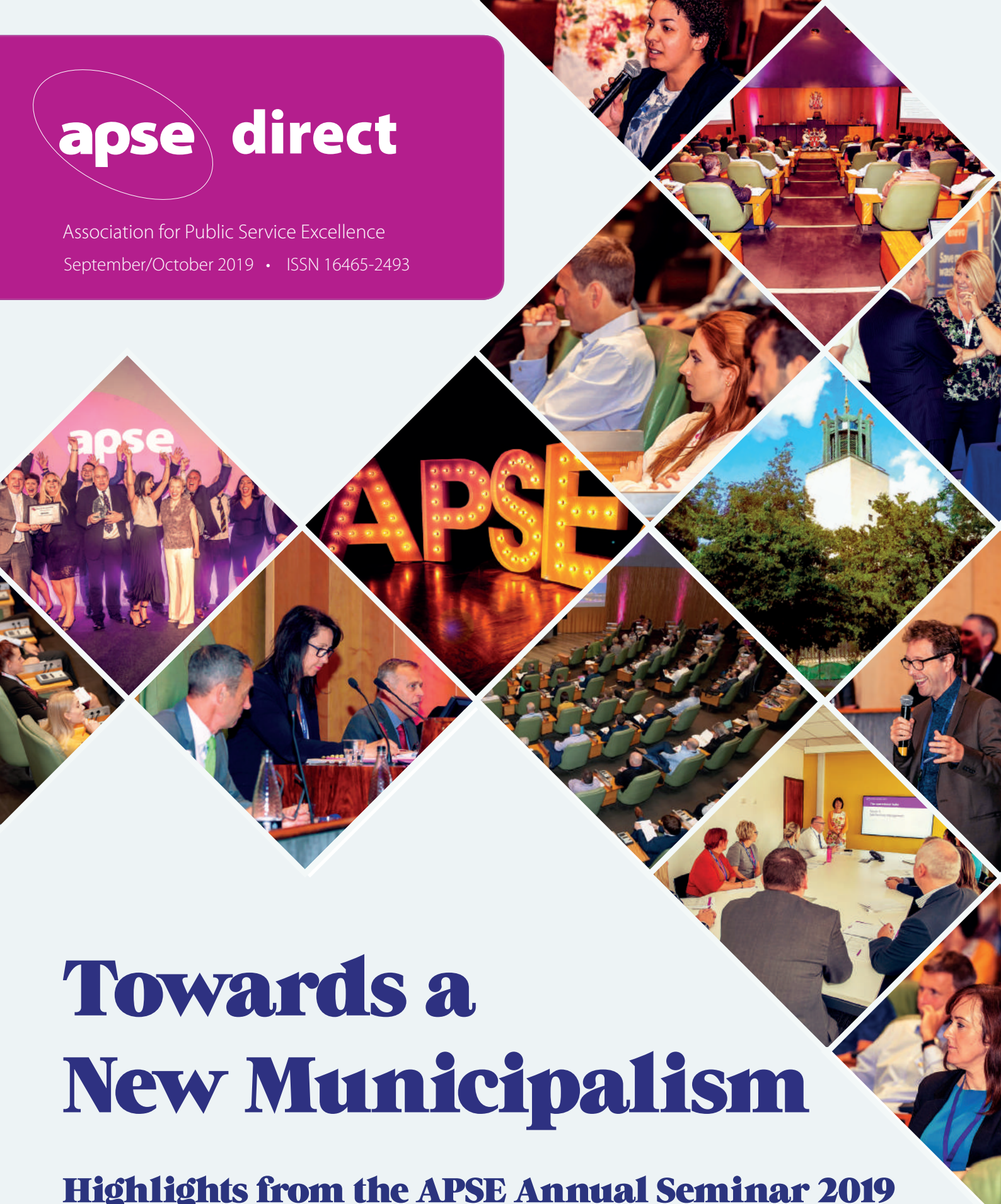


apse direct

Association for Public Service Excellence

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Towards a New Municipalism

Highlights from the APSE Annual Seminar 2019

Service Awards Winners

See the winners and finalists of the APSE Service Awards 2019

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APSE Local Government Commission 2030

Exploring the core issues

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Insourcing Domiciliary Care

Pembrokeshire County Council

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Editorial



Paul O'Brien
Chief Executive, APSE

Celebrating the best in frontline services!

This is our post-awards edition of APSE direct and every year we are amazed by the volume, strength and breadth of our APSE Service Awards submissions. Whilst this fills me with happiness, it also astonishes me that the perceptions of local councils in the mainstream media is so far removed from the reality of innovation, public service ethos and resilience displayed by the local government workforce and local councillors.

If we pick up a newspaper local government stories are often negative. Whilst tens of thousands of residents may get their bin emptied every week and on time, it only takes one 'missed bin' to make it to the local press. And on top of the local press we also see national news outlets with oodles of negativity on top of social media where keyboard warriors vent their spleen.

Whilst we may take the view that we have broad shoulders so in the long-term this doesn't matter too much, I am increasingly of the view that this paradoxical view of local councils has excused years of under-funding. People care about their bin being emptied but don't often give much thought to their local council.

This chasm in the relationships between local services and the institutions that provide them is absent when the public think about the NHS or emergency services like the police.

So to me, perceptions of local councils do matter! I was in fact delighted when across the weekend a disgruntled resident had a pop at an award winning council on twitter; making spurious accusations of service quality and whether or not they deserved to win an APSE award. I was so proud of the senior manager (who shall remain nameless!) for her immediate courage in going back and arguing not just for the service but for her frontline staff – pointing out the difficulties that councils have faced and the resilience of the workforce. The twitter spat ended amicably because once facts are presented fake news tends to slip away. So perhaps we should all be a bit more robust in our defence of local government because celebrating the best in frontline services matters!

Congratulations to our winners and finalists in 2019!

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Report Back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events

APSE in Brighton for the Labour Conference

APSE hosted two fringe events during the course of Labour Party Conference. The theme of 'New Municipalism and Insourcing' featured at an event addressed by APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien and Mo Baines, APSE Head of Communication and Coordination, with delegates discussing a range of policy issues including responding to local government finance pressures and housing need. A further fringe event on 'Climate Emergency: How are councils responding' provided delegates with an overview on council Climate Emergency declarations and responses from Paul O'Brien with Cllr Mark Pengelly, APSE National Chair facilitating discussions.

In pictures: The winners of the Annual Service Awards 2019

APSE is delighted to present a gallery of the winners from the APSE Annual Service Awards 2019. The gallery can be accessed via the Annual Seminar hub on the APSE website. The gallery also contains links to video clips of the winners. These clips have been uploaded to the Annual Service Awards 2019 playlist on the APSE YouTube channel.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to our new National Chair, Cllr. Mark Pengelly of Corby Borough Council, and new National Secretary Karen Bradford, Chief Executive of Gedling Borough Council, on their election. They were officially elected at the National AGM which took place in Newcastle during the APSE Annual Seminar on 11 September. You can read more about Mark's vision on page 12. For a full list of the chair, secretaries and vice chairs elected, please visit the APSE website.



[L-R] Karen Bradford, Chief Executive of Gedling Borough Council, Cllr. Mark Pengelly of Corby Borough Council, Cllr. John Kerr-Brown of Warrington Borough Council and Anita Brown, Service Manager at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

Van Coulter Award

At the Annual Service Awards, APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien and outgoing National Chair Cllr. John Kerr-Brown, presented former Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Chief Executive and APSE Local Government Commissioner, Neil Schneider, with the Van Coulter Lifetime Achievement Award. Neil has held a variety of roles in local government spanning 37 years and has remained a dedicated and forward-thinking public servant throughout that time. Under his leadership, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council were shortlisted for APSE Overall Council of the Year 10 times in 10 years - winning the prestigious award in 2010. Well done and thank you Neil!



Journalist and presenter Wendy Gibson and APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien present Neil Schneider with the Van Coulter Lifetime Achievement Award in Newcastle.

Talking insourcing at Unison

Mo Baines, APSE's Head of Communication was delighted to take part in a UNISON North West Policy Seminar to discuss APSE's work on Local Government finance and Insourcing. The policy day took place in Blackpool on Friday 27 September with attendance from North West UNISON branches and other speakers including Cllr. Matthew Brown Leader of Preston Council. The seminar focused on Community Wealth Building approaches in North West Councils.

Scotland

SOLACE Conference

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien and APSE Principal Advisor for Scotland Louise Melville were in Glasgow on 5/6 September for the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers Scotland (SOLACE Scotland) Conference.

Meet our new members of staff!

Louise Midwood, Finance and Administrative Assistant



What is your professional background?

I've previously worked in administrative and analytical roles for a number of organisations, including NHS Digital, the National Probation Service and Ofsted. I also have a degree in Criminology and Sociology from Manchester Metropolitan University

What is your role at APSE?

I provide administrative support for training events and consultancy, and assist the Finance Manager with all aspects of finance and credit control.

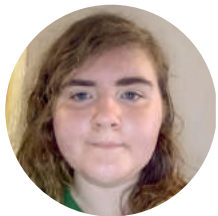
What is your favourite thing about your role?

I really enjoy working within a busy environment and assisting in the day to day running of the Manchester office. I also enjoy the responsibility that comes with administering and coordinating the many training courses APSE offers. I am also the newest member of the APSE cake club!

Where can APSE members meet you?

I will be based in the APSE Manchester office. You can contact me by emailing lmidwood@apse.org.uk or by phoning 0161 772 1810.

Caitlyn King, Administrative Assistant



What is your professional background?

Prior to working at APSE, I obtained a Level 3 BTEC in Creative Media Production, which gave me some experience working on live briefs, including a digital marketing campaign for ao.com. I also took part in HMRC's 'Movement to Work Scheme' which

saw me working for a senior officer in the HR Learning and Development department where I designed materials for their 'Smarter Learning' scheme for six weeks.

What is your role at APSE?

As part of the APSE administrative team, I work chiefly with the exhibitors and sponsors attending APSE seminars and events. I also do general administrative tasks, design work and some database management.

What is your favourite thing about your role?

I enjoy providing support to other staff members, seminar delegates, exhibitors and sponsors where it's required, as well as having the opportunity to do design work such as creating flyers and photo editing.

Where can APSE members meet you?

I can be found at the APSE Manchester office as well as at seminars where I'm handling the bookings. Also, if you need any support, particularly if you're an exhibitor or sponsor, you can contact me at cking@apse.org.uk or 0161 772 1810.

New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome **Sulo**

Sulo UK Limited are a supplier of quality waste solutions including, but not limited to, plastic wheeled containers and street furniture. Sulo also supply, install and maintain underground refuse systems (URS) and have over 500 products installed so far in the UK.

Managing Director of Sulo, Braham Djidjell, said, "We believe that underground bins are the future of waste collection in the UK. Having collaborated with APSE Solutions at their latest underground refuse seminar, we know that APSE shares our enthusiasm for this innovative waste collection method. Through this partnership, Sulo will be ideally placed to demonstrate the effectiveness of underground bins to councils across the UK."

Sulo provide preventative reactive and washing services for these URS products to ensure they are maintained and provide a long service to clients and residents alike that use the systems. The URS system is commonplace in Europe but is still a growing solution in the UK. The URS products are well established and, in many cases, have been installed for over 10 years and are still going strong.

Speaking of the partnership, APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, "Extensive research from APSE has shown that URS systems can assist UK authorities by improving the efficiency and cost effectiveness of both domestic refuse and commercial waste services. As a market-leader in this field, APSE members will benefit enormously from Sulo's expertise and cutting-edge technology; helping them make significant savings at a time of growing financial uncertainty."

For more information, please visit www.sulo.co.uk/en/ or contact Sulo at customerservices@sulo.com or 0121 521 4472



Outgoing APSE National Secretary Anita Brown, outgoing National Chair John Kerr-Brown and APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien present Sulo's Alan Craddock with the Approved Partner Certificate at the Annual Seminar.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION 2030

To coincide with APSE's 20th Anniversary in 2019, we were delighted to launch the APSE Local Government Commission 2030 at our Annual Seminar in Newcastle. This Commission – comprised of experts and representatives of those who have run, protected and championed local government alongside academic experts and research professionals - will explore the core issues that will impact on local government in the future.

After ten years of austerity across public services, local government faces a number of wicked policy issues, be it growing inequalities, housing, climate change or public health. At the same time, the organisational landscape of local government has undergone a patchwork reorganisation through City Deals and combined authorities, partnerships and shared services, asset transfers and local authority companies. Political leadership and democratic accountability have arguably become increasingly 'messy', as core internal capabilities and traditional ways of working have been challenged.

Yet, there is equally a new municipalism that is emerging, one that advances new forms of local action, in-house services, municipal entrepreneurship and stewardship of place. Local authority housing companies have mushroomed as councils have sought to address housing need. Meanwhile novel forms of commercialisation, community wealth building and social value production have taken hold as councils have looked to keep the public spend in localities and forge new ways of working with communities.

The APSE Local Government Commission 2030 will develop an independent analysis of the state of local government in the United Kingdom. It will identify and assess the capabilities and capacities of local government, capturing good practice and exploring local councils can advance a new municipalism and vision for the next ten years. Importantly, the Commission has taken 2030 as its key date on the horizon, signalling its commitment to meet the challenges of climate change and sustainability, one of the pressing 'wicked policy issues' facing local authorities. Indeed, the Commission will build on the principle of stewardship, viewing local government as one of the key sites to mitigate climate change.

Key Themes

Tasked with bringing together a vision for sustainable local government in 2030, APSE has invited Commissioners to reflect on the following inter-connected themes:

- Place leadership and local government stewardship in local communities;
- Service provision and meeting local needs;
- Local democracy, governance and accountability;
- Sustainable funding and workforce planning;
- Local government and the multiple policy crises of the environment, economy and society (for example, climate change; energy; housing; social inequality; food poverty).



[Above L-R] Gedling Borough Council Chief Executive Karen Bradford, former leader of Nottingham City Council Jon Collins, and APSE's Paul O'Brien.

[Below] Former Chair of the LGA Lord Gary Porter and former Chief Executive of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Neil Schneider at the Commission launch.

Formal Structures

The Commission will be composed of two structures. The Board of Commissioners will take evidence and assess the policy challenges facing local government and make a series of recommendations as to the changes required across local government to ensure its stewardship of place.

It will be supported by the Commission Executive, which will provide logistical and research support to the Commissioners, bringing together and generating evidence, crystallising emerging debates and reporting the findings of the Commission. The lead members of the Executive are:

- Professor Steven Griggs, Director of Local Governance Research Centre, De Montfort University;
- Dr. Arianna Giovannini, Deputy Director of the Local Governance Research Centre, De Montfort University;
- Neil Barnett, Leeds Business School, Leeds Beckett University.

Through evidence gathering sessions, briefing notes, communications and consultations, the Commission are tasked with bringing forward a report, including a series of interim briefings and policy notes, that will help frontline services meet the challenges of the future.

- *To stay up to date with the latest developments, and for more information about the Commission and how to get involved, visit the APSE website or contact Head of APSE Communications and Coordination Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk*

Meet the Commission



Elma Murray OBE
Chief Executive of North Ayrshire Council,
2009-2018

Elma has a local government career of over 35 years. She is passionate about the vital role of public sector services to support local people and the most vulnerable in our communities.

She is the Chair of Young Scot (Scotland's youth information and citizenship charity) and has a specific focus on transformation, children's services, wellbeing and inclusive growth.

Over her career she has held several senior positions including Chair of SOLACE (Scotland), Directors of the Improvement Service and of Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company, Depute Director of Finance and Head of Service Reform at Glasgow City Council, Head of IT Services at North Ayrshire and at Strathclyde Police.

Between 2016 and 2018, Elma sat on the National Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Board and the DYW Delivery Group, working to support and oversee the development and implementation of regional Employer-led DYW Groups to create more opportunities for young people to get into employment.



Heather Wakefield
Head of Local Government, Police and
Justice at Unison, 2001-2018

While at UNISON, Heather was a member of the Low Pay Commission and the Fawcett/LGIU Commission on Women in Local Government.

She is a regular commentator and writer on local government issues and recently wrote 'Triple Whammy - Women and the Cuts in Local Government' for the Women's Budget Group.

Before joining UNISON, she was the Women's Rights Officer at NCCL (now Liberty) after working for a number of years on the Lewisham Women's Employment Project - investigating women's employment and training needs in London's Docklands. Prior to that she was a social worker and policy officer in the London Borough of Newham.

Heather also worked for Unison as a researcher for the National Union of Public Employees and as a Regional official in the Greater London Region.



Gary Porter, Lord Porter of Spalding CBE
Chairman of the LGA, 2015-2019

A former Chairman of the District Councils' Network, Gary chaired the LGA Environment and Housing Board for two years before becoming Conservative Group Leader and Vice-Chairman of LGA in June 2011. In 2013 he was

awarded a CBE for services to Local Government. He was elected LGA Chairman at the General Assembly in June 2015.

One of Gary's main achievements in his time as Chairman was his leading role in the campaign to negotiate the scrapping of the government cap on how much local authorities can borrow against their Housing Revenue Account assets to fund new developments.

He also helped to secure an extra £2billion for adult social care, and following the Grenfell Tower tragedy successfully lobbied the Government to pay for all of the council and housing association buildings that required re-cladding.



Neil Schneider
Chief Executive of Stockton-on-Tees
Borough Council, 2008-2019

Neil was Chief Executive at Stockton Borough Council for 11 years where his commitment to people development and customer service assisted the Council in being shortlisted for

APSE Council of the Year for 10 years consecutively, winning it in 2010.

He helped establish one of the country's first housing ALMOs and a thriving leisure trust.

He has held a variety of roles in local government spanning 37 years, during which time he has led major regeneration projects - recently helping Stockton win the Rising Star award in the 2016 High Street of the Year awards that led Bill Grimsey to describe him as a maverick and a visionary. Neil is now delivering leadership programmes in the public sector and is a non-executive Director of a local NHS Trust.



Jon Collins
Leader of Nottingham City Council, 2003-
2019

Jon has 40 years experience of local government, the public and voluntary sector. He has been a Nottingham City Councillor for 32 years, Council leader for 16 years and variously responsible for

community development, community safety, property and finance management, transport, neighbourhood and city centre regeneration

and economic development.

During his 16 years as Leader, Nottingham became Britain's cleanest big city and crime dropped from nearly 75,000 crimes per year to less than 35,000. Under his leadership, the Council also developed a reputation for innovation and enterprise, boosting its commercial income by over £20million in the last 4 years. This has included establishing Robin Hood Energy, the first municipally owned not-for-profit energy company, as well as a joint venture housing development and regeneration company called Blueprint.



COMMISSION CHAIR - Paul O'Brien
APSE Chief Executive

Paul has commissioned and contributed to over 100 APSE research publications on topics as diverse as housing, energy, finance, scrutiny, commercialisation and devolution. These have

been produced with respected bodies such as TCPA, CLES, NPI, CIPFA and CIPS. A key strand of APSE research

is through an excellent partnership with De Montfort University. Through this partnership, APSE took part in a Knowledge Transfer Programme, which was awarded 'outstanding' status by the European Social Research Group.

Paul was named in the LGC magazine's 100 most influential in local government. He was a member of the Guardian's Local Government Network Advisory Board and is also a board member on the partnership which delivered the ODPM's National Councillor Mentoring Programme.

The measure of tomorrow

20 years of benchmarking

Key note speakers include:

Performance management in America - Bertha Johnson, City of Durham Budget and Management Services Director, North Carolina, United States of America

Benchmarking the performance of councils in France - Hervé Guillaume, Co-ordinator, Association Des Villes Pour La Propreté Urbaine

How are front line services performing? - Debbie Johns, Head of Performance Networks, APSE

Latest opinion polls on local government frontline services - Paul Smith, Director for Government & Public Sector, Survation

Climate change emergency and funding the gap - Dr Peter Kenway, Director, New Policy Institute.

Register at www.apse.org.uk



5 and 6 December 2019

Grand Hotel, Blackpool

New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome **Go Plant Fleet Services**



Go Plant Fleet Services, one of the UK's leading providers of specialist commercial vehicles, has been confirmed as Approved Partners of APSE.

The company has been delivering a wide range of cost-effective solutions for public and private sector customers for more than 40 years. It provides a comprehensive suite of fleet management services, road and pedestrian sweepers, refuse collection trucks, gritters and other vehicles on both operated and short-term hire as well as repair and maintenance. Furthermore, its nationwide network of almost 50 depots and service centres means it offers the broadest coverage of any fleet provider in the country.

Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, said, "As a nationwide company with vast experience and expertise, Go Plant Fleet Services set the benchmark in the provision of solutions for specialist commercial vehicles. They offer an outstanding service to local authorities across the UK and we're delighted that they're now on board. Judging by their record in safety, reliability and professionalism, I'm sure they will provide services of immense value to our members."

Go Plant Fleet Services places strong emphasis on working in partnership with local authority customers to deliver solutions perfectly tailored to their requirements.

Graham Hale, Chief Executive, said: "Our people set the standard in fleet hire solutions and we've built a strong reputation by consistently providing excellence. It's our vision to become known as THE company to call for any service connected to specialist vehicles – and we're well on our way. Our customer-first policy is designed to ensure we deliver the highest standards of service and it's that kind of approach, alongside the sheer scale of the business and the vast expertise behind it, that helps us to stand out from the crowd.

"We already work in partnership with more than 60 local authorities across the UK and we hope that linking with APSE will help us to build on those relationships and establish many more."

For more information on Go Plant Fleet Services, visit www.go-plant.co.uk



APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien, outgoing National Chair Cllr. John Kerr-Brown and Co-Vice Chair of APSE's northern region Cllr. Julie Simpson present Go Plant's Amanda Brown with the Approved Partner Certificate at the Annual Seminar.



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Annual Seminar 2019

Report back

A quick look at this year's excellent speakers

Message from APSE's National Chair

A welcome message for members from the incoming National Chair, Councillor Mark Pengelly

Service Awards

Check out the winners and finalists of this year's prestigious APSE Service Awards, which celebrate excellence in local government

A big thank you to our overall sponsor:



Annual Seminar 2019

Report Back

Missed this year's annual seminar? We've put together a summary that captures the two-day programme of presentations, workshops and discussions on delivering for local people and local economies.



Cllr. Alison Evison of COSLA takes to the podium for the opening symposium. Joining him on the panel are (L-R) Martin Swales of SOLACE, APSE's Paul O'Brien, Alderman Alan McDowell of NILGA and Cllr. Arwyn Woolcock of the WLGA.

The beautiful and historic city of Newcastle - famous for its industrial heritage, eponymous brown ale and the unmistakable 'Geordie' dialect – provided a superb setting for this year's APSE Annual Seminar.

Hosted in the Grade II listed Newcastle Civic Centre, over 500 delegates, exhibitors and speakers from across the UK made the journey to north east England for two days of workshops, networking and expert insight into the latest legislative and technological developments in the sector.

We provide an overview of what was a "reet canny" seminar.

Opening Symposium: Defining the issues for local councils across the UK

Opening up the Seminar, Deputy Leader of Newcastle City Council, Cllr. Joyce McCarty, welcomed delegates to the city, and spoke of looking forward to an event that would "provide a wonderful opportunity for local government to reflect, share best practice and find creative solutions in order to help protect our communities."

Session one opened with a panel discussion exploring the financial and policy dynamics at local government level. First up was APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien, who highlighted some of the many public policy challenges – climate change, housing crisis, decline of the high street – confronting local government. For Paul, embracing a new municipalism is key to overcoming these messy issues.

Up next was Chief Executive of South Tyneside Council and President of Solace Martin Swales, urging the Government to deliver a clear and confident long-term financial settlement for local authorities so that they may alleviate the acute pressures on the frontline.

After Martin, President of COSLA Cllr. Alison Evison made the case for strengthening local democracy: "I firmly believe we need a shift in where decisions are made and where powers lie ... democracy, devolution and empowerment are the focus of mine and COSLA's agenda." Alison was followed by Alderman Alan McDowell, Vice President of NILGA, discussing the challenges facing local government

in Northern Ireland, not least the political stalemate and the issue of Brexit. Finally, representing the WLGA, Cllr. Arwyn Woolcock spoke of how the relationship between councils and the Welsh Government is developing into one that is more constructive and based on principles of partnership; helping to ensure a more localist agenda.

Tomorrow's world

The focus of session two was on the critical factors for developing the councils of tomorrow. First up was Professor Steven Griggs of De Montfort University to discuss APSE's latest report on how chief officers in local authorities are experiencing the shifting landscape of local government, and how they are making sense of its leadership challenges. Another APSE report - "Neighbourhood services and sustainable local government" - was the topic of our next speaker's presentation with delegates hearing from report author Dr Peter Kenway about local authority neighbourhood services taking a bigger share of austerity than other council services. Peter called for a restoration of the link between local government spending and the growth rate of the economy back to a minimum level of 6.2% of GDP. You can read more about this report on page 23.

Our final speaker in the session was Joyce White OBE, Chief Executive of West Dunbartonshire Council, who outlined her Council's priorities - delivering homes, tackling inequalities and poverty, being a listening council - as well as the significant investment in regeneration that is helping to deliver on these priorities.

Future-proofing frontline services

Creating sustainable neighbourhoods was the theme of Session 3 with Katherine Kynaston, Assistant Director in Business, Development and Employment at Telford & Wrekin Council taking to the podium first. Delegates heard how, to address the housing crisis in the local area, the Council set up a new wholly owned company called Nuplace to manage more than 400 private and affordable homes to rent. Since 2015/16 Nuplace has generated a cumulative net income for the



Joyce White OBE, Chief Executive of West Dunbartonshire Council, discusses her Council's priorities. Joyce's fellow panelists for session two included Professor Steven Griggs and Dr Peter Kenway of the New Policy Institute.

Council of over £2m with housing management services delivered by local authority teams.

Up next was Terry Collins, Chief Executive of Durham County Council, explaining to delegates how maximising the use of in-house services has helped the authority generate significant efficiencies. Terry also spoke about improving community wellbeing, boosting tourism and creating a positive culture in the Council and in the wider community.

Operational hubs

Day one was capped off with a workshop session which involved six specially operationally focused hubs. These forums looked at innovation, the latest industry developments and technologies; with a strong focus on how others are improving their operational frontline services

Forum 1 focused on technical and highways services and was facilitated by Head of APSE Performance Networks Debbie Johns. Over in Forum 2, APSE's Mo Baines explored property, housing and investments with special guest speaker Cllr. Giles McNeill, Leader of West Lindsey District Council.

In Forum 3 Head of APSE Solutions Andy Mudd asked, in the context of the proposals within the Resources and Waste strategy, whether underground bins could provide a viable and efficient option for councils in the future. Joining Andy was Marcus Machell of Contenur, who was there to take questions from delegates on the practicalities of underground refuse systems. In association with LACA, Forum 4 focused on soft facilities management. Facilitated by Head of APSE Training Jan Kennedy, the forum looked at the contribution of FM services to the health and wellbeing of children and communities.

Forum 5 was the APSE Energy zone, where Head of APSE Energy Phil Brennan led the discussion on how councils can 'go green' on their own energy needs as well as provide to residents and businesses and generate much needed sources of new income in return. This Forum was kindly sponsored by Migrate Energy. The Leadership Forum - Forum 6 - was facilitated by Professor Steven Griggs and, touching on his latest research with APSE, considered how local councils are responding to changing demands on leaders and chief officers.

Climate Emergencies

The first session of day two - session four - explored the contribution of councils to positive action, with a specific focus on the climate crisis. The session opened with a keynote address from Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy at BEIS. In the wake of climate emergencies



Cllr. Jacqui Burnett of Luton Borough Council poses a question to the panel - comprised of Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy at BEIS and Michael Lenaghan of Zero Waste Scotland - during session four.



Q&A time during session six: The APSE Local Government Commission 2030 hear from Cllr. Julie Simpson of Gateshead Council.

being declared by local authorities across the UK, Patrick examined the shifting landscape of skills, procurement and planning, and how local government can lead the way in the green agenda. The circular economy was the topic of our next speaker - Michael Lenaghan of Zero Waste Scotland - who explained to delegates why it is essential to fighting climate change, and why the public sector is essential to a more circular, sustainable economy in a world with limited resources.

Local economic strategies

A closer look at income generation and local economies was on the agenda in session five. First, delegates were taken on a first-class trip to 'Scarbados' as Richard Bradley, Commercial Director at Scarborough Council, spoke about the Council's investment strategy and how it has helped to deliver economic growth and employment skills for local residents and businesses.

From across the Pennines, Adrian Phillips, Chief Executive at Preston City Council, provided an overview of how the Council's community wealth building approach has returned real value to the local economy through its 'anchor strategy' of increasing spending to local suppliers. This has led to Preston being named as the most improved city according to the Demos/PWC Good Growth for Cities Index 2018.

Our final speaker of the session was Bernie Pich, Assistant Director of Commercial and Property at Wokingham Borough Council. With high street shops closing en masse across the UK, Bernie told delegates how his Council had reimagined the Wokingham offer to attract local shoppers. As well as a slew of new retailers setting up in the city, the regeneration has created over 900 new jobs from construction to retail, and developed in-house skills for future projects and investment.

Local Government Commission 2030

The final session of the day and the seminar involved the launch of the Commission. The launch provided delegates with the opportunity to meet three of the Commissioners - Jon Collins, Lord Gary Porter and Neil Schneider - and have their say in what elements they wished the Commission to probe in developing its work over the coming year advancing Local Government to 2030. Unfortunately, two of the Commissioners - Heather Wakefield and Elma Murray - were unable to join us in person but did address delegates via video link. What followed the initial introductions was a robust discussion on finance, reorganisation, infrastructure and democracy that could have continued well into the night. For more information about the Commission, please turn to page 6.

If you would like to view any of the speakers' presentations, please visit the APSE website. Alternatively, email Vicky Starmer on vstarmer@apse.org.uk

A message from APSE National Chair 2019/2020, Cllr. Mark Pengelly



I am delighted to be elected as the APSE National chair for 2019-2020. It is a real honour to be entrusted with the position of National Chair within an organisation I hold so close to my heart. APSE is very much like an extended

family with the closest members to me being my colleagues within APSE's Central region and on our National Council. I take on the role of National Chair with my New National Secretary, Karen Bradford, who is Chief Executive of Gedling Borough Council and I am lucky to inherit a vibrant and strong organisation from my predecessor Chair Cllr. John Kerr Brown and National Secretary Anita Brown.

APSE has always thrived on the relationships and networks which exist between our member local councils. During my own term of office I am confident that those bonds of mutual respect, integrity and reaching out across the local government family will only strengthen further. One of the ways in which we provide that mutual support is through APSE's research programme; with many member councils taking part in our studies and sharing their learning and successes. APSE's

overarching research theme is our ongoing work on 'New Municipalism' but under that banner of course we see a myriad of different policy themes emerging including housing; finance; neighbourhoods; the environment; tackling inequality; digitalisation and the workforce and of course our local high streets.

I have to confess I have something of a personal interest in the policy agenda around the future of high streets and our town centres. I am active in the Trade Union USDAW and have seen first-hand the impact of decline in town centres; not just on the retail jobs sector but also on the resilience and attractiveness of local areas and local economies. As part of my year in office, APSE will be exploring the issues surrounding our local high streets and town centres and investigating how we, as local councils, can act to reinvigorate them.

Alongside high streets and town centres a huge swathe of APSE member councils have recently declared motions to take action on the climate emergency, including my own council Corby. Whilst austerity has dominated the political landscape in local government over the last decade, I am acutely aware that the climate emergency will be the dominating

force in the coming decade. I will ensure that this issue is built thematically into all of APSE's services to members so that when councils are looking for practical actions on climate change APSE will be at the fore with workable and operationally savvy solutions to help on the road to decarbonisation.

Of course 2019 is also the 20th anniversary of the relaunch of the association as APSE. In 1999 we implemented our Millennium Charter and started to build many of the services that members use today. The strength of APSE reflects this concentration on our core services and the two decades of growth are down to that strategy. Indeed the work of APSE over the last 20 years has only been possible by ensuring the services we provide to our members are sustainable. Therefore, keeping the ship steady in our core services, as set out in our ongoing business plan, will be part and parcel of my approach – securing APSE's future for the next 20 years.

I thank you all for supporting me as National Chair and you have my absolute commitment in the coming 12 months to serve you well alongside our new National Secretary Karen Bradford. We promise to do you proud!

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Annual Service Awards 2019

Celebrating outstanding achievement and innovation within
local government service delivery

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PL**TBOX**

Best Workforce Initiative

Kindly sponsored by UNISON



It's all about the Why, not just the How

As recycling services expanded, reliance on agency staff to supplement the workforce grew. Whilst one option to reduce this reliance was straightforward recruitment, the Council felt that the changing nature of waste management would benefit from a cultural shift towards a fully

Finalists

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Calderdale Council
City and County of Swansea
Glasgow City Council
South Ayrshire Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Sunderland City Council

Winner: City and County of Swansea

flexible workforce with a wider understanding. Knowing the intricacies of why things are best done a certain way, and why some things can't be done, is a great motivator and reduces frustrations regarding change. The Trainee Partnership was born.

Best Housing, Regeneration or New Build Initiative

Kindly sponsored by Fraser & Fraser



Port Talbot Integrated Living Programme

The Integrated Living Programme is an ambitious, high impact and transformational urban regeneration programme that has been delivered in the town centre of Port Talbot. The programme delivered an investment of over £45m through integrated and complementary projects including

Finalists

City of Wolverhampton Council
Hartlepool Borough Council
Hull City Council
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Southampton City Council
Sunderland City Council

Winner: Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

housing, commercial, transportation and public realm interventions. The delivery of the programme required a coordination and collaborative approach led by the Council in partnership with several organisations with innovative governance and management arrangements.

Best Efficiency and Transformation Initiative

Kindly sponsored by Yotta



Nottingham's Electric Fleet Transformation

Nottingham City Council is a forward-thinking authority with a track record for integrated transport delivery. The Council are now delivering efficiencies by electrifying its fleet – improving air quality, saving taxpayers' money through reduced vehicle costs and providing an

Finalists

Birmingham City Council
Durham County Council
Manchester City Council
Nottingham City Council
Scarborough Borough Council
Sheffield City Council
Thurrock Council

Winner: Nottingham City Council

improved environment for drivers. Within three years the Council has transformed its fleet from two electric vehicles to 62 – nearly 1/3 of the light fleet. By December 2019, the Council will double that to 132 ULEVs – the highest percentage of any local authority.

Best Health and Well-being Initiative (incl. Social Care)

Kindly sponsored by UNISON



Livewell Service

Derby City Council's Livewell service offers free lifestyle programmes to help adults and children in Derby to manage their weight, stop smoking, get fitter and improve their overall wellbeing. The 12-month programmes combine one to one and group support with fun activities

Finalists

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
 Cheshire East Council
 Darlington Borough Council
 Derby City Council (Livewell)
 Lancaster City Council
 NHS Ayrshire and Arran
 Wirral Council

Winner: Derby City Council (Livewell)

and educational workshops to help families to change their lifestyles for the better. Since 2013, the service has supported over 15,000 people to transform their lives thanks to an innovative behaviour change model which interlinks lifestyle risks.

Best Public/Private Partnership Working Initiative

Kindly sponsored by the Fleet Auction Group



Shaping Southampton through Digital Excellence

Making highways digital may sound like an impossible task – but Southampton City Council and Balfour Beatty have been working in partnership for over 8 years to do just that. Implementing a 'Digital by Design' initiative for the Highways Service has been key to providing a

Finalists

Cityserve (Birmingham City Council)
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council
 Harrogate Borough Council
 Liverpool City Council
 Norsecare Ltd (Norfolk County Council)
 South Gloucestershire Council
 Southampton City Council / Balfour Beatty

Winner: Southampton City Council / Balfour Beatty

'future ready', outcome-driven service that can continue to meet the high level of demand and expectation from customers, within the context of an ever-reducing budget.

Best Collaborative Working Initiative (with other public sector or third sector)

Kindly sponsored by Invotra



Working Together to End Rough Sleeping

The City of Wolverhampton recently experienced a sharp rise in rough sleepers and with it potentially devastating social costs and escalating demands on public resources. The Council has led a highly effective multi-agency response focused on offering tailored, comprehensive

Finalists

Cheltenham Borough Council
 City of Lincoln Council
 City of Wolverhampton Council
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council
 Hartlepool Borough Council
 Somerset Independence Plus (Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, Mendip District Council and West Somerset District Council)
 Sefton Council
 Xentrall Shared Services (Darlington Borough Council and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)

Winner: City of Wolverhampton Council

support designed to tackle the root causes. Rough sleeping has fallen sharply and the city has a new, sustainable approach that better utilises the skills and resources of the Council and its partners.

Best Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship Initiative

Kindly sponsored by Commercial Services Group



Calculated Risk Taking

By 2022, Cheltenham Borough Council will have made significant local investments and is predicting a financial net surplus. This will be the result of long-term fiscal planning; embracing calculated risks with commercial opportunities and boldly encouraging growth in a climate of austerity.

Finalists

One West (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
Birmingham City Council
Cheltenham Borough Council
Liverpool City Council (Culture Liverpool)
North Norfolk District Council
Stockport Homes Group (Stockport Council)
Sunderland City Council
Thurrock Council

Winner: Cheltenham Borough Council

Despite a challenging financial environment, the Council maintain investment in the frontline and public realm – through innovative shared services, safeguarding existing services, skilled treasury management and astute commercial investments with a clear sense of purpose.

Best Community and Neighbourhood Initiative (incl. Community Safety)

Kindly sponsored by Leafield Environmental



#GiveAGift Campaign

Thurrock Council pledged to provide 2,400 children in need with a present for Christmas Day. The challenge – to achieve this using communications effectively to generate a social revolution harnessing Thurrock's community spirit and the generosity of residents, businesses

Finalists

Cheshire East Council
Darlington Borough Council
Derry City and Strabane District Council
East Ayrshire Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Stevenage Borough Council
Thurrock Council
Trafford Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Winner: Thurrock Council

and council officers at almost no cost to the council tax payer. The communications campaign reached over 300,000 and the whole project ran on just £1,000. #GiveAGift exceeded the number of presents and delivered a little Christmas magic for Thurrock's children.

Best Innovation or Demand Management Initiative

Kindly sponsored by Contenur



Creating Employment Opportunities for Local Authority Care Leavers

With over 120 per 10,000 Children in care – double the national average, Wirral has operational and financial challenges in meeting its care leaver responsibilities. This pioneering programme, with enormous long-term financial benefits, sees Wirral working with its direct supply chain

Finalists

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Darlington Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
North Norfolk District Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Wealden District Council
Wirral Council

Winner: Wirral Council

providing opportunities to disadvantaged young people through full time work and apprenticeships, enabling young people to feel valued, supported, optimistic about their future and recognise the benefits and of full-time employment whilst being less reliant on the local authority.

Best Renewable Energy or Energy Efficiency Initiative

Kindly sponsored by Salix Finance



Dundee's Electric Vehicle Charging Hubs

Dundee is regarded as Scotland's leading city in the adoption, promotion and operation of electric vehicles. In 2018, Dundee City Council embarked on an EV infrastructure project building three revolutionary EV multi charging hubs across the city. Putting the city at the forefront of

Finalists

- Brent Council
- Derby City Council
- Dundee City Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Public Power Solutions (Swindon Borough Council)
- South Gloucestershire Council

Winner: Dundee City Council

EV charging technology not only in the UK but also in Europe; allowing the city to provide data and knowledge for other such projects in the UK and beyond.

Best Service Team of the Year: Construction and Building Service

Kindly sponsored by De Montfort University



Design Services Team of the Year

The Design Services Team is the heart of North Kesteven's progressive and ambitious approach in increasing Council houses and delivering more choice across the HRA, General fund and its housing company. They are engaged people who understand the commercial realities of

Finalists

- 3C Shared Services (Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council)
- Bristol City Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- North Kesteven District Council
- Wealden District Council

Winner: North Kesteven District Council

construction and the dynamics of delivery, with a passion to design value and excellence into every aspect of every project. Their secret is mutual respect and trust, with the support and understanding of finance, tenancy and housing needs colleagues.

Best Service Team of the Year: Catering Service

Kindly sponsored by the New Policy Institute



Cityserve (Birmingham City Council)

A perfect storm is brewing: austerity, academisation, threats to funding, increased competition, escalating costs and of course, Brexit; these are exceptionally difficult and complex times for local authority caterers, many of whom are fighting to survive. Cityserve is responding to these

Finalists

- Cityserve (Birmingham City Council)
- Edsential (Cheshire West and Chester Council and Wirral Council)
- Gateshead Council
- Lancaster City Council
- LTS Catering Services (Leicestershire County Council)
- Oxfordshire County Council

Winner: CityServe (Birmingham City Council)

challenges through restructuring and the implementation of scalable IT, the insourcing of services, innovative product design and development including a time and money saving free-cashless pre-order system and contract free-access to flexible bundles of services.

Best Service Team of the Year: Facilities Management and Building Cleaning Service

Kindly sponsored by Edsential



A whole team approach to an improved service

Durham County Council's Building and Facilities Maintenance Team is an innovative and award-winning service, providing a one-stop-shop facilities management solution to the council and customers across the North East.

Finalists

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Durham County Council
Gateshead Council
Manchester City Council
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
South Tyneside Council

Winner: Durham County Council

Through investment in the team and equipment, the Council have developed an FM and Cleaning service that is achieving financial savings, providing an excellent high-quality Value for Money commercial service, whilst ensuring the highest safety standards are maintained.

Best Service Team of the Year: Highways, Winter Maintenance and Street Lighting Service

Kindly sponsored by Archway Roadmaster



Transforming the Roads to Wigan Pier

Wigan Council provides highway services to 325,000 residents, working 365 days a year to keep the borough's infrastructure and residents safe. These frontline services can be too easily be taken for granted, particularly when faced with one of the top 10 largest budget reductions

Finalists

Cheshire East Council
Derby City Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Southampton City Council / Balfour Beatty
Wigan Council

Winner: Wigan Council

- £160m (43%). The Council introduced The Deal, an informal agreement between the Council and residents to 'transform rather than cut services' to protect the most vulnerable and keep the front-line services that resident's value.

Best Service Team of the Year: Transport and Fleet Maintenance Service

Kindly sponsored by Go Plant Fleet Services



New Initiatives to improve the Delivery of Fleet Management

Fife Council has invested in a diverse range of vehicles and plants to enable the delivery of frontline services to the community of Fife. Fleet Operations is responsible for procuring assets to ensure best value, ongoing fleet management and maintenance including mandatory

Finalists

East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Fife Council
Oxford Direct Services Ltd (Oxford City Council)
Scarborough Borough Council
South Gloucestershire Council
Sunderland City Council

Winner: Fife Council

compliance. The Council fleet currently comprises 1,418 road registered vehicles and 135 items of plant. Since 2011-12, the demand challenge approach has reduced the fleet by over 300 vehicles ensuring a low carbon sustainable fleet into the future.

Best Service Team of the Year: Cemetery and Crematorium Service

Kindly sponsored by Plotbox



Working for excellence

Cardiff Bereavement Services is an innovative, income-generating, customer focused service with a 99% Customer satisfaction rating. The service consists of a small team committed to assisting the bereaved and meeting the needs of the community we serve. The team are South

Finalists

- Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Cardiff Council
- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Gedling Borough Council
- Kettering Borough Council
- Oxford Direct Services Ltd (Oxford City Council)

Winner: Cardiff Council

Wales' only holder of the Gold standard in the Charter for the Bereaved and maintain two Green Flag Sites. In 2018, the Council became the first cemetery in Wales to hold the Green Flag Heritage Flag for Cathays Cemetery.

Best Service Team of the Year: Waste Management and Recycling Service

Kindly sponsored by Bartec Auto ID



Waste and Recycling Team

East Riding of Yorkshire Council has achieved England's top recycling rate for two years running. The Team's proactive schemes and close partnership working with residents has increased recycling, improved services and attracted international attention. Refuse collectors battled

Finalists

- City and County of Swansea
- City of Wolverhampton Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Harrogate Borough Council
- Newry Mourne and Down District Council
- Renfrewshire Council

Winner: East Riding of Yorkshire Council

appalling weather conditions during the 'Beast from the East' to make sure every bin was emptied. Despite huge budget pressures, the team worked hard to overcome them and end the year with a balanced budget.

Best Service Team of the Year: Street Cleansing and Streetscene Service (Public Realm)

Kindly sponsored by Enevo



Working for Oxford

2018 saw the first year in which Parks and Open Spaces (Parks) ventured as part of a wholly owned social enterprise through Oxford Direct Services (ODS). The service is responsible for the maintenance for all publicly owned verges, parks, cemeteries, play areas, trees, allotments

Finalists

- Islington Council
- London Borough of Redbridge Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Oxford Direct Services Ltd (Oxford City Council)
- Royal Borough of Greenwich
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Winner: Oxford Direct Services Ltd (Oxford City Council)

and countryside sites. The transition has been seamless, with City Council and ODS service standards being upheld to excellent levels whilst moving forward.

Best Service Team of the Year: Parks, Grounds and Horticultural Service

Kindly sponsored by Cemetery Development Services



Putting People First in Parks and Open Spaces

Mid and East Antrim Parks section consists of 120 staff, a £3m budget and manage 300 sites. The team have worked with enthusiasm and commitment to engage with the community, attract external funding of £712,640 and to excel in their field of work. This includes successes

Finalists

Aberdeen City Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Oxford Direct Services Ltd (Oxford City Council)
Scarborough Borough Council
Sheffield City Council

Winner: Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

in Ulster in Bloom, Britain in Bloom, Green Flag Awards, Seaside Awards and a Blue Flag Awards for our Marina. The Council are the first in NI to support Forest Schools and smoke free playgrounds.

Best Service Team of the Year: Sports, Leisure and Cultural Service

Kindly sponsored by SportsArt



Team Salt Ayre

Award winning Salt Ayre Leisure Centre has recently transformed from a shabby and uninspiring facility to a vibrant community hub. The Centre is a nationally renowned show site for Alliance Leisure, Les Mills, and Precor. When the City Council recently invested £5m in to the

Finalists

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
Culture Liverpool (Liverpool City Council)
Sefton Council
Sunderland City Council
Volair Limited (Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council)

Winner: Lancaster City Council

facility, the entire staff team had to go through genuine organisational transformation. Completely new facilities meant a completely new operation. Dedicated staff now deliver one of the finest, and unique leisure offers in the UK.

Best Service Team of the Year: Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Regulatory Service

Kindly sponsored by British Bins



Working with Partners to Improve Standards in Wakefield City Centre

Working in true partnership with the Police and Wakefield's Business Improvement District it was recognised that the independent off licence premises in Wakefield City Centre were selling single cans of high strength lagers and ciders. This was fuelling anti-social behaviour in our

Finalists

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Darlington Borough Council
Peterborough City Council
Sunderland City Council
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Winner: Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

city intimidating those who wish to shop, visit and work. The partnership set a goal to reduce the sale of high strength cans of alcohol not only by using conventional policing but by utilising the use of Smartwater.

Overall Council of the Year in Service Delivery



Winner:

City of Wolverhampton Council

Finalists:

- Birmingham City Council
- City of Wolverhampton Council
- Darlington Borough Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Sunderland City Council

APSE would like to thank all sponsors of the Service Awards 2019 for their support





Swift, seamless and successful: Insourcing domiciliary care

After the collapse of a local domiciliary care provider, Pembrokeshire County Council took the decision to bring the contract back in-house. Working to a 4 week timescale, we take a look at how the Council's decision helped to drive up quality and innovation in the market.

In line with the political and strategic environment of the time, Pembrokeshire, like many other local authorities, outsourced all its domiciliary care market to private providers. Following changes in legislation, strategic direction, demand and increasing challenges within the domiciliary care market, this policy was reviewed.

After agreeing in principle to create an in-house service and setting up a project group, it was decided that the Council would develop an in-house service that would enable the authority to be more responsive and creative in meeting its statutory duties. The initial meeting was focused on options of what form this could take, and a number of actions were set to bring together evidence, good practice, risks and challenges as well as budgetary implications. The initial project plan envisaged that the work would take at least 12 months before an actual service could be set up.

However, before the planned second meeting could be convened, information was received that a local provider was in extreme financial difficulty and at high risk of closing. The closure of any agency has major implications for a local authority and its customers. In Pembrokeshire's case, these implications were amplified by the current

position - capacity in the market had been a problem, most agencies are small and unable to expand resulting in delays in sourcing care. Recruitment and retention of care staff was another serious issue; if action was not taken promptly to stabilise the situation, the staff from the agency would leave not just their employer but the care sector itself.

Potential gains from insourcing

The project group met and, although acknowledging the risks, also saw this as a potential opportunity. Given that there was no concrete information, it was agreed that there would be informal discussions with key stakeholders to 'test the waters' on the suggestion that, if the agency was unable to continue, the local authority would take over.

Further information confirmed the extent of the agency's problems. A briefing paper was taken to cabinet clearly outlining the options open to the authority: it was agreed that the best course of action was to pursue taking the business in-house. The time scales were extremely tight (4 weeks). This required an extremely detailed and comprehensive project plan, clear leadership and total commitment.

If action was not taken promptly to stabilise the situation, the staff from the agency would leave not just their employer, but the care sector itself.

The project group agreed an updated strategy, identifying the priorities, actions and timescales. There were specific work streams that considered HR, TUPE implications, meetings with staff and unions, financial information and budgetary implications. There was also an operational work stream to ensure that all clients had up to date assessments and care plans to feed into the data collection and, importantly, as a face to face communication with the service users who at this stage were aware that the company would close.

Due to the amount of work, and the extremely tight timescales, the project group began to meet on a daily basis. The Director of Social Services chaired these meetings and was the link to corporate directors and elected members, providing them with reports and updates and ensuring that major decisions were made extremely quickly.

Some of the vital information received that was necessary to progress - in terms

of issues such as TUPE - was sometimes unclear and needed to be verified repeatedly. Communication was therefore key to ensuring the switch was seamless and a success. This involved a multi-layered approach- written communication, meetings, media briefing, and face to face communication by staff in a number of forums.

Driving up quality

Finance was not the driving force within this project. The initial project brief identified cost implications and any potential savings, but these were neither substantial nor immediate. The main driver at the start was to provide a resource that would allow the Council to flexibly and creatively respond to service user need, as well as increase competition and drive up quality and innovation in the market.

It was transparent that, in the short term, taking the service in-house would cost more. But the Council was also clear about the potential financial and reputational costs if action wasn't taken. There was a danger that, given the authority had to meet the assessed needs of the agency customers under statutory duties, and given the lack of market capacity in the area, the Authority would be faced with the option of either contracting at a vastly increased price to an alternative provider or placing the individuals in residential care, again at both an increased cost financially.

However, the project did (and has) highlighted how having an in-house service can offer value for money in terms of its oversight and scrutiny, and being able to utilise other resources. So, as an example, the Council was able to mobilise an internal team to look at manual handling practices; resulting in improved quality and reduction of staff hours required. Insourcing the service has also led to more efficient business processes and a more efficient deployment of staff; staff are happier as they are able to achieve a higher income by working fewer days.

Furthermore, as other council services – cleaning, catering – are having to reduce staff hours and downsize due to budgetary pressures, the Council are considering the option of recruiting these staff into their domiciliary care service as part of a dual contract (subject to training). A Development Officer has also recently been appointed to explore innovative ways of stimulating the workforce and bringing new people into the caring profession e.g through using an apprenticeship scheme.

- *APSE's insourcing report 'Rebuilding Capacity: The case for insourcing public services' explores the growing phenomena of insourcing. For more information about the publication, please contact Mo Baines on mbaines@apse.org.uk*

It's time for local government spending to be restored to a minimum sustainable level

Over the nine years from 2009/10, resources devoted to neighbourhood services across Britain fell 27 per cent. This new report, published by APSE and written by the New Policy Institute (NPI), argues local government spending must, as a matter of urgency, be restored to a minimum sustainable level.

Neighbourhood services are critical to residents and businesses alike. Delivered by local councils, these frontline public services - parks and public realm, recycling, bin collections, roads and highways - are vital to the wellbeing of local areas and local people. However, when it comes to public funding they are at the back of the queue.

The latest report from APSE and the NPI finds that over the nine years from 2009/10 resources devoted to neighbourhood services across Britain fell 27 per cent representing a total of £8.9bn in 2017/18 prices. This is against the background of a real fall in total UK local government spending over the same period of 19 per cent demonstrating that neighbourhood services have taken a bigger share of austerity than other council services.

Given the importance of these services to local communities and local businesses, the report builds an argument for a sustained increase in local government spending on neighbourhood services, supported by an analysis of how increases might be distributed across the 70 or so individual services.

This report calls for a restoration of the link between local government spending and the growth rate of the economy back to a minimum level of 6.2 per cent of GDP. This would provide an additional sum of some £3.2bn and would provide a welcome step-up to begin to restore a minimum sustainable level for neighbourhood services. This additional £3.2bn would, on average, represent a 12 per cent increase in neighbourhood services budgets.

Lead report author, Dr Peter Kenway said, "From an economic point of view, the parlous state of local government finance reflects the fact that its spending as a share of GDP is at its lowest level for 50 years. It dropped below the old record (6.2 per cent) in 2016/17 and is still heading on down."

"From an economic point of view, the parlous state of local government finance reflects the fact that its spending as a share of GDP is at its lowest level for 50 years." Dr Peter Kenway

Paul O'Brien APSE's Chief Executive added, "It is now clear that reductions in local government spending has gone too far. In spite of well-intentioned announcements by the Chancellor to allow

public spending to grow in real terms at 1.2 per cent a year from 2020/21 this is not enough to prevent the share of local government spending in the whole economy from continuing to slide."

The report combines quantitative and qualitative evidence to highlight that reductions in local government spending have gone too far, and in particular finds that the impact of spending cuts has hit the poorest areas hardest. When compared on a per head basis, spending on neighbourhood services by the one third of authorities with the lowest spending in 2017/18 has fallen further since 2009/10 than spending by authorities with higher levels.

Paul O'Brien added, "To address these deepening concerns local government spending must, as a matter of urgency, be restored to a minimum sustainable level after which its growth must be linked to the growth rate of the economy. Only when that has happened will austerity for local government truly be over".

This article was written in advance of the Spending Review in September.



- The full report 'Neighbourhood services and sustainable local government' can be downloaded for free from the research pages on the APSE website www.apse.org.uk

To purchase a hard copy, please email wai.lee@apse.org.uk

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Getting to grips with the climate crisis

The Climate Emergency momentum has raised some very hard questions at a local level. With councils across the UK wrestling with how to properly address this issue, the APSE Climate Emergency Seminar aimed to bring some clarity to an important and complex issue.

July was the hottest month ever recorded in history – with the UK seeing a new high temperature of 38.7C in Cambridge. Record-breaking temperatures gripped the country and most of the northern hemisphere; causing serious travel disruption, health warnings and raising urgent questions about the sustainability of public services in the face of increasingly volatile weather events.

With temperatures soaring, delegates gathered in Liverpool for a sold-out APSE seminar focusing on how local authorities can best equip themselves for dealing with the growing threat of extreme weather.

“The defining issue of the coming decade”

Session one began with a key note address by APSE Chief Executive, Paul O’Brien. Paul outlined the APSE position: that local authority climate emergency declarations need to take an organisation wide approach. They cannot be addressed effectively by a small team within the authority but need to be everyone’s responsibility. Identified as the defining issue for councils in the coming decade, Paul stressed that climate change now has to be factored into a local authority’s financial strategy with short, medium and long-term planning.

The BEIS Perspective

Next up to the podium was Patrick Allcorn, Head of Local Energy at the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Patrick highlighted the importance of setting a net-zero target in order to have any chance of meeting the 1.5C global warming limit.

He noted that energy is an important factor when it comes to climate change and will become even more significant as the demand for air conditioning increases. However, as housing stock varies significantly across the UK and different regions will have a varying capacity for certain forms of renewable energy (such as geothermal), the national and local picture may not always align. Instead, councils will often need to think local when searching for energy solutions. Patrick stated that this agenda is not just about energy but also the economic opportunity, community benefits and the wider value in investing in projects such as energy from waste. To achieve net-zero it is vital that local authorities work closely with each other as well as with national Government and the private sector.

Bristol – The first city to declare a Climate Emergency

After becoming the first city to declare a climate emergency, Alex Minshull, Sustainable City and Climate Change Manager at Bristol City Council, discussed the ways the Council is turning that policy into reality. Bristol have recently escalated their targets as part of their “One City Climate Strategy”; pledging to make the city of Bristol carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.

Alex then went on to outline other climate actions planned by the Council. This includes the introduction of the City Leap programme – a new way to generate, transport, store and use energy - as well as retrofitting 7,000 homes every year, ensuring new council-built homes meet environmental standards of 20% lower emissions, target reaching 50,000 electric vehicles in the city and a 200% increase in renewable energy in Bristol.

State Action and Municipal Governments: What can we learn from Europe?

The final presentation in session one was from Dr Peter Eckersley, a Senior Research Fellow at Nottingham Trent University. Peter focused his presentation on power, capacity and climate change, outlining that power is not just about control and not just about legal competence or jurisdiction – it’s about having the resources and capacity to do what you want to do. Austerity and economic decline have stripped out capacity within many councils. Local authorities have to therefore look elsewhere for resources such as money, networks and staff, if they do not have sufficient internal capacity to address public problems effectively.

Peter provided two case studies from Gelsenkirchen in Germany and Newcastle in the UK. He noted how important it is to look at which measures work best in certain areas; identifying and using assets such as universities and sports clubs to build strengths and address weaknesses.

Ensuring green local infrastructure - TCPA

Session 2 opened with a presentation from Hugh Ellis, Head of Policy at the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), who considered the legislation that underpins planning.

Hugh stressed that it was important councils aligned their local plans with the Climate Change Act; if there isn't a clear carbon reduction plan then the plans are not lawful. Hugh then moved on to the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), which makes clear that 'mitigating and adapting to climate change' is a core planning objective. To be in conformity with the NPPF, local plans should reflect this principle, ensuring that planning policy clearly and comprehensively deals with climate change mitigation and adaptation. The NPPF also highlights climate change as key part of strategic planning policy which local authorities are legally obliged to set out in their local plans.

Dundee leading the international charge on EV use and air quality

Our next speaker, Cllr. Mark Flynn, Depute Convener of City Development at Dundee City Council, provided the context for Dundee and their commitment to tackle climate change and improve air quality. The Council declared a climate emergency on 24 June 2019, passing a motion to set a science-based target of working towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 or sooner.

Mark also provided an update on Dundee City Council's electric vehicle (EV) journey. Dundee's Council fleet contains more EVs than any other local authority. The city has become a test bed for EV projects including e-bikes, pop-up chargers, and a 20mph zone.

The Council are also involved in a hydrogen project, JIVE: Joint Initiative for Hydrogen Vehicles across Europe. The aim is to advance commercialisation of hydrogen fuel cell buses through large-scale deployment of vehicles and infrastructure. The Authority currently has 12 hydrogen buses on order and is in the planning stage for a hydrogen from waste production plant.

Lancaster: Striving for Zero Carbon +

Delegates then heard from Mark Davies, Director for Communities and the Environment at Lancaster City Council, about their Zero Carbon+ plans. The Council has declared a climate emergency and set a 2030 net-zero target. Mark outlined the importance of dealing with an emergency by first working out what the problem is, then ensuring that people recognise that problem, establishing a clear chain of command and allocating resources.

For their Council's own emissions, Lancaster are taking a business first approach, setting carbon budgets for functional areas and agreeing a strategy/ plan that link to corporate plans. For the wider district, which accounts for 99.6% of emissions, the Council is focusing on the use of open space, planning / development, transport, partnerships and setting exciting goals. Mark stressed the importance of investing in parks and green spaces. As part of their plan, Lancaster have pledged to plant a million trees to improve air quality, mitigate flood risk and connect people with nature.



Rebecca Kite, Environment Policy Manager for the Freight Transport Association, Rebecca introduces the Logistics Emissions Reduction Scheme (LERS) to delegates.

Logistics Emissions Reduction Scheme (LERS)

Our final speaker for session 2 was Rebecca Kite, Environment Policy Manager for the Freight Transport Association. Rebecca introduced the Logistics Emissions Reduction Scheme (LERS), a free to join industry initiative to record, report and reduce emissions from freight transport. We spoke to Rebecca about this exciting new scheme in the previous edition of APSE Direct. You can read the article on the APSE website.

In the afternoon, delegates split into workstream 1 and workstream 2.

Workstream 1: 'Refuse, Waste, Recycling and Fleet'

The first presentation was from Emily Rae, Project Manager, Deposit Return Scheme, Zero Waste Scotland. Emily outlined the aims of the Scheme; to capture at least 90% of target containers for recycling and increase the current recycling rate of 50%. The Scheme has been forecast to capture an estimated 1.5bn drinks containers for recycling each year. That's an average of around 160,000 tonnes of CO₂eq each year, the equivalent of taking 85,500 cars off the road.

Andy Hickford, Project Manager at Leeds City Council, was up next to discuss how his Council's Fleet Replacement Programme, EV offer and Clean Air Zone (which you can learn about in more detail in APSE Energy's 2019 Energy across the authority publication - free to download from the APSE website).

The final presentation in workstream 1 concerned Leicester's River Monster Project from Victoria Hudson, Community Development Manager, Leicester City Council. The project aim was to raise the profile of the scale of plastic ending up in the city's 8.5mile section of the River Soar. The success of the project was down to engagement with local people, community groups, councillors, directors, local business, schools and National Citizenship Scheme.

Workstream 2: Green transport infrastructure, renewable energy: Developing a corporate plan

Up first was APSE Energy's Charlotte Banks. Charlotte provided an overview of APSE Energy: how it supports local councils in the development and delivery of municipal energy schemes, and the role of municipal energy in tackling climate change. Following Charlotte, a facilitated discussion, led by APSE's Mo Baines, focused on LED street lighting. Mo began by providing insight into the projected overall demand for lighting, which will be 80% higher by 2030 than in 2005. Many local authorities are therefore switching to LED street lighting, which is 40 to 60% more energy efficient than traditional lights. The pros and cons of switch off or dimming policies were debated, with emphasis placed on the need to consider safety.

The next speaker was Steve Cirell, APSE Energy Associate. Steve considered local energy policy in the context of climate emergencies. Steve began by outlining that a declaration affects a range of local government services and that a full organisational response is required and leadership at local level is essential. There needs to be engagement across senior members in an authority to help energy and sustainability officers to progress with necessary projects.

The final presentation was from Fiona Appleton, Regional Account Manager at the Energy Saving Trust. Fiona's presentation focused on Residential Chargepoints: Funding and developing schemes. Fiona began by explaining some of the different options for on-street charging, including charging hubs, lampposts and destination charging. Fiona then provided some information about the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS).

- *This article was taken from the APSE Energy briefing 'Briefing Note 11-19 Notes from Climate Emergency Seminar'. To download the full briefing, visit the APSE website. For more information about how your council can get involved in renewable energy, please contact Phil Brennan, Head of APSE Energy on 0161 772 1810 or at pbrennan@apse.org.uk*

New APSE Approved Partners: Welcome **Police Crime Prevention Academy**



Established in 2017, the Police Crime Prevention Academy delivers accredited qualifications in the field of Problem Solving, Crime Prevention and Designing Out Crime in the UK.

The Police Crime Prevention Academy is just one initiative belonging to Police Crime Prevention Initiatives and is an Approved Centre for the Awarding Body ProQual, with the qualifications being regulated by Ofqual.

Speaking of the partnership, Head of the Academy Guy Collyer said, "The work carried out by all local authorities in the UK ties in very closely with local policing. This partnership is long overdue and we see it as another significant stepping stone to bring police and local authority staff together, so that they may work together to solve problems and reduce crime and antisocial behaviour. This will save time and costs to both agencies and bring about safer communities where we live and work".

All of the Academy's qualifications are open to anyone engaged in security, policing, and community engagement, who work towards and contribute to supporting safer communities. This includes Police, local authorities, security staff and others with an interest in building security such as fire, architects and planners.

The qualifications delivered by the Academy are also available and relevant to the private sector, be it business, retail or industrial settings as well as people working at large corporations and visitor attractions.

APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien said, "Strengthening the link between the police and local government is key to ensuring the safety of diverse communities across the UK. At a time of financial uncertainty, the Academy's courses offer real value for money; I am in no doubt that this partnership will bring significant benefits to our members and I very much look forward to working with them."

For more information, visit www.crimepreventionacademy.com or contact info@crimepreventionacademy.com



Outgoing APSE National Chair John Kerr-Brown and APSE Chief Executive Paul O'Brien present the Police Crime Prevention Academy's Guy Collyer with the Approved Partner Certificate at the Annual Seminar.

Permitted development rights: A potential threat to the health and wellbeing of residents

Launched at the House of Lords on 16 July, APSE's latest Housing report with the TCPA finds that 59% of UK councils report 'severe' shortages of affordable housing. Fiona Howie, Chief Executive of the TCPA, provides an overview of the report.

The current deadlock in UK politics is unprecedented and this continues to frustrate many of us who would welcome a much greater focus on some of the main policy crises of our time. Tackling the UK housing crisis remains one of the top domestic priorities which requires the focus of Government(s) in terms of time, effort and resource input.

It is easy to get drawn into discussions around numbers when discussing the housing crisis but what is equally important is the notion of community, people's health and wellbeing, as well as creating places where people want to live and work.

APSE's latest housing research report 'Housing for a fairer society: The role of councils in ensuring stronger societies' exposes the impact of permitted development rights as a potential threat to the health and wellbeing of residents.

This report, published by APSE and written and researched by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), finds that half of councils in England think permitted development housing could threaten people's health and wellbeing and that vulnerable people are disproportionately negatively affected by permitted development. The report also finds that 59% of UK councils report 'severe' shortages of affordable housing for the fourth consecutive year, with only 2% claiming their need is 'not substantial'.

Whilst the government's proposed removal of the limit on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing was broadly welcomed, building affordable housing is found to be out of reach to 32% of local authorities who no longer have an HRA account.

Furthermore, three quarters of councils in England and Wales said they rely on developer contributions as their main source of income for delivering affordable housing, further calling into question the efficacy of the government's market-led approach to housing delivery.

Speaking at the report's launch at the House of Lords on 16 July, APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien said, "It is ironic that as we celebrate a 100 years since the advent of council housing and the 'Addison Act' standards on space and public amenities that were so innovative and important to the health and wellbeing of communities, we are now witnessing a serious regression of these protections.

"Permitted developments are in danger of becoming the new slum housing of the 21st century, de facto permitting a dangerous slide into deregulated and ultimately damaging housing provision."



Drawing on feedback and insight from an online survey, a series of case studies and a high-level stakeholder roundtable, this report sets out recommendations for Governments to enable councils to deliver more and better homes of all tenures. The report sets out 10 recommendations aimed at increasing the delivery and retention of high-quality genuinely affordable housing and ensuring the multiple wider benefits of affordable housing delivery and development processes are realised. The 10 recommendations include:

- 1: Government should reinstate a definition of affordable housing which links affordability to income.
- 2: Government should make significantly more investment available for social rental homes as well as other genuinely affordable tenures. Government should also clarify how much of the funding announced to date is available for social rent, as opposed to more intermediate 'affordable housing' products.
- 3: Government should suspend the Right to Buy in England as happened in Scotland and Wales. If the Right to Buy continues, Government should enable councils to retain 100% of their Right to Buy receipts to reinvest into building new affordable housing.
- 4: Government should further reform the viability test in planning to close the loophole on land valuation enabling developers to avoid building affordable housing. Government should also make changes to the compensation code to remove 'hope value.'
- 5: Government should adopt a set of robust mandatory national housing standards, including standards on safety, accessibility, space, environmental impacts, energy performance, flood resilience, noise, and light. The government should also ensure that adequate resources and systems are in place for the monitoring and oversight to ensure that quality outcomes are delivered.
- 6: Government should reverse the central imposition of Permitted Development Rights and give powers back to local authorities to reflect local circumstances. This will assist in maximising the number of affordable homes built through the planning process and prevent poor quality outcomes for people and places.
- 7: In national and local government, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on the link between place-making and the delivery of homes. High-quality place-making brings huge benefits to communities; improving health, life chances and the local economy. It has to be a key consideration in local and national planning policy.

8: Local planning authorities should be empowered and adequately resourced to take on the role of 'master-developers' ensuring that Local Plans deliver real change. This requires changes to financing, skills and a stronger offer from central Government to reward local action.

9: The government should take a proactive role to incentivise domestic production of equipment and sustainable raw materials alongside exploring options for scaling offsite production and modern methods of construction. The government should produce a national labour strategy to support the expansion of the construction industry, recognising the current capacity constraints on delivery due to factors such as the availability of skilled workers.

10: In order to address the very variable approaches to the use of Community Benefit Clauses, and broader mechanisms for community wealth building, the government should set out in the NPPF and PPG much stronger guidance and policies on the use of Community Benefit Clauses. This will ensure that local authorities more consistently maximise community benefit of localised procurement processes, skills development and employment opportunities within construction and development processes.

Local authorities have a powerful role in shaping existing and new places that can enhance people's health and wellbeing, but it is essential that they have the tools they need. This report highlights there is still much to be done to enable local authorities to deliver the affordable houses people so desperately need.



- The full report can be downloaded for free from the research pages on the APSE website www.apse.org.uk

To purchase a hard copy, please email wai lee at wlee@apse.org.uk

Transforming local parks

Dudley Council has invested significant time and energy into transforming its local parks; working hard to increase the health and wellbeing of local residents. With visitor numbers and visitor satisfaction continuing to grow, APSE Direct spoke to Liz Stuffs, the Council's Greenspaces Team Leader, about the progress the Council has made.

Dudley is perhaps best known for being an area of heavy industry and high density housing, but it also has an amazing wealth of green space gems, with over 1,300 hectares of it being publically accessible. The Borough is rich with geological and industrial heritage, and outdoor spaces merge to celebrate these two histories in a striking contrast that is both fascinating and beautiful. In addition to thousands of small areas of open space, Dudley has 59 parks and 28 of these are community parks located within a 15 minute walk of the people who live in the Borough.

Dudley Council's parks service, like many other councils across the country, has been focused on improving parks infrastructure over the last 20 years. In 2003 a Government grant (The Liveability Fund) of £3.4m, gave a massive boost to the capacity of the team. Grant funding was available for two community development project officers for five years, parks masterplans as well as detailed consultations and seed funding for projects. 25 parks were improved as a result and the Dudley parks friends groups, made up of local volunteers, became well established.

Public Health England

A further Government grant of £4.5m was secured in 2009 - working in partnership with Public Health to engage local people in health and fitness programmes in parks - to reduce childhood obesity in the borough. The funding was another massive investment in the parks, providing dedicated staff on site. Park Keepers became Park Activators and are all funded by the Public Health budget. There are now four new park buildings from which community development work and physical activity programmes take place. They have become community hubs which have outdoor gyms, sign posted cycle ways and weekly programmes of activity. Visitors at last feel safe to exercise in their local park.

Lottery funding

Alongside Central Government funding Dudley also took full advantage of the Lottery funding programme with five successful large scale Lottery projects at Leasowes Country Park, Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve, Priory Park, Mary Stevens Park and Stevens Park, Quarry Bank. The latter three projects under the Parks for People programme run by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Lottery has always provided very favourable terms for grant funding, requiring the Authority to find between 10 - 25% match funding for projects. Match funding is difficult to find during times of austerity, but through local tenacity and support, officers have located funding from various sources including the Authority's own capital programme.



Priory Park

Priory Park Lottery project began 10 years ago and was completed in 2013. The park pavilion and toilets had suffered repeated vandalism and arson attacks, as had the 19th century hall on site which houses the registrars team. The project cost £2.6m and was an ideal park for a lottery grant as it contained a ruined 12th century priory and a grade 1 listed scheduled ancient monument, which becomes the backdrop to many wedding photos from the registry office. A programme of consolidation of the priory was developed along with interpretation of the ruins through planting of a herb garden, interpretation panels and art features. An underused pavilion was extended to provide a light airy classroom for environmental workshops and educational events. The park was improved for disability access, paths were upgraded and a rose avenue was introduced to restore the majesty of the original landscape design by Edward Mawson who developed the 1930's vision for the Park.

As a result of the restoration programme, there was a 22% increase in visitor satisfaction from a baseline of 66% in 2009. The number of visitors increased by 49% to 417,000 per year. The park achieved Green Flag in 2014 and continues to maintain its Green Heritage award annually. A mobile phone app was also created to show people what was on offer at the park and to interpret the heritage of the park. More recently, the Council has converted the Green Classroom into a community café which is run by a local organisation which provides events and activities on the park.

Mary Stevens Park

The Mary Stevens Park restoration project began in 2014 and was completed by summer 2017 at a cost of £3.1m. The service had learned a lot from the previous project at Priory Park. Mary Stevens Park is situated in a more affluent part of the Borough, so can sustain much more economically viable projects such as the Mary Stevens Coffee Lounge which has had a huge impact on the visitor experience in the park. There is also a considerable income from ice cream sales and other events and activities.

The park was gifted to the authority in the 1930's along with several other parks by an enamelware manufacturer from Cradley, Ernest Stevens, in memorial to his wife Mary. There were some very fine wrought iron gates which were in desperate need of restoration and required a significant amount of investment. Dudley also restored a

beautiful war memorial, the 1930's bandstand and a circular walkway around the lake. Improvements to the bio-diversity of the lake and surrounding area were also delivered. In addition, the old water play feature was refurbished.

The visitor numbers have increased dramatically over 5 years by 42% to 1.4million, and visitor satisfaction has increased from 82% to 95%. The park is currently listed on Trip Advisor with a 94% rating from visitors. Engagement of volunteers was also an important part of the project and we currently have a regular gardening group and weekly health walk group. The Heritage Ranger also works with school groups, youth organisations and community groups to keep people involved and excited about the heritage of the park. A book about the heritage of the park has been created by local residents and is on sale in local shops. A heritage audio trail has also been developed for mobile phones. The site also receives the Green Heritage Award each year from Green Flag, a video to show off the success of the project is available on You tube.

Stevens Park

Stevens Park in Quarry Bank, Dudley's current Heritage Lottery project, lies in an area of deprivation in the borough. Here the Authority has partnered with the Emily Jordan Foundation, a CIC which works with people with learning difficulties, to provide horticultural training and bicycle refurbishments in an old Victorian farmhouse on the park. The £1.8m lottery funded programme will eventually see a café and increased community involvement through events and activities. When work is completed in 2021, the house will be transferred to the charity through Dudley's asset transfer process, further strengthening its sustainability for the future.

Awards

The Borough recently submitted the Priory Park and Mary Stevens Park projects to the Horticultural Week Custodian awards, and beat off stiff competition from other well established parks and gardens to pick up prizes for Best Heritage Park and Best Parks Restoration respectively. The Council was also highly commended for its work with Dudley Mind who have a service level agreement to work in the Borough's redundant glasshouses and further develop plant collection.

The aim for Dudley has always been to provide high quality parks and open spaces at the lowest cost to the Borough's residents. Dudley Council still prides itself on having one of the lowest council tax rates in the country. By getting community groups involved in the management and maintenance of these green spaces we can increase community buy in and develop new funding opportunities for our improvement plans. As a Council we have resisted implementing car parking charges or having fees to enter parks so that they can be enjoyed by local communities and visitors to our borough. It is therefore paramount that we continue to explore other sources of income and other ways to deliver existing and new services in our parks. The National Lottery Heritage Fund has been a consistent source of financial support in the last 10 years enabling Dudley to deliver on the quality which our residents deserve.

Despite the fiscal pressures faced in local government today, Dudley Council is finding a way to get the 'green light' on investment in its beautiful outdoor spaces. This work is bringing not only notoriety and accolades for the authority, but more importantly it is bringing communities together and protecting precious spaces for generations to come.

- *Liz Stuffins will deliver a presentation on the transformation of Dudley's parks at the APSE Refuse, Recycling, Streetscene, Grounds and Parks Seminar in Nottingham on 25 October. To book your place at the Seminar, please visit the APSE website. For more information, contact Wayne Priestley on wpriestley@apse.org.uk*

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Nottingham City Council's Energy Services are leading the way in embracing the commercial agenda within a local authority setting. Delivering on commercial opportunities in order to support budgets and provide additional internal benefits, the Council is insourcing to build greater capacity, flexibility and cost effectiveness in order to deliver its project and service aims.

The latest example of an innovative in-house solution is the EEMonitor. On the back of operating one of the largest district heating schemes in the country, Energy Services have created a team with extensive knowledge of the district heat market in order to deliver heat metering and billing services to over 9,000 customers across 30 sites nationwide. This experienced workforce manages the process from design, through to installation and commissioning, and provides on-going billing services for both credit and prepayment customers.

A growing customer base enables Energy Services to build on their commercial success. By delivering these services in-house, the Council is ensuring that the knowledge and expertise around district heating, heat metering and billing are growing within the organisation. This generates additional income and helps to protect frontline services, with Energy Services focused on embedding a business-like approach within the department and across the Council. The award-winning Energy Services team pride themselves on collaboration, innovation and knowledge sharing, and are looking to continue to grow their national customer base and to continue to support other local authorities across the country who wish to enter into the heat market.

Operating a heat network can come with a number of challenges, varying from maximising efficiency to keeping the customers happy and the prices low. Nottingham City Council promotes and practices a deep focus on knowledge sharing which helps to address the hurdles faced when operating a heat network. Energy Services collaborate with existing clients as well as a number of partners across the country to provide advice around heat networks but also to learn and improve our own service.

To other local authorities that are operating heat networks, the EEMonitor solution a secure and cost-effective proposition. The London Borough of Waltham Forest have worked collaboratively on both new build and retrofit projects with Energy Services; recently installing 330 EEMonitors across their portfolio.

New regulations are expected to come into place within the next 12 – 24 months, which will affect the way heat network organisations operate. These will include stronger consumer protection, a nominated market regulator and a focus on transparency from the heat suppliers. As the operator of one of the largest district heat networks in the UK, Nottingham City Council has the benefit of unique expertise and knowledge. This knowledge combined with local

authority perspective means the council is able to ensure regulations and consumer protection is of the highest priority. Energy Services are able to provide advice and guide operators on best practices in order to stay compliant during the changes.

The EEMonitor is designed to be flexible for property owners as well as tenants, and was developed as a solution to some of the challenges mentioned above, particularly to make it easier for the customer to view and manage their heat charges.

Some of the benefits of the EEMonitor include:

- Available in two communication protocols to suit new builds and retrofit
- Ability to integrate with most heat meters
- Multiple payments options available for residents
- Colour touch screen
- Designed and manufactured in the UK
- Easy to budget with flexible debt recovery options available

Nottingham City Council manage all of their customer service provision in-house through Energy Services. This is a service offered to other councils or housing associations who wish to invest in a heat network but don't have the capability of taking on the on-going heat metering and billing services. The customer service offerings include:

- Tailored Utility Billing
- Payment Services
- Credit Control
- Energy Efficiency Advice
- Debt Advice

For further information contact: Elin Hultgren, Senior Energy Projects Officer – Metering & Billing - elin.hultgren@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

You can also visit the EEMonitor site at: www.eemonitor.co.uk





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