a dividend out of the company profits – and thereby pay less tax. Unfortunately and particularly at a senior level, it is rarely that clear cut and other factors such as whether they have to provide the service personally, whether they are provided with equipment, and whether they carry a financial risk all have to be considered in order to make an 'on-balance' judgement.

As ever with complex tax rules, there is considerable room for interpretation. Unsurprisingly, the accountants of people working through Personal Service Companies have maybe taken a more relaxed view of the regulations than HMRC and given the benefit of the doubt to their clients. The new rules are aimed at reversing this by removing responsibility for making the decision from the Personal Service Company and placing it on the 'engaging authority'. Nor does it stop there – to make sure that the tax gets paid the legislation also creates a duty on the authority, or the supplying agency where there is one, to deduct it from fees paid to the Personal Service Company. This is why APSE Solutions, in preparation for April, has been asking its interim management clients to decide whether new interim roles are in or out of scope. Those that are in scope will be added to the APSE payroll run, those that are out will carry on getting paid in the traditional way.

Last week, with just a month to go, HMRC finally published an online tool to help with making the decision. This is symptomatic of the last minute way that the new rules have been brought in and has led to calls in some quarters for it to be delayed. APSE Solutions has been focused on a smooth implementation for months and whilst a delay would be welcome and probably sensible, it is highly unlikely. Indeed by the time this article is published, the new rules will have kicked in.

Without a crystal ball it is of course impossible to be certain what will happen. Some are predicting chaos and others have pointed out that fees for interims are likely to rise as they try to make up for any perceived loss of income and agencies pass on costs. Both of these things are possible but APSE Solutions does not foresee any reduction in its ability to meet the needs of APSE member authorities. New systems and processes are in place and we will not be adding the cost of these to the fees we charge for the service. We fully expect to be continuing to provide interim assistance at highly competitive rates with the only impact on clients being that they will be asked to decide whether a given role is in or out of scope.

## Clients: What you need to know

*Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions*

**A**PSE Solutions has been working hard to make sure that the introduction of new tax rules for interim managers does not create headaches for APSE councils when they come in April of this year. It is all change for interims but councils engaging interims through APSE should not see any big difference to the service other than being asked to decide whether a particular assignment is in or out of scope of the new regime.

According to HMRC, there has been widespread non-compliance with the so-called IR35 rules. These rules, properly known as the Employment Intermediary Regulations, require temporary workers provided through a limited company, owned by them, to pay tax and NICs at PAYE rates on anything they earn from assignments, which if the worker had not been an interim, would be treated as employment for tax purposes. If that sounds complicated, that is because it is and perhaps goes some way to explaining why it is so widely misunderstood and, if you believe HMRC, frequently ignored.

The problem with IR35 has always been that it is difficult to be certain when it actually applies. The difference between a consultant and an interim can be a subtle one. Case law indicates that the key factor to take into account when determining employment status is whether the worker

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*APSE Solutions offers affordable interim management options for local councils. For more information contact Andy Mudd on [amudd@apse.org.uk](mailto:amudd@apse.org.uk), or Emma Taylor, Client Liaison Officer, on [etaylor@apse.org.uk](mailto:etaylor@apse.org.uk). Alternatively, call 0161 772 1810.*

# Helping local authorities develop low emission fleets

*We spoke to Luke Redfern, Project Manager at Cenex, who explains more about how local authorities can improve the emissions of their fleet and make greener choices.*

For local authority fleets, fuel costs and low emissions targets have made the diesel engine the most popular choice for council-owned vehicles. Over the last decade, fleet operators have refined their decision-making based on the ability to apply diesels across the full range of fleet operations.

Despite the inherent efficiency of diesel vehicles, the logic of diesel-only fleet operations is under challenge, as the motor industry invests in electrified powertrains and many larger UK local authorities prepare to meet government mandated Clean Air Zones by 2020. As more local authority fleets include battery-electric and plug-in hybrid vehicle options when making fleet replacement investment decisions, fleet managers need low-cost data collection and emissions estimation solutions to make smart, future-proofed purchasing decisions.

Cenex, the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon and Fuel Cell technologies, has developed a new vehicle-monitoring approach called CLEAR Capture which, with support from emissions analytics, offers a low-cost means by which fleet managers can gain valuable insight into real-world pollutants and carbon emissions. This can help inform replacement decisions for key segments of their fleets. Because published manufacturer data on fuel consumption has always been treated with a level of scepticism, CLEAR Capture uses real-world emissions and fuel consumption data to predict how a vehicle will perform for a fleet over time.

As an independent not-for-profit organisation, set up by Government in 2005, Cenex is ideally placed to provide unbiased expert advice. Cenex has an established track record working with local authorities to measure the effectiveness and long term costs of adopting low emissions vehicle fleets. Cenex also has access to real-world fuel economy and carbon emissions data for all types of high-mileage vehicles operating in many different scenarios. CLEAR Capture uses this rich dataset to help fleet operators model different vehicle options. This in turn helps them to make reasonable assessments about the true total cost of ownership for investing in new low emissions technologies.

CLEAR Capture is a simple and unobtrusive method to track current vehicle fleets. The system can be installed in either a cigarette lighter or OBD port, and allows users



to measure driver behaviour, route choices, local traffic patterns, and performance for categories of vehicle that don't have telemetry already fitted, and compare it against industry standards. Cenex segments vehicles by journey type and driving style to give fleet owners actionable insight to make better purchasing decisions based on their unique operational needs.

In the CLEAR Capture model, diesel car and van fleets are compared against electric powertrain models. Cenex provides tailored walk-throughs of the CLEAR Capture reports, offering an unbiased look at the best low emissions technology to meet each fleets' specific needs while helping improve air quality. Armed with the data that shows how a fleet operates today, operators will be able to confidently invest in the technologies of tomorrow that will deliver cost efficiency and emissions reduction without the burden of trial and error.

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*Cenex have recently signed up as APSE Approved Partners. For more information on how they can help you and your fleet, please contact Luke by emailing [luke.redfern@cenex.co.uk](mailto:luke.redfern@cenex.co.uk)*

[www.scarab-sweepers.com](http://www.scarab-sweepers.com)

# M25H

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# The great debate: How do we fund social care?

*With the announcement of extra care cash in the 2017 Budget, APSE's Mo Baines asks what are the options for funding social care?*

A classic case of an emergency injection, with a promise of more fundamental surgery to 'fix the problem' of social care funding, was evident in the Chancellor's budget announcement. It provided a welcome £2 billion of new money, with £1 billion being made available in 2017-2018 and a further billion over the following two years. This is on top of the permissible council tax rises in England, which the vast majority of councils responsible for social care provision are taking advantage of. However, welcome as the extra funding is, most recognise the one-off cash injection will not solve the crisis in funding care, a position reflected by Philip Hammond's promise of a consultation paper on funding options. But could agreement be reached on a consensus option for funding social care?

Funding social care is not a new issue. There is a perception that social care sucks up more money on

a continuous basis; however, this is not entirely fair or indeed the case. According to the Kings Fund, the number of people over 65 accessing social care through public funds has fallen by 26 per cent. In part, this is attributable to the growth in demand, so the parameters for accessing care are squeezed as councils stretch their resources to meet it. By 2050, it is estimated that around 19 million UK adults will be aged over 65, which makes it one in four of the population compared to roughly one in six now. By 2030, there will be six million adults aged over 80 - a doubling of today's figures.

The growth in Octogenarians correlates to a growth in the more complex, expensive care needs, skewing social care resources towards this group. This has driven the decline in services available to older people at the lower end of ageing and need. In turn, we also see

over 500,000 'bed days' lost to the NHS as it struggles to discharge older people without adequate care in place. To add fuel to the bonfire, the sector is beset by low wages, low skills investment, low retention and a fragmented provider base; market failure is evidenced by many providers now reporting that they are not able or willing to operate in an increasingly cost-competitive market.

So what options are there for future funding? Well the Chancellor has already ruled out inheritance tax to pay for social care so this is unlikely to make an appearance in any future green paper. Government has already committed to the Better Care Fund, which leverages in additional funding for integration and it is highly likely future funding will come with some 'carrots' to encourage further integration. Similarly, whatever finance model is adopted in the future, the approach of linking extra resources to desired outcomes, such as reducing delayed hospital discharges, is likely to remain a feature.

There is also a growing political discourse on the issue of intergenerational fairness. Whilst successive governments have committed to improving the incomes of older people, most recently with former PM David Cameron's ongoing commitment to the so called 'triple lock' on pension increases, this looks set to create a bill of £20 billion over the lifetime of the next Parliament. At the same time, younger tax-payers and families, which Prime Minister Teresa May has called the 'just about managing,' have seen much deeper cuts to benefits and income but potentially face a higher tax bill to fund social care. Nevertheless, ending the triple lock is politically risky for any party and it is important to remember that not every pensioner should be considered 'wealthy'.

So, what about a dedicated health and care tax; would a hypothecated tax work? In theory, this would allow for a specific tax to be collected and then in turn this would create a dedicated revenue stream for social care. However, hypothecated taxes are not universally accepted with many pointing out that it breaks the link between governments being elected on specific funding pledges; would the public vote for what will often be a new and thereby additional tax?

A further option might be a simple increase in income tax. A 1% rise on income tax is estimated to bring in around £4.6 billion in 2017-2018, for example, but the current government has made a manifesto commitment not to increase income tax; therefore, this would only be a realistic option if there was cross-party consensus. In reality, building such a consensus would be a matter for the next General Election.

There is also an option to increase National Insurance Contributions (NICs). The current NICs system is directly

attributable to the Beveridge principles of contributory benefits. You pay in so you can take out. Currently about 90% of NICs is used in the payment of pensions. According to the Office for Budget Responsibility in 2014/2015 National Insurance receipts topped £109 billion compared to receipts from income tax of £163 billion, £111 billion from VAT, and £42 billion from corporation tax. However, in spite of the contributory nature of NICs and the benefits paid out, it is not entirely the case that what goes in equates to what is paid out. In times of recession, governments will invariably face an increase in the costs of people unable to contribute NICs for themselves. There are also different classes of NICs dependent on individual circumstances, but these historical classes of contributions, as the Chancellor Philip Hammond recently found out to his cost, are not that easy to change without a public (and political) backlash. Some argue that increasing NICs to fund social care will shift the burden on those least able to pay more and this would not address the anomalies in the relative growth in wealth of pensioners compared to working families. There could be some tweaking of NICs to perhaps extend the payments to those over 65 but still in work; a proposition referred to by an independent panel reporting on behalf of the Liberal Democrats in March 2017 (Health and Social Care delivering a Secure Future: Interim Report).

An additional solution might be to consider some form of amalgamation or integration of National Insurance with income tax. This was considered by the Taylor report in 1998 and although certain changes were made, following on from that report by the then Chancellor Gordon Brown, the modernised collection and integration of tax was never fully realised. It will be interesting to see if such a fundamental approach to the issue of funding our ageing population is raised in a future green paper.

Finally, there are many commentators who would call for a fairer share of taxes by the big corporations. As corporation tax has been reduced, and tax avoidance continues to hit the headlines, is this likely to be put on the table as an option to fund social care? Arguably this will be unlikely and made all the more so in the midst of Brexit negotiations when the mood music of government has been to court corporations in the negotiations that are ahead for UK PLC.

So, we don't have the answers but we do have a lot of questions to consider and hopefully some more detailed analysis of what the options will be!

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*Mo Baines is the APSE Head of Communication and Coordination. You can contact her by emailing [mbaines@apse.org.uk](mailto:mbaines@apse.org.uk) or call 0161 772 1810.*

# A direct route to success: Announcing new APSE approved partners GoCardless

*We are delighted to welcome new Approved Partners GoCardless to the APSE family!*

Founded in 2011, GoCardless offers a simple way to take recurring payments via Direct Debit. By using technology to automate the entire payment process, the company has taken a clunky, legacy solution into the digital age. It now helps over 20,000 private and public sector organisations process over £1.5 billion worth of transactions per year.

GoCardless is an approved G-cloud provider and works with a number of local authorities including Peterborough City Council, South Kesteven Council, and Boston Borough Council, along with government bodies such as the DVSA and the Cabinet Office.

GoCardless provides a range of benefits for local authorities. These include increasing revenue with improved customer retention and renewal, along with reducing admin overheads with simple online sign-up. Local authorities can achieve increased control over payments with automatic notifications of failures and cancellations, while having automatic payment renewal removes the need to chase up constituents.

Also, GoCardless is quick and easy to integrate into existing systems, either via its off-the-shelf integrations with major accounting and billing software, including Jada. For added flexibility GoCardless also offers a powerful and versatile API allowing in-house developers or technical partners to seamlessly integrate it into any system.

By taking a modern approach to Direct Debit, GoCardless helps local authorities all over the UK to streamline processes, reduce costs and serve their constituents more effectively. Most recently this included Peterborough Council which recently

## GOCARDLESS

adopted GoCardless to take payments for garden waste collection, while saving over £800,000 of taxpayers' money.

Members of the GoCardless team will speak at future APSE Advisory Groups, as well as attending other APSE seminars and events, where the team will be able to help APSE members revolutionise their payment processes.

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, 'GoCardless is an innovative company, working to move organisations such as local authorities forward into a new era of payment management. The support and knowledge that they can offer APSE members makes them an excellent addition to the APSE Approved Partner scheme. I look forward to seeing them at our events in the near future – welcome, GoCardless!'

Nicola Anderson, VP Marketing at GoCardless, said, 'We're delighted to be selected as an APSE Approved Partner. Our expertise will be invaluable to local councils looking to streamline and manage their payment systems. We look forward to helping members and sharing more of our knowledge of digital transformation at future APSE events.'

GoCardless will be presented with an Approved Partner certificate at an upcoming advisory group.

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To learn more about GoCardless, please go to [www.gocardless.com/local-government/](http://www.gocardless.com/local-government/)

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# And the winner is...

*We're delighted to announce the excellent winners of our awards for building and housing, and highways, street lighting and winter maintenance.*



## The APSE Scotland Building and Housing Apprentice of the Year

### 1st Year Trade Category

Kindly sponsored by:

Jordan Electrics Limited  
www.jordanelectrics.com

- Daniel McTaggart, Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Calum Love, Fife Council
- Craig Barrett, South Ayrshire Council
- Pamela Duffy, West Dunbartonshire Council

**Winner: Pamela Duffy, West Dunbartonshire Council**

### 2nd Year Trade Category

Kindly sponsored by:

Jordan Electrics Limited  
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- David Hutcheon, Aberdeen City Council
- Allan Campbell, East Dunbartonshire Council
- Lee Tomaszewski, Falkirk Council
- Ryan Fair, Fife Council
- Alan Webster, West Lothian Council

**Winner: Alan Webster, West Lothian Council**

### 3rd Year Trade Category

Kindly sponsored by:

Jordan Electrics Limited  
www.jordanelectrics.com

- Graeme Baird, Aberdeen City Council
- Liam Brawls, Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Allan Trolland, Fife Council
- Darryl McClure, South Ayrshire Council

**Winner: Graeme Baird, Aberdeen City Council**

### 4th Year Trade Category

Kindly sponsored by:

Jordan Electrics Limited  
www.jordanelectrics.com

- Lewis McFadyen, Fife Council
- Adam Cairney, North Ayrshire Council
- Jamie Edwards, West Lothian Council

**Winner: Adam Cairney, North Ayrshire Council**

### Non-Trade Category

Kindly sponsored by:



- Andrew Rae, Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Paul Don, East Dunbartonshire Council
- Steph Ewan, Fife Council
- Lauren Agnew, West Lothian Council

**Winner: Lauren Agnew, West Lothian Council**



**A**PSE is delighted to announce the winners of the Scottish Building and Housing Apprentice Awards, the Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Apprentice Awards, and the Innovation Awards 2017. The Apprentice Awards seek to celebrate the progress and achievements of the best apprentices in local authorities across Scotland and the UK, whilst the Innovation Awards celebrate outstanding local councils that use innovative ideas and solutions to tackle the current challenges facing their frontline services.

This year's finalists of these competitive awards are truly excellent representatives of their service area and their council. Their hard work and commitment has shown through the extremely high standard of submissions that APSE received, and all the finalists should feel proud of their achievements.

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, 'I believe that it is important to celebrate the hard work that goes on in all aspects of local government frontline services – from the work completed by apprentices just embarking on their careers, to the more experienced teams that use innovation to improve their local area. All of our finalists have proven themselves to be excellent at their work and champions of local council frontline services. Well done.'

The APSE Scotland Building and Housing Apprentice of the Year Awards took place in Dunblane on Thursday 16 February 2017. The APSE Highways and Street Lighting Apprentice of the Year Awards and the APSE Innovation Awards took place in Blackpool on Thursday 9 March 2017. Congratulations to all the winners and finalists!

### The APSE Highways and Street Lighting Apprentice of the Year

Kindly sponsored by:



#### Finalists

- Lee Glover, Cheshire East Council
- Elizabeth Hemborough, Dorset County Council
- Louisa Phillips, Gateshead Council
- Fran Creaser, Kirklees Council
- Cameron Newsham, Lancashire County Council
- Leonie Denley, Newcastle City Council
- Derek Thomson, North Ayrshire Council
- Aaron Jack, West Lothian Council

**Winner: Cameron Newsham, Lancashire County Council**

### The APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Innovation Awards

#### Highways Maintenance Services

Kindly sponsored by:



- Ayrshire Roads Alliance
- Cheshire East Highways
- Dorset Highways
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- South Gloucestershire Council

**Winner: South Gloucestershire Council**

#### Street Lighting

Kindly sponsored by:



- Bolton Council
- Kingstown Works Ltd.
- Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Northumberland County Council

**Winner: Kingstown Works Ltd.**

#### Winter Maintenance and Winter Resilience Services

Kindly sponsored by:



- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Harrow Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Peterborough Highway Services
- Tayside Contracts/Dundee City Council

**Winner: Tayside Contracts/Dundee City Council**



Apprentice award winner Cameron Newsham, centre left, with award sponsors WJ Group, far left, and representatives of Lancashire County Council, right.

# Report back

## A round up of APSE advocacy and events

### England

#### Food for thought

APSE continues to provide secretariat support to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on school meals. Dr Roberta Blackman Wood, MP for Durham and vice chair of the APPG, addressed the APSE Soft FM seminar held in January in Durham. A new programme of APPG meetings for 2017 is in the offing.

#### Labour spring

Organised by the LGA Labour Group, APSE attended the spring conference in Warwick on 17-18 February 2017 hosting two fringe events. The first event on housing included Cllr Van Coulter, APSE's National Chair, the Rt Hon John Healey MP, Shadow Minister for Housing, and APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien. A second joint fringe between APSE and the TUC discussed devolution and was chaired by Cllr Simon Letts, leader of Southampton Council and included, Judith Blakes, Leader of Leeds City Council, Jim McMahon MP, Shadow Local Government Minister, Paul Novak, Deputy General Secretary TUC, Cllr Peter Lowe, Leader of Dudley Council, and Mo Baines for APSE.

#### Conservative Councillors' Association Conference

APSE once again attended the CCA conference 24-25 February 2017 in Lincoln and held two very well attended fringe events on Housing with Mo Baines, Rob Bailey and Cllr Giles McNeill (West Lindsey) in the sessions. APSE also sponsored the Conference plenary event on Devolution with a panel including Andrew Percy MP, Minister for Local Government, Bob Sleigh, Leader of Solihull and Mo Baines, APSE. The CCA annual dinner was addressed by Home Secretary, Amber Rudd MP and conference plenary sessions addressed by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon. Teresa May, and the Communities Secretary The Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid, MP.

#### Who cares for the carers?

APSE participated in an inaugural meeting of an LGA/NJC Trade Union event at UNISON Headquarters in London attended by the DCLG, DoH and LGA (employers' side) as well as GMB, Unite, UNISON and industry figures. The event was to kick-start discussion on the future of the social care

workforce. Mo Baines addressed the event for APSE on the issue of commissioning and contracts in social care.

#### The Wombles!

Well not quite the Wombles but our dedicated team have been pressing the case for a cleaner Britain. APSE's Chief Executive Paul O'Brien represented APSE on the DCLG/DEFRA group developing a National Litter Strategy for England, with Wayne Priestley, APSE's principal advisor for environmental services, coordinating survey work and chapter write ups for the litter strategy. The Head of Performance Networks, Debbie Johns, is currently representing APSE on the sub group on benchmarking.

#### Partnering up?

Paul O'Brien attended a meeting with Local Partnerships (formerly 4PS) Chief Executive Sean Hanson. This is an early stage discussion with a view to seeing if there are any possibilities of joint working which is attractive to both parties and in APSE's interests.

### Scotland

#### Scottish Labour Conference

APSE Scotland hosted a fringe event during the course of the Scottish Labour Conference 2017 held in Perth on 24 -26 February, which was addressed by Professor Richard Freeman, Professor Steven Griggs, Monica Lennon MSP, the Shadow Minister for Inequality, Paul O'Brien representing APSE, and chaired by Cllr Jim Docherty. Louise Melville also hosted the exhibition stand for APSE during the course of the conference with a number of high profile MSPs, including Scottish Labour Leader Kezia Dugdale MSP, visiting.

#### Building a better Scotland

The APSE Scotland Building, Housing and Renewables seminar took place on 16-17 February with Fiona Lees, Chief Executive of East Ayrshire Council and chair of SOLACE, Gavin Stevenson, Chief Executive of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Rhondda Geekie, Leader of East Dunbartonshire Council, Cllr John Stevenson, and John Blair taking part in a question time panel hosted by APSE's Chief Executive. The APSE Scotland Housing and Building

apprentice award winner Graeme Baird, Aberdeen City Council, was again referenced in a motion of support in the Scottish Parliament alongside four other such motions which also referenced the winners and finalists in our Scottish Apprentice Awards. High praise indeed for our finalists and winners!

## Wales

### Regeneration in Flintshire

Flintshire will play host to APSE Wales on 30 March at an event exploring the links between regeneration, housing development and community health issues. The event, at Flint Town Hall, is free for APSE Wales members to attend. For details contact Rob Bailey on rbailey@apse.org.uk

### Renewables and climate change

A packed programme is planned for APSE Wales Renewables and Climate Change Advisory Group with speakers from the Welsh Government, APSE Energy and Conwy County Borough Council. With topics looking at battery storage developments in the context of renewable energy solutions, the development of a Tidal Lagoon project and with the Head of APSE Energy Phil Brennan on hand to develop ideas with local councils on renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in local government. The event will be held in Llandridnod Wells. For details about the event see the APSE website or contact Rob Bailey on rbailey@apse.org.uk

### Points of view

APSE will be responding to the Welsh Government White Paper on the future of local government in Wales. To share your comments or ideas on the paper to feed into APSE's response, please email Rob Bailey on rbailey@apse.org.uk

## Northern Ireland

### Future forums

An extensive programme is planned for APSE Northern Ireland with a rolling programme of thematic events, training, and performance management events. Mo Baines has been allocated as the APSE lead officer for Northern Ireland following a restructuring of portfolios, and a survey of members in Northern Ireland is ongoing. Contact Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk with any queries. You can join in at the next performance networks event for members in Northern Ireland on 28 March, which will explore customer satisfaction surveys and methodologies

for the new NI specific data templates. Contact Debbie Johns on djohns@apse.org.uk for more details.

## Northern Ireland Local Government Awards 2017

We are delighted to announce that the 2017 Local Government Awards NI will be launched in the next few weeks. The awards bring together key local government partners to support councils in showcasing the best examples of service provision, new initiatives, and personal commitment from councils, councillors and officers, whilst also awarding excellence in frontline services. APSE is pleased to be a sponsor and provide a judging panel for the awards. The 2017 awards will follow NILGA's Annual Conference on 12th October 2017. For more information, contact Mark Maher, NILGA, on m.maher@nilga.org or 028 9079 8972, or visit the members area for Northern Ireland on the APSE website.



APSE's Mo Baines speaking at the Conservative Councillors' Association Conference



APSE's Louise Melville and Scotland Labour Leader Kezia Dugdale MSP at the Scottish Labour Conference



Rt Hon John Healey MP, Shadow Minister for Housing speaking alongside APSE's Paul O'Brien

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