

(What's the story) Aviemore?

A look at our supersonic seminar in Scotland

**Applying digital solutions
efficiently and effectively**

Derby City Council

p9

Dual fuel gritters for Glasgow

Glasgow City Council

p14

Winter services wonderland

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

p19



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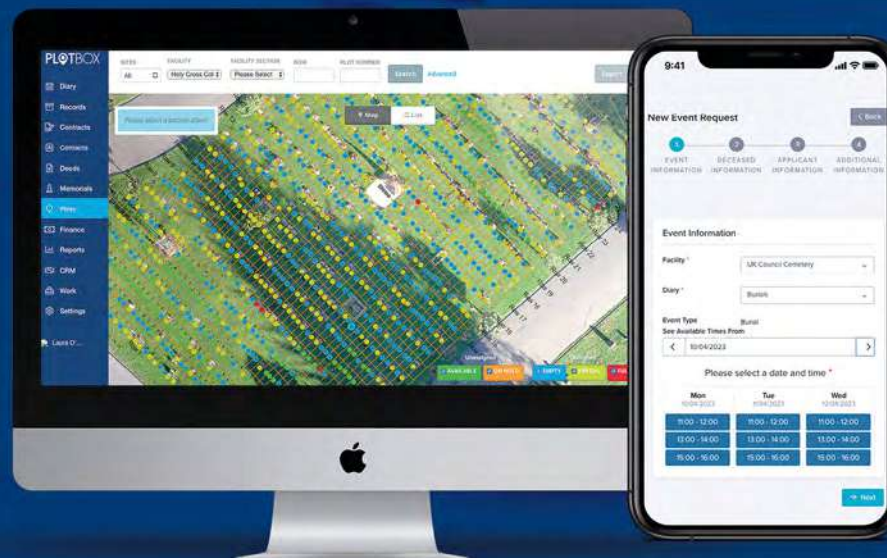
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Editorial



Mo Baines
Chief Executive,
APSE

A unique opportunity for collaboration

Once again APSE Direct is delighted to showcase 'Aviemore' - not only a key event in the APSE calendar but across the waste, fleet, and grounds sectors, embracing service providers in local authorities as well as suppliers.

Last year saw a bumper return to the Aviemore Show following the event's suspension due to COVID-19, a return that was welcomed by all who attended. Whilst many things work online, it is pretty hard to imagine climbing into the cabin of a newly devised RCV, or for that matter talking face to face about the new technologies in green fleet, without those in-person interactions.

Our team in APSE Scotland, led by Louise Melville, will once again bring together expert panels, workshops and suppliers across the fleet, waste and grounds sectors. Whilst pressures mount on council finances, alongside the necessity to green services, Aviemore offers a unique opportunity for collaboration, innovation, and learning.

As the cost-of-living crisis bites hard at our communities, there is an obvious 'bad-guy' in the room in the form

of oil and gas companies, who have achieved soaring profits in the face of individual hardships. No wonder then that many APSE member councils are looking to expedite their own plans to remove reliance upon fossil fuels in service delivery. However, for many services, the cost of change can be a barrier, particularly when services are restricted by short-term budget setting, not necessarily allowing the longer-term planning for the lifetime cost savings of moving away from polluting fuels to more sustainable alternatives; particularly those that will help improve air-quality for local residents.

So, at this year's Aviemore show, I hope that the sharing of best practice, the approaches to exploring the 'warts and all' of the alternative fuels on offer, alongside improving waste and grounds services for greener outcomes, can drive integrated change. Not just for our services but for our local residents. With the support of supplier innovations it is achievable!

See you there!

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Report Back

A round up of APSE advocacy and events



Lindsay Airey, APSE's Head of Business Resources, talks workforce planning at the APSE Associates Away Day on 29 April 2023.

The Annual Associates Away Day, another success!

On 27-28 April, Head of APSE Solutions, Andy Mudd, hosted the Annual Away Day for APSE's Associates at Bredbury Hall in Stockport. The event involved discussions on emerging public policy issues as well as opportunities to identify solutions for challenges within the sector. Speakers included Lindsay Airey, Head of Business Resources, and Phil Brennan, Head of APSE Energy. The two-day forum was supported by Emma Taylor, our Senior Recruitment Consultant who supports APSE members with their interim management needs, and Nathan Horrocks, working in a client support role.

APSE's associates offer ethical and practical support in all aspects of local government service delivery, performance and cost reduction. Visit the Solutions pages on the APSE website or email Emma Taylor on etaylor@apse.org.uk or Nathan Horrocks on nhorrocks@apse.org.uk to enquire about interim managers or consultancy support.

Thank you and farewell: APSE National Chair, Alderman Tommy Nicholl MBE

The APSE family would like to say a fond farewell to Alderman Tommy Nicholl MBE; a long-standing friend and advocate of APSE. As Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's longest serving councillor, Ald Nicholl is retiring from local government after 42 years in the chamber. He successfully contested 11 elections to serve the Bannside area in his home town and as a member of the Council following the amalgamation of local authorities in Northern Ireland in 2015.

Ald Nicholl was Mayor twice, from 2001 until 2002 and from 2005 until 2006 and served as Deputy Mayor, from 1989 until 1990 and from 1990 until 1991. Serving his first term as APSE National Chair, Ald Nicholl is also a previous Chair of APSE Northern Ireland. We wish Tommy a long and happy retirement, and thank him for his many years of service to local government and to APSE.

Housing roundtable

On 23 March, APSE and the TCPA held an online roundtable to discuss the findings and emerging recommendations from our upcoming housing report. Isaac LeQuesne, Projects and Policy Manager at the TCPA, provided an overview of the survey results. Fiona Howie, Chief



Thank you and farewell: APSE National Chair, Alderman Tommy Nicholl.

Executive at TCPA, then shared the emerging recommendations. APSE and the TCPA will be launching the report at a special event in July. The event programme will be released in the coming weeks.

Announcing the winners of the Highways Innovation Awards 2023

APSE are delighted to announce the winners of the 2023 Innovation Awards for highways, street lighting and winter maintenance services. These Awards celebrate outstanding local councils that use innovative ideas and solutions to tackle the current challenges facing their frontline services. The winners were presented with their awards at the APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar in Blackpool on 23 March. For a full list of this year's winners, finalists and photographs from the event, visit the APSE website.

Energy in Notts

On 27 April, APSE Energy held a special event in Nottingham - free for APSE Energy members. The meeting was a brilliant opportunity to network with peers in local government as well as the wider energy sector, discussing topics as diverse as public sector decarbonisation guidance and local nature recovery plans. Delegates heard from: Wayne Bexton, Director of Environment and Sustainability, Nottingham City Council; Professor Lucelia Rodrigues, University of Nottingham; Steph Parker, Senior Advisor, Energy Systems Catapult; Councillor Kye Dudd, Bristol City Council; Tim Crawshaw, APSE Energy Associate; Heather Stokes, Conservation Team Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council; and Nigel Hallam, Workplace Parking Levy Service Manager, Nottingham City Council. Presentations from the event are available to download from the APSE website.

APSE Training Spring Symposium

APSE's first Training Spring Symposium was held on 16 and 17 March 2023, at APSE's Manchester Office, in Old Trafford. Training Associates, from across the UK, joined discussions and workshops to ensure best practice in learning and development and capitalise on the integration between APSE's services. Key issues discussed were workforce capacity, training impact, the use of technology and meeting a variety of learner needs and expectations. The Symposium was convened by Head of Training, Fiona Sutton-Wilson, with support from Amy Caldwell, Senior Training Officer and Olivia Giles, Training Co-ordination Officer. Focussing on APSE's unique offer, speakers at the event included Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive, Debbie Johns, Head of Performance Networks, Phil Brennan, Head of APSE Solutions and Lindsay Airey, Head of Business Resources.

For more information about learning and development with APSE Training, please email: training@apse.org.uk.



APSE's first Training Spring Symposium was held on 16 and 17 March 2023, at APSE's Manchester office.



Heather Stokes of Nottingham City Council talks conservation as Charlotte Banks, APSE Energy Principal Advisor, chairs the session at APSE Energy's free Nottingham event on 27 April.

Food for thought: Meals on wheels survey

APSE are conducting research into the provision of Local Authority Community Meals Services (Meals on Wheels) on behalf of the National Association Of Care Catering (NACC) to gain a picture of the scope of the provision, the cost of providing the service, menus and food and wider provision. The survey is available via the APSE website. Please answer as many questions as you can and feel free to share this survey with your colleagues so that we can capture a broad snapshot of data on the local authority Community Meals Services.

Scotland

Scottish Conservatives Spring Conference

On 28 April, APSE Scotland hosted a fringe event at the Scottish Conservatives Spring Conference in Glasgow with Louise Melville APSE Principal Advisor for Scotland. The fringe considered what the public think of local services, where their priorities lie and what this means for elected members and local authorities. We were delighted to be joined in the fringe discussion by Roz McCall MSP, Member of Parliament for Mid Scotland and Fife Region; and Graham Simpson MSP, Shadow Minister for Transport and Member of Parliament for Central Scotland Region.

Wales

Carbon reporting

APSE Wales responded to concerns raised by some council members that the new carbon reporting requirements of the Welsh Assembly for local government and the wider public sector were too onerous and the scope too wide, requiring a substantial officer commitment to collect large amounts of data with some of limited value. APSE Energy was commissioned to investigate carbon reporting across the UK and provide recommendations for an improved Welsh reporting regime. The final report 'Reporting carbon emissions - A critique of

Roz McCall MSP, highlights the importance of councillors at the Scottish Conservative Conference 2023 in Glasgow



the Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide' was widely shared across Wales and received a ministerial response from Julie James AM, the Senedd Minister for Climate Change, thanking APSE for our analysis and its contribution to an evolving reporting framework whose use has since been simplified and data accuracy improved.

Northern Ireland

Celebrating Performance: Using data to transform frontline services

On 3 May, APSE Performance Networks held a free event for members in Craigavon. Delegates heard from speakers across the sector emphasising the importance of collecting data when delivering service transformation. Thanks once again to our excellent speakers: Charlene Stoops, Deputy Chief Executive, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Sharon McNicholl, Chair of the Local Government Performance Improvement Working Group; Debbie Johns, Head of Performance Networks, APSE; Andy Mudd, Head of APSE Solutions; Mike Cockburn, Assistant Director – Climate Emergency & Environment, Wirral Council. For more information about APSE Performance Networks, please contact the team at performance.networks@apse.org.uk

Digital innovations: Socitm and APSE online event

On Wednesday 29 March, APSE and Socitm held a free online event for members in Northern Ireland exploring the challenges and opportunities of digital transformation. Delegates heard from: Martin Ferguson, Socitm Policy and Research Director; Sharon Sanders Programme Manager – Digital Inclusion, and Paul Wilson, Digital Lead, Bradford Council; Paul Knee, Security Specialist, Jisc; Samantha Kelly, Streetpride Service Manager – Street cleansing, and Lee Wheatley, Service Manager for Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture, Derby City Council. Presentations are available to download from the APSE website.

Charlene Stoops, Deputy Chief Executive at Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, joins Debbie Johns, panel chair and Head of APSE Performance Networks, for a special Performance Networks event in Northern Ireland on 3 May.



APSE's Environmental Social and Corporate Governance Framework

Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive, sheds light on APSE's new comprehensive ESG framework approach.

As the relatively newly appointed APSE Chief Executive, I undertook to deliver several outcomes in my first 90 days. Yes, a rather clichéd approach but actually a very effective way to focus! One of my key milestones was to achieve agreement to APSE's first ever Environmental Social and Governance Framework. Whilst many institutions have adopted ESG policies, particularly in areas like financial institutions, as a non-profit body, working on behalf of our member local councils, it was essential to recognise that our approach to an ESG framework would need to be different, as well as achievable. Indeed, whilst many local government think-tanks have promoted ESG policies across sectors, we believe APSE is amongst the first to have adopted its own comprehensive ESG framework approach.

Following consultation with stakeholders, our staff team and, importantly, amongst our governing body, APSE's National Council, the ESG framework was adopted in March 2023. The process of implementation has now begun.

Like many organisations, APSE had several environmental, social and governance initiatives and policies in place. However, some were in need of a refresh. Moreover, the absence of an overall framework can make it more difficult for organisations to monitor and report against progress. The new ESG framework allows us to do just that, providing a ready-reference point for our National Council.

We are viewing the ESG framework as a dynamic document, using it to update our governing body on our ESG achievements and proactively approaching different parts of the framework, by revising and implementing new policy aims and practices. This includes selection of venues for events, ease of access for public transport and the credentials of suppliers e.g., Are they fair wage employers? Do they have a no plastic policy in place? Do they have EV charge points?

Alongside this, some less developed areas that are now coming to the fore such as computer hardware replacement schedules, and the ethical sourcing of materials, will be a focus in the coming year. We have revised our print policy (you are hopefully reading this online) but we equally felt it wrong to exclude our member contacts who may from time to time need access to traditional platforms for communication. At the heart of our ESG is balance and fairness.

We are proud to have achieved platinum standard in carbon literacy across the organisation but equally we know there is further to go. Some matters we will not achieve in the short or even medium term, but we very much view the framework as a pathway to change. One such area is in seeking to reduce our own carbon footprint. Whilst we are not in the business of manufacturing or production, and our footprint is relatively low in that regard, we are looking at all practicable opportunities, whilst safeguarding the core services we provide to our network, alongside ensuring our staff are safe and well in their working environment and practices. Like life itself, it is about a fair balance and transparency in what we can realistically achieve to enable us to meet the needs of both our member councils and APSE organisationally in delivering its services.

We are viewing the ESG framework as a dynamic document...revising and implementing new policy aims and practices. This includes selection of venues for events, ease of access for public transport and the credentials of suppliers e.g., Are they fair wage employers? Do they have a no plastic policy in place? Do they have EV charge points?

Across APSE member stakeholders, our National Council and staffing core, there has been genuine support for the ESG framework as we all look to embrace and embed these factors in our organisational values, principles, and practice.

We will be held to account on behalf of our APSE member councils by our National Council, the governing body of APSE, and with reports to our Policy Performance and Scrutiny Committee, alongside, of course, our Annual General Meeting. The first ESG report will be presented to the AGM in Belfast this coming September. So, get the 13 September in your diary and come along to the AGM and ask me how we are doing on it!

- *The AGM is ran in conjunction with APSE's Annual Seminar. Bookings are now open for the APSE Annual Seminar 2023 in Belfast. Scan the QR code on page 7 to book your place now. Hurry, as tickets sell fast!*

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By cutting out unnecessary trips and emptying bins only when they were needed, the Council reduced the number of visits to bins by 53%

no way of knowing if the bin was full, overflowing, or only half full. The technology has moved the authority away from this way of working. This also allows for a route to be fully optimised, sorting the order each bin is to be emptied and the route the operatives take from site to site. This route optimisation and cutting out unnecessary trips has a positive environmental impact, decreasing the carbon footprint.

This new way of working has improved operations and allowing for an efficient workload has freed up capacity to carry out other work. Derby City Council anticipate that as the technology is expanded further, the same team will be able to maintain additional sensor bins, doing 'more with the same' and increasing the efficiency of the service further.

Overall, this digital solution has enabled a smarter, leaner way of working. The future capabilities of the technology continues, with the ability to make more intelligence led decisions – such as helping to determine if an area requires an additional bin or a double capacity bin to reduce littering. When additional bin requests are received, a temporary sensor bins can be located to assess the fill level and determine if a bin is required. On the reverse, this also allows a review of the current 'binrastructure' and use the system to see if any bins are not being used. This will help to decide where bins can be removed or relocated, driving towards having the 'right bin in the right place'.

Piers Barron, from technology provider, REEN, said, "Technology within the waste management industry is really developing quickly. Used in the right way, it can add enormous value in terms of efficiency and sustainability, as well as significant cost savings."

"It was a pleasure to work with Derby City Council, and we were delighted to see the technology deliver real, tangible benefits. We're looking forward to helping the Council drive even further waste management efficiencies in the future."

• Sam and Lee Wheatley, Service Manager for Grounds Maintenance and Arboriculture, spoke on this topic at the APSE and Socitm online event for Northern Ireland councils on 29 March 2023. The presentation is available for download from the APSE website.

Applying digital solutions efficiently and effectively



Derby City Council's street cleansing and grounds maintenance teams are rolling out litter bin sensor technology, following a successful trial. Sam Kelly, Streetpride Service Manager - Street Cleansing, spoke to APSE Direct about this "smarter, leaner way of working."

The technology uses predictive 'fill-level' sensor technology, monitoring how fast the bin is filling and providing an alert when the bin needs emptying. This will be deployed into litter bins on parks, streets and open spaces, in a bid to reduce overflowing litter bins and manage the bin collections as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The technology, provided by REEN (reen.com), was initially trialed in 200 litter bins on streets – the bins which were part of this trial were in areas where the routine cleansing was once every few weeks, so relied on an enhanced collection. The trial result dramatically reduced the number of overflowing bin complaints, and also transformed the efficiency of the collection rounds.

The collection rounds saw some bins being emptied more frequently than before the sensors were installed – impacting the number of overflowing bins the local community were seeing regularly full and overflowing. Also, some bins are now emptied less frequently than before, suggesting that prior to a sensor being installed, the teams were arriving to these bins before they had reached full capacity, an unnecessary trip at that time. By cutting out these unnecessary trips and emptying bins only when they were needed, the Council reduced the number of visits to bins by 53%.

Working this way and the result of the trial was a transformation for the services. Prior to the technology, every litter bin was emptied as part of the scheduled routine area cleanse, which varies across the City and is determined by the rate the area falls below the required standard of cleanliness. This still happens. But outside of the routine cleansing, the bins were emptied based on team knowledge or reoccurring complaints, and was a manual, paper schedule. This was essentially a list, where the operatives would work from bin one, to bin two, to three, until they reached the end and restarted again. This created a problem - until you arrived to each of the bins, you had



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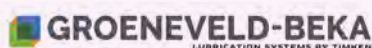
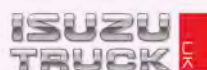
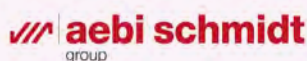
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(Avie) more, more, more



The seminar that just keeps on giving, Louise Melville, APSE Principal Advisor for Scotland, provides a preview of the speakers, topics and themes of this year's APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar...

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sponsors...*



Against the stunning backdrop of the Cairngorms, local government specialists in fleet, waste and grounds services will gather with the UK's leading suppliers to explore new and exciting innovations within the industry and debate the future of these vital services.

The annual event returns once again to the Macdonald Aviemore Highland Resort and features Scotland's largest trade exhibition of its kind with over 120 exhibition stands confirmed. Delegates have the unique opportunity to question suppliers about their latest products and pricing.

However, Aviemore is far more than just an exhibition. The Seminar – kindly sponsored by ACL Hire – draws in a rich variety of highly influential and knowledgeable speakers; offering those in attendance a fantastic opportunity to network and bounce ideas around other members of local government.

We will also be holding four discussion forums – Transport; Parks, Streets and Grounds; Waste; and Litter Managers Network – so that delegates can debate the latest challenges and opportunities in each sector.

Session One – sponsored by Groeneveld Beka

The Seminar will open with the keynote session: Looking to the future for fleet services – the first of two sessions on the topic over the event. As the momentum for decarbonising road transport continues to grow, we are delighted to confirm that the Head of Low Carbon Fleets and Infrastructure at Transport Scotland, Jamie Dunsmore, will open the event outlining the key net zero objectives of the Scottish Government, and the progress made thus far. Joining Jamie on the opening panel will be Phil Lloyd, Head of Engineering Policy, Logistics UK. Phil will be providing an update on the guide to maintaining roadworthiness and the implication for local authorities. Delegates will also hear from Andy Mitchell, the National Account Manager from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency on the current landscape of DVSA enforcement.

Session Two

Flytipping is at the top of the litter management agenda in Aviemore this year. In Session Two, delegates will be able to pick the brains of our expert panel on how to develop and plan actions maximising efforts to tackle litter and fly-tipping. Paul Dougall, Co-ordinator of Neighbourhood Services at South Ayrshire



Council, will shine a spotlight on the success of his Council's Locality Neighbourhood Hit Squads. The revolutionary potential of technology in eradicating flytipping will be the topic of our next speaker, Frankie O'Rourke, Neighbourhood Liaison Manager at Glasgow City Council, highlighting how his authority utilises drones to create litter maps.

Session Three

The issue of Persistent Organic Pollutants will be the topic of discussion for our expert panel. Providing an overview of the issues, delegates will hear from Mark Heggie, Senior Policy Officer at the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. How local authorities are managing POPs south of the border will be the focus of our next speaker, as Stuart Russo, Senior Technical Officer at Bradford Council, will talk through the challenges his authority has overcome so far as well as the difficulties which lie ahead. Our final speaker of the session, Bruce McLean, Managing Director at Optimum Eco Group, will provide analysis on POPs testing, in addition to WEEE recycling.

Session Four

Delegates interested in parks, grounds and green spaces will be invited to look at their services through the lens of sustainability and climate change. Colin Reid, Grounds Services Manager at South Lanarkshire Council, will explore alternatives to spraying weeds with chemicals (mainly glyphosate). Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and its relevance to local authority parks and greenspace teams will be the topic of our next speaker - Fiona Sutton-Wilson, Head of APSE Training. You can read more about APSE Training's new BNG course for parks professionals on page 29.

Session Five

Effectively incorporating circular economy ideas into operations is arguably one of the most pressing issues currently facing local authority waste collection services. For that reason, we have invited Jon Havens of the Scottish Government's Circular Economy Division to talk through the Government's route map to a circular economy; the key priorities and progress made. Sandy Anderson, Service Manager in Waste Operations at Fife Council, will be up next to highlight the importance of a mentally healthy workforce, and what councils can do to drive positive change. Our final speaker of the session, David

The Seminar will take place at the MacDonal Aviemore Highland Resort on Tuesday 23 to Friday 26 May 2023. It is an extremely valuable resource for local authorities and is not to be missed

The annual event features Scotland's largest trade exhibition of its kind with over 120 exhibition stands confirmed. Delegates have the unique opportunity to question suppliers about their latest products and pricing

Gunn of Zero Waste Scotland, will unpack the Recycling Improvement Fund; how local authorities can get involved and case study examples of where the fund has helped.

Session Six – sponsored by Renault Trucks

For the final session of the Seminar, we return our attention to the future of fleet services. First up, delegates will be brought up to speed with alternative vehicle types by Bruce Moffat, Service Manager in Transport and Waste at East Lothian Council. As a member of the APSE Scotland Transport and Mechanical sub-group on alternative vehicle types, Bruce will be on hand to discuss the main aims of the group, how councils can get involved as well as future plans. The theme of investigating fleet replacements will continue with our next speaker, Paul Gray, Fleet Manager at Aberdeenshire Council. For those delegates who are curious as to how to they can access funding for fleet decarbonisation, Gordon Manson, Programme Manager of Technical Projects at the Energy Saving Trust, will be on-hand to offer an overview of the support available to local authorities and any relevant funding.

Besides providing ample opportunities for learning through our Seminar sessions, APSE Scotland's Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar is a key event for local government decision-makers and heads of service to come together and share best practice, while providing the opportunity – via the largest Scottish trade exhibition of its kind - to

Aviemore is far more than just an exhibition. The Seminar – kindly sponsored by ACL Hire – draws in a rich variety of highly influential and knowledgeable speakers; offering those in attendance a fantastic opportunity to network and bounce ideas around other members of local government

get to terms with the latest technological developments in fleet, equipment and ancillary supplies; from salt spreaders to asset management software. It is a space in which new partnerships can be developed with a view to transforming and enhancing local government frontline services.

Rising Star Awards

As well as a chance to share best practice and network, the event in Aviemore is also an opportunity to recognise and reward excellence in the sector. The APSE Scotland Rising Star Awards will take place on the final day of the event at a dinner ceremony.

The Awards were established to celebrate the hard work and commitment of individuals within local authority services in Scotland. Categories include:

- Parks, Grounds and Street Scene Award
- Waste and Recycling Award (sponsored by Zero Waste Scotland)
- Fleet Award

Entry to the awards are now closed.

The Seminar will take place at the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort on Tuesday 23 to Friday 26 May 2023. It is an extremely valuable resource for local authorities and is not to be missed.

• To learn more about the APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar, please visit the APSE website or contact Louise Melville on 01698 459051

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Scotland has been at the forefront of reducing its carbon footprint from mobility for some time. A number of cities across the nation appreciate the opportunity that hydrogen vehicle solutions provide to deliver practical routes to decarbonising their heavy-duty utility vehicle fleets.

ULEMCo, the company pioneering the adoption of ultra-low emission hydrogen fuel in the UK, has worked with a number of City Councils to deliver real-world solutions for their fleets. Several technical approaches have been taken to the deployment of clean hydrogen fuel. One approach sees existing vehicle types being converted to dual-fuel operation, hydrogen and diesel.

This can be achieved by converting existing vans and trucks, speeding up the process dramatically compared with developing a new engine. In one example, the company has converted 20 of Glasgow City Council's fleet of gritters, some existing and some new, to hydrogen dual fuel - the largest single deployment of hydrogen dual-fuel vehicles yet seen. Based on the gritters' normal duty cycles, around a third of the energy is expected come from hydrogen, resulting in the same proportion of emissions being saved. The City Council is in the process of securing 'green hydrogen' for the fleet to refuel.

Hydrogen fuelling works especially well with utility vehicles such as refuse collection vehicles, water bowsters, emergency transport and so on as these feature back-to-base refuelling and often have a need for high levels of uptime and high power take-off demands. The last two requirements make a pure electric vehicle approach difficult, as do the hilly terrain and cold climate in Scotland.

Meanwhile, In Aberdeen, ULEMCo has worked with the City Council and demonstrated impressive real-world reductions in CO₂ emissions through the deployment of road sweepers. Sweepers with hydrogen dual-fuel operation for both the powertrain and the "donkey" engine have shown daily diesel displacement rates nearing 50% - believed to be a record for the technology. The vehicles are running on the streets of Aberdeen, saving the annual equivalent of approximately 3 tonnes of CO₂ emissions and contributing to cleaner air for the city. Extrapolating that to all of the 333 UK

councils would suggest that a saving of 10,000 tonnes is possible if an average of just ten vehicles were converted at each.

These initiatives of course require an increasing supply of hydrogen, ideally green hydrogen, and a growing infrastructure for refuelling. The UK government has identified green hydrogen as critical to the achievement of net zero goals. In March came the announcement of a round of successful applications in the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund. Among these were several Scottish initiatives in hydrogen fuel, further strengthening the country's leading position. These include:

Inverness Green Hydrogen Hub, which plans to production, storage and dispensing, and new onsite renewable energy generation. The hydrogen facility would scale to upwards of 10 tonnes a day over time. H2 Green Ltd, with Highland Council, is developing plans for a regional hydrogen hub network, with a vision of creating a UK-first regional network of green hydrogen supply.

Lanarkshire Green Hydrogen also plans to use wind generation to produce green hydrogen, and will deploy electrolysis directly connected to an onshore wind farm, to produce over 3.5 tonnes per day of green hydrogen for use to replace high emission fuels such as diesel and support the decarbonisation of sectors like commercial transport.

The Knockshinnoch Green Hydrogen Hub Project (KGH2P) will deliver one of the first fully off-grid renewable hydrogen supply systems on the mainland UK, enabling the commercial deployment of hydrogen mobility by supplying over 160 tonnes of low-carbon hydrogen per year to the sector.

Kintore Hydrogen's grid connected, electrolytic green hydrogen project is equivalent to 30% of the country's 2030 target of 10 GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity, making it one of the largest of its kind in Europe when operational.

ULEMCo's enabling of fleets of hydrogen vehicles - the firm already supports a fleet of around 100 vehicles - builds the base load for hydrogen infrastructure investment, as well as saving large volumes of CO₂. It helps to create a market for hydrogen fuel that will make it easier for other local authorities and businesses to switch to the cleaner fuel.

Dual fuel gritters for Glasgow

Glasgow City Council successfully implemented 11 new hydrogen dual fuel gritters into its fleet. These dual fuel gritters have interchangeable bodies meaning that they can be used for other purposes in the summer months when gritters are not required.

In early 2019, Glasgow City Council set up a Climate Emergency Working Group. The Working Group produced an independent report in which 61 recommendations were made, the standout target of this report was the ambition to reach carbon neutrality by 2030. Following one of the recommendations from the report, the Fleet Strategy 2020-2030 was approved, the strategy establishes a framework for the Council to achieve a zero emissions fleet by 2030.

The following 5 points have been taken from the Fleet Strategy and represent the key targets to be achieved by 2030:

- Facilitating the procurement and modification of high-quality vehicles that meet operational demands whilst maintaining best value.
- Having processes in place which provide safe, efficient and reliable transport for the Council whilst optimising fleet availability.
- Identifying and implementing a continuous improvement programme for increased efficiency through savings and income generation.
- Having a highly trained and qualified workforce that are capable of meeting the challenges of innovative and emerging technologies.
- Having alternative fuel solutions powering the fleet which support the operational objectives, whilst advancing the Council's drive towards net zero emissions..

The Council's current Road Maintenance fleet includes 20 dual fuel gritters (hydrogen and red diesel) which operate across 18 gritting routes within the city (2 spare). In October 2021, a new fleet of 11 hydrogen dual fuel gritters (hydrogen and red diesel) came into operation to replace the ageing diesel gritting fleet, a move which is helping the Council to reduce exhaust emissions. A beneficial aspect of the new dual fuel gritters is that the 11 new vehicles have interchangeable bodies, meaning that they can be used for road maintenance in both summer and winter.



Over the winter months, the vehicles will focus on gritting and winter maintenance and in the summer, they will be used for gully cleaning, road patching and as tipper vehicles. The operation to change the bodies takes just 30 minutes and therefore, the Council will be able to monitor weather forecasts to alter the role of the vehicle depending on the weather conditions.

The Council has found that the new gritters performed well, with performance indicator targets being met by gritting runs being completed on time. When compared with the previous ageing fleet, the new gritters were a significant improvement. This improvement was due to improved reliability and very few breakdowns which require a fitter to attend, meaning that the gritters could work much more efficiently.

Additionally, the fuel consumption of the Council was also reduced, vehicle emissions were considerably improved, both of these points mean that Glasgow City Council is making good progress towards maintaining its programme to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, whilst also working towards the Fleet Strategy target of achieving a zero emissions fleet by 2030.

One of the key challenges for the Council was informing operatives of the benefits of adopting lower emissions vehicles and convincing them that the vehicles were safe and wouldn't make their jobs more difficult. The Council addressed this challenge by ensuring that operatives were involved and informed throughout the procurement process and by providing the necessary training.

Further challenges were caused by delays to the construction of Glasgow's hydrogen refuelling centre, this meant that initially the new vehicles had to be fuelled entirely by diesel, however this issue was quickly addressed before the onset of winter when the gritters were in the highest demand.

Following the success of the 11 new gritters, there is now improved confidence that the low-carbon technology will lead to improvements in performance. This improved confidence has led to a new hydrogen fuelled Multihog being procured by the Council which has been in service since December 2021 and has also vastly improved performance, whilst reducing emissions.

The City of Glasgow will be enforcing a new Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in the city centre from June 2023, the scheme will operate 24 hours per day, all year round. It is expected that the LEZ will significantly improve air quality.

Glasgow City Council intends to continue striving towards achieving their goal of carbon neutrality by 2030 and plans to continue to introduce similar initiatives to improve the carbon emissions of road maintenance vehicles.

• This article is taken from a case study in the report 'Energy across the authority 2023'. This report is FREE to download for APSE Energy members. For more information, contact James Jefferson on jjefferson@apse.org.uk



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Alternative fuels in refuse collection vehicles



Abi Ademiluyi, APSE Principal Advisor, offers a preview of our latest report "Use of EV fleet and alternative fuels in refuse collection vehicles."

Whilst waste is one of the lower emitting areas for carbon, with the Committee on Climate Change Local Authority report in December 2020 identifying just 5% of greenhouse gas emissions from waste¹, it is the transport used within the waste sector where a real difference could be made. Surface transport is amongst the highest emitting sector in the UK economy, making up 22% of UK emissions in 2019. It stands to reason that councils can't ignore the fleet used in refuse and recycling services which is a public service area highly reliant upon heavy goods vehicles.

However, the cost of change, and emerging technologies in the RCV sector, creates challenges for councils. If they take the plunge on one particular technology, will this be quickly obsolete when other options emerge? Equally for some to transition they may also need to consider changing the infrastructure or location of their depots.

With this in mind, APSE decided to embark on a piece of research with its member councils across the UK to explore barriers to, and opportunities for, greening the RCV fleet. With the cost of a new RCV running at between £150,000 to over £300,000, it is not a decision that councils can afford to get wrong.

Survey and case studies

To get an initial understanding of where local authorities were in relation to their transition journeys in greening their fleet, a broad reaching survey was sent out to APSE member authorities to help build a general picture.

Following the roundtable, the research identified eight UK local authority refuse services for semi structured interviews, each at a different stage of the transition journey. The authorities included:

- Islington Council
- Dundee City Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Greater Cambridge Shared Waste
- North Kesteven District Council
- Eastleigh Borough Council

Findings

APSE looked at several local authorities and, from the survey and case studies, it can be observed that despite the best intentions and the willingness for councils to work on greening their fleet, and despite progress made, councils have faced a wide range of challenges, with many of them experiencing similar issues.

- *To learn more about the findings of the report, please visit the APSE website to download a copy.*



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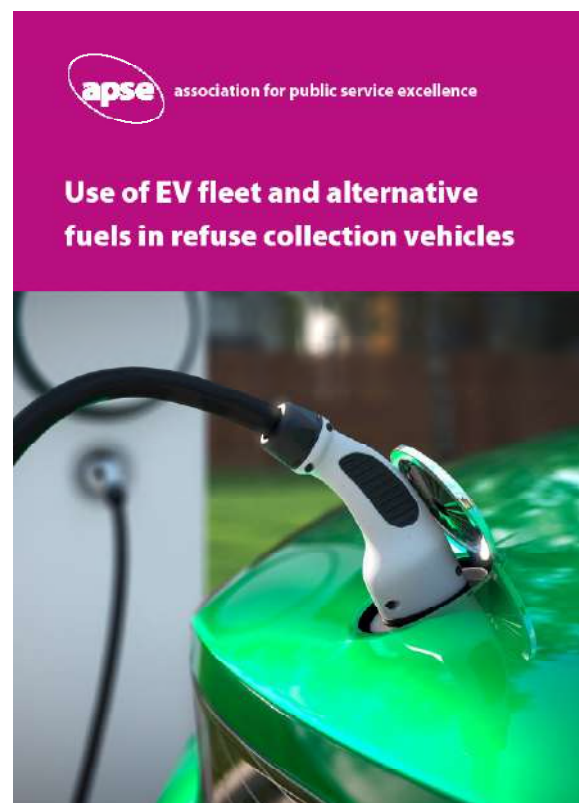
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East Riding of Yorkshire Council (EYRC) Winter Team



ERYC Daytime Operatives - David O'Pray and Martin Mumby



(left to right) Ben Towse - Senior Engineer, Maureen Ward - Engineer, Luke Thompson - Engineer, Charlie Dunkley - Winter Driver



Spreader with additional brine tank fitted



Winter services wonderland

Having scooped the Innovation Award for Winter Maintenance at the APSE Highways Innovation Awards, Maureen Ward, Engineer - Highways Technical Services at East Riding of Yorkshire Council, reveals the secrets to her team's success.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council are responsible for the maintenance of over 3500km of carriageway, of which 1955 km are on the winter treatment network. Treatments are provided by 17 spreaders based across 4 depots.

- Precautionary network - approximately 38% (1,405km)
- Secondary network - approximately 15% (550km)

In recent years, there has been a continued drive to maintain the exemplary service standards which East Riding residents and businesses expect and rely on. For the 2022/23 season, Winter Services were tasked to enhance the level of treatment of the secondary network by changing the treatment trigger point from freezing conditions forecast beyond 12:00 to 08:00. Practically, this change would mean that, in an average season, the number of secondary network treatments likely would potentially rise from 8 to 40.

The changes required to facilitate the delivery of this service enhancement were wide reaching and would not normally be deliverable in the short time that we had available. Pragmatic solutions were devised to enable the required level of service to be delivered in the 2022/23 season. The project work was undertaken in-house by Winter Services, Highway Technical Services and our Vehicle Maintenance Unit.

Effective project management controls were operated throughout to ensure programme progression to a very tight 6-month deadline.

The approach agreed needed to consider increased delivery range, optimisation of existing treatment network, production of efficient, deliverable routes together with driver hours compliance.

Working with Aebi-Schmidt we ensured weight compliance of the spreaders. A maximum treatment range for the Concurrent Network was calculated at 105km at 21g/m² maintaining the existing 17 route treatment network structure. This would be achieved by the addition of an 850l brine tank fitted where the front gantry was located; giving a total of 3860 litres of brine carried and an effective route treatment range of around 105km.

Extensive work was undertaken to rationalise the existing secondary network allowing for route optimisation by focusing more exclusively on inter community connective roads and routeing as extensions to the precautionary routes creating a concurrent network (total treatment length 1700km). The precautionary routes have, in some cases, been redefined to provide more balanced treatment delivery but network coverage remained unchanged from last season.

It was known that the concurrent routes would take longer to deliver. However, it was intended that all routes would fall within a 4-hour treatment duration. In the initial stages of testing the treatment time, drivers were stood down from their regular duties for 2 hours to ensure appropriate compliance.

Extensive work was undertaken to rationalise the existing secondary network allowing for route optimisation by focusing more exclusively on inter community connective roads and routeing as extensions to the precautionary routes creating a concurrent network

A further benefit of this innovation is in the project's environmental credentials in reduced CO2 emissions by no longer separately treating the precautionary and secondary networks.

The project encountered some barriers to progression:

- Delays receiving the brine tanks due to global materials supply chain issues
- Loss of the gantry meant we have trialled different washing down procedures to ensure safety and efficiency
- Drawing the routes and directional instructions in ArcGIS Pro was very labour intensive. Projects are now underway to improve this process
- Number of hours required to record and process the routes in Autologic

Further service benefits gained through this project:

- Enhanced route-based forecasting procured with a view to reducing the possibility of unnecessary treatments over all networks in the future
- Alternative sheeting rope system installed on each vehicle allowing the closing of load covers from ground level
- Out of hours standby shifts were redefined with overlapping periods to allow for greater treatment delivery flexibility

The overall impact has seen improved public perception in the service and overall service efficiency savings in terms of labour, fuel consumption and salt usage. A further benefit of this innovation is in the project's environmental credentials in reduced CO2 emissions by no longer separately treating the precautionary and secondary networks.

Many challenges were faced. However, we have very motivated staff within the Winter and Highways Technical Service teams and, together with the support of Fleet/VMU, we rose to and delivered this challenge with all the new routes loaded into the spreader Autologic units ready for the challenges of the winter season. We are now keen to benefit from driver comment and feedback as this can form the basis of future service delivery process planning. Feedback from Members and the general public has been tremendous, recognising the improvements in their local area.

- *East Riding of Yorkshire Council received their Innovation Award in Winter Maintenance at the APSE Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar 2023. You can download presentations from the event from the APSE website.*



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Decarbonising road surfacing



Paul Boss, CEO at the Road Surface Treatments Association, discusses efficient and sustainable road maintenance solutions.

We all know the Government has to reduce spending and local highway authorities are having to make difficult decisions about finance as they, in turn, receive less funding overall. We also know that the majority of local councils have declared a climate emergency and where an authority manages the local road network, the majority of its carbon generation is as a result of their highway operations. So, why do local authorities not proactively manage their highway networks to reduce both the costs of maintenance and their carbon generation? Well, in a lot of cases there is a lack of understanding of the benefits of whole cost and carbon lifecycle planning and implementation in relation to highways. There is too, a lack of proper funding to be able to manage the network efficiently and sustainably, but simple improvements to the planning and implementation of whole cost and carbon lifecycles typically saves around two-thirds of costs and three quarters or more of carbon generation.

By considering an asset over its whole lifecycle, it is possible to select the optimum point to intervene with the optimum treatment and hence provide the best whole life cost and sustainable maintenance. For example, following conventional resurfacing of a road with asphalt, it starts to wear, losing some of its texture, and micro cracks that are not visible to the naked eye, begin to form. This is known as oxidation and is basically caused by the effects of the sun. As moisture gets into the cracks they get bigger and then when there is a frost, water in the cracks freezes, making the cracks wider and allowing more moisture to penetrate the surface. As time goes by, more cracks appear and they all continue to get bigger due to the freeze thaw cycle. This is made worse by the movement of traffic and on winter salting routes, the effects of the salt spread onto the road. Eventually, the cracks, in effect, join and potholes are formed, getting bigger and more numerous where there is no intervention. After 10 – 15 years, depending on the type and volume of traffic, the road then needs to be resurfaced with new asphalt.

However, if roads are treated or surfaced with a road surface treatment such as a preservation, rejuvenation, surface dressing or microasphalt, depending on their location and current condition, these treatments seal the surface of the road, filling micro and other cracks, stopping moisture, water, salt and the effects of the sun from getting in and resulting in deterioration of the road and allowing potholes to form. Applied at the right time, intervening with the right surface treatment at between 5 and 15 year cycles, depending on the traffic and treatment applied, ensures the road not only stays free from potholes, but over a 60 to 90 year lifecycle, ensures the road is maintained for around a third of the cost of cycles of replacing the asphalt surface, and generating less than a quarter of the carbon emissions, not to mention much less planned and unplanned disruption for highways users.

Applied at the right time, intervening with the right surface treatment at between 5 and 15 year cycles, depending on the traffic and treatment applied, ensures the road not only stays free from potholes, but over a 60 to 90 year lifecycle, ensures the road is maintained for around a third of the cost of cycles of replacing the asphalt surface, and generating less than a quarter of the carbon emissions

Although the example used here is for a road, the same is true for most highway assets including footways, structures, drainage, signs and some street furniture. We would not leave our wooden windows to deteriorate and rot so they had to be replaced by not repainting them every few years, or buy a car and then not have it serviced so it eventually broke down requiring unplanned and costly maintenance or scrapping. So why not maintain our highway assets in the most efficient and sustainable manner?

Local highway authorities that do plan and implement proactive preventative asset management strategies and policies are already reaping the benefits in reduced costs and carbon, and are seeing less deterioration in the condition of their networks, enabling them to undertake expensive structural maintenance on those roads with the greatest need, without the perpetuating issue of good (Green) and average (Amber) condition roads falling into poor (Red) condition. It is notable that companies managing roads on the public network as part of design, build, finance and operate agreements with the Government implement proactive highway asset management. Being privately funded, their efficient lifecycle planning and implementation for maintenance ensures operation of their highway with reduced finance requirements and carbon generation, improving their profitability and reputation. Local roads authorities must follow suit, managing their highway networks as if they were their own.

- Paul spoke on this topic at the Highways, Street Lighting and Winter Maintenance Seminar on 23 March. You can download Paul's presentation from the APSE website.



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Rising to the challenge: Key issues facing the flooding sector in Wales



With climate change likely to increase the likelihood of flooding, [Adrian Crompton](#) – Auditor General for Wales explains the key issues facing the sector.

Like many parts of the UK, Wales has suffered the devastating impacts of flooding. Over 3,000 properties in Wales were known to be flooded in the winter storms of February 2020, causing an estimated £81 million in damage. Such events are a stark reminder that severe storms could become increasingly common due to climate change.

The response to the climate and nature emergency is one of the key themes that will shape my work programme as Auditor General over the next few years. In December 2022, [I published a report explaining how flood risk management works in Wales](#) and setting out key challenges. It is one of a number of other reviews relevant to the topic, including by the Wales [Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee](#) (looking at resources, and at legislation and associated policy).

So, what are the big issues for the flooding sector in Wales? My report highlighted five areas:

Workforce capacity: The most immediate priority, and the starting point for tackling other challenges. We found a workforce under considerable pressure, in desperate need of increased capacity, and requiring broad skills which are hard to find. The sector is also suffering from a lack of succession planning to ensure a suitable pipeline of future staff.

Long-term investment: The increasing risks associated with climate change are likely to require significant long term public investment, but there may also be parts of Wales where the costs of maintaining flood defences outweigh the benefits.

We found a workforce under considerable pressure, in desperate need of increased capacity, and requiring broad skills which are hard to find

Natural Resources Wales have been modelling potential requirements for maintaining existing flood assets over the next 100 years. We are expecting that this assessment will point to the need for a significant increase in spending. Meanwhile, opportunities to secure funding from other sources, including developers and the beneficiaries of flood risk management schemes, are being missed.

Policy integration and collective leadership: We heard from key stakeholders that flood risk management is too often seen as an issue for flooding departments to manage alone, and the Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee has described collaborative working as ad hoc. More needs to be done to join up with other policy areas to achieve wider benefits such as economic development, recreation, and improved biodiversity. My report also highlighted that there is no Wales-wide forum for senior leaders to discuss and elevate the profile of flood risk management across public services, something I see as a gap.

Measuring performance and delivery: There are gaps in flood risk data and the risks themselves keep changing with climate change. The overall picture of the condition of flood defences is not clear, although the Welsh Government's 2020 [National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management](#) commits to improvement. [Natural Resources Wales](#) are taking forward action in this area. Meanwhile, measuring impact by monitoring changes in risk does not necessarily indicate how well those risks are being managed. Building developments or new flood defences can also move flood risk from one place to another.

Building development: My report flagged concerns that building development in high-risk flood areas is exposing properties to avoidable flood risk. National data on planning consents shows significantly higher levels of development in high flood risk areas in 2016-17 to 2018-19 compared to 2015-16. However, beyond 2018-19 there is no national data to judge new risks resulting from development.

While there have been some positive developments, my report raises serious questions about whether public services can keep pace with the increasing risks and challenges associated with flooding. The Welsh Government has shared a [response to my report](#) with the Welsh Parliament's Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee and I will consider further audit work in the next few years looking at progress. The messages from my work appear to have been well received, but concerted action is now needed to deliver a sustainable future for flood risk management in Wales.

• Seth Newman from [Audit Wales](#) spoke on this topic at APSE's Flooding Mitigation and Climate Change Online Seminar on 30 March 2023. The presentation is available to download from the [APSE website](#).

New APSE Approved Partners:

Welcome **EDGE**
IT Systems Ltd



Chris Edge, CEO at EDGE IT Systems, receives the APSE Approved Partner certificate from Cllr David Hughes, Chair of APSE's Cemeteries and Crematoria Advisory Group.

EDGE are the UK market leader in the supply of software solutions to cemeteries, crematoria, markets and local councils, specialising in paperless, cloud-based solutions and digital modernisation.

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The latest addition to EDGE's portfolio is AdvantEDGE Markets & Events which delivers paperless administration and harnesses a market's website to provide traders with an online service to apply, sign their licence agreement, upload certificates and book & pay.

Chris Edge, CEO at EDGE IT Systems said, "We look forward to APSE members benefitting from our range of 10 software modules which includes disaster recovery and escrow as standard, which are available via a direct award to the Everything ICT procurement framework instead of going to tender.

"EDGE support is practitioner lead and Epitaph support includes ICCM qualified staff led by Peter Linsell who has extensive knowledge of cemetery and crematorium management, gained over 25 years working in the field, and Peter is an APSE approved consultant."

Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive, said, "With over 30 years' experience, EDGE has developed a well-earned reputation for enhancing and transforming organisations through its world class integrated software solutions and IT support. We are therefore delighted to welcome EDGE into the APSE family. We are in no doubt they will bring much needed insight and technical knowledge to the sector; making things a whole lot easier for death care providers."

EDGE are assisting NABMA, the National Association of British Market Authorities, with software for the next phase of the APSE performance benchmarking project for UK markets.

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"Our products are designed to be cost-effective and sustainable, enabling our customers to reduce their carbon footprint and remove the need for environmentally unfriendly chemical treatments and disruptive and expensive physical and mechanical intervention often required to deal with recurring blockages."

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"APSE is pleased to announce ABS's involvement in the Approved Partner Scheme. It's important that we recognise our responsibility to adopt sustainable practices within our organisations. With ABS on board, we can provide organisations with practical, eco-friendly alternatives," said APSE Chief Executive, Mo Baines.

For more information about ABS and its revolutionary bacterial solutions for waste and water management, please visit abs.eco

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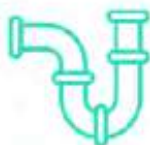
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No pain, Net Gain: Preparing for Biodiversity Net Gain



What is Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and why is it important? Fiona Sutton Wilson, Head of APSE Training, provides an overview.

APSE has been working with local authorities to explore ways in which the new mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements can help to achieve ecological and climate targets.

According to the most recent State of Nature report, there has been a 13% decline in the average abundance of wildlife in the UK since the 1970s. As local authorities grapple with the impacts of climate change and developing their mitigation strategies, the UK figures are distressing. In fact, the UK is in the bottom 10% of all countries globally, comparing less favourable than all G7 countries and most in the European Union.

Without investment and action, the situation will become much worse. The Environment Act, which received royal assent in November 2021, outlines clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world. The approach is to halt the decline in biodiversity and to go further by improving the abundance of species in the natural world in the UK.

As a mechanism to meet the UK targets, several new requirements will be in place, with supporting guidelines such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) within the planning process.

To mitigate against the impact of the built environment, all planning permissions in England (with a few exceptions) will be required to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, amending the Town and County Planning Act. The idea behind "Net Gain", as an approach, is that the natural environment will be left in a measurably better state than it was beforehand and a new BNG metric will be available to do this. Biodiversity will need to be placed at the heart of new developments. This provides significant opportunity for parks and grounds managers to work with planners and communities to influence the biodiversity of their local area.

"As rangers we are in a direct position to be implementing this, however we are also potentially expecting to be more involved in the process of assessing sites for their viability for BNG, so having an understanding of how this works is useful."

Park Ranger, Halton Borough Council

By building biodiversity into a collaborative planning process, existing habitats can be protected, and new habitats created. New and existing habitats will need to be secured for 30 years.

For those looking for a better understanding of BNG, APSE has developed BNG training to help Parks professionals prepare for their role in this important next step.

"(The course) filled in a number of gaps in my knowledge of the legislation as well as presenting questions for further clarification."

Parks Manager, Southend-on-Sea Council

Biodiversity Net Gain: Preparing Parks Professionals will be held on 20/06/23, via Microsoft Teams. For further information, contact APSE's training team: training@apse.org.uk

- If you are interested in finding out more about this topic and APSE's response, Fiona will be speaking at APSE Scotland Fleet, Waste and Grounds Seminar, which is being held in Aviemore, during 23 - 26 May 2023.



Are you a parks professional looking to further their understanding of Biodiversity Net Gain? Then sign up for our new and highly interactive training course, heavily discounted for APSE members!



Preparing for Biodiversity Net Gain: Preparing Parks Professionals

£182+VAT (APSE members) £ 296+VAT (Non-members) *This course is also available as an in-house option*

This training has been specifically designed to prepare parks and greenspace colleagues for the introduction of this legislation later this year. Through a variety of interactive activities, learners will have the opportunity to gather information and discuss strategies for practical application.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of what the new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) legislation is and how it affects you.
- Appreciate how BNG can contribute towards place making and improving the environment.
- Understand how you can link BNG to your corporate and service objectives.
- Commit to supporting the delivery of BNG projects in your area by taking practical action.

Who Will Benefit?

Specifically parks professionals who are keen to further their understanding of this crucial topic and how their role is instrumental to the delivery of BNG. However, any local authority colleague keen to understand more would benefit from attending.

Onsite delivery is available for in-house enquiries. Please email training@apse.org.uk

**Email training@apse.org.uk
for more information**



Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan: What does it mean for councils?



On 27 March, the Government announced its Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan. Matt Ellis, APSE Acting Principal Advisor, provides an

outline of the Plan, with a focus on its potential impact on the operations of local councils in England and Wales.

On 27 March, the Government announced its Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan. The Action Plan (AP) involves perpetrators of anti-social behaviour facing swifter justice, increased fines for littering and graffitiing, a crackdown on organised begging, and the introduction of council league tables for fly-tipping. When it comes to the role of local councils in this new Action Plan:

"Local authorities will play an important role in tackling anti-social behaviour through prevention and enforcement using the range of powers and tools available to them. This includes neighbourhood wardens, working alongside police and other partners, to offer a visible and reassuring presence in local communities, handing out more on-the-spot fines for vandalism, and taking appropriate action against perpetrators."

Measures announced in the Plan include:

Introducing tougher fines for litter, graffiti and fly-tipping - As a first step, the Government is increasing the upper limits for on-the-spot fines:

- Those caught fly-tipping could be fined up to £1,000 (from £400 now)
- Those who litter or graffiti could be fined up to £500 (from £150 now)
- Those who breach their household waste duty of care could be fined up to £600 (from £400 now)

Introducing council league tables on fly-tipping - The AP has committed to increased transparency of the data on the use of on-the-spot fines, including publishing league tables on fly-tipping to show which local authorities are taking a muscular approach. Further details on this league table have yet to emerge.

High Street Rental Auctions - High Street Rental Auctions will be introduced across all local authorities this autumn. These auctions will allow local authorities to sell off the rental rights for empty properties to willing tenants, such as businesses and community groups, for a short period of time.

The Plan includes increased fines for littering and graffitiing, a crackdown on organised begging, and the introduction of council league tables for fly-tipping

A review of the Landlord and Tenant Act - The Government will launch a review of the Landlord and Tenant Act, with a view to the reform of commercial leasing rules. The Government's aim is to make the system easier to understand and more transparent

Prohibiting organised and harmful begging - This will include direct individuals to engage with positive pathways, including accommodation, mental health support, substance misuse support, and immigration or asylum services

Expanding closure powers - Closure Powers allow police or council officers to quickly shut down premises that are being used, or likely to be used, to commit nuisance or disorder. The Government intend to extend these powers to Housing Providers, making it easier and quicker for them to directly tackle nuisance premises without needing to go through the police or council officers.

Making evictions of anti-social tenants easier - Through reforms for renters, the Government will make grounds for possession – the legal reasons a landlord can evict a tenant – faster and far easier to prove. This will mean landlords can take immediate action – rather than giving two months' notice and waiting for the end of a fixed term, as they currently need to when relying on Section 21.

The Government will also speed up the process of removing anti-social behaviour perpetrators from their communities by exploring a "three strikes and you're out" eviction expectation for all social landlords, meaning three proven instances of anti-social behaviour followed by three warnings from your landlord.

The APSE view: Reinvesting in neighbourhood services is critical

As alluded to by the Prime Minister in the AP Foreword, there exists a golden thread in society which helps local communities build places where families can flourish, where businesses want to invest and where people feel pride, optimism and hope. Unfortunately, as our member authorities can attest, this golden thread frays and greys in the presence of anti-social behaviour. APSE therefore broadly welcomes the Government's acknowledgement of this issue and its plan to address it.

When it comes to enforcement, councils will always take a proportionate approach to using the tools at their disposal to tackle anti-social behaviour. However, APSE member councils are all too aware that sound-bites and one-off headline interventions do little to secure improvements in the root causes of anti-social behaviour including poor housing, and access to a decent home, jobs and skills alongside addressing ill-health determinates including additions, poverty and education. Many frontline neighbourhood services were reduced during the era of austerity in order to balance local authority budgets and reinvesting in neighbourhood level services will be critical to successful, and long-term reductions in anti-social behaviour.

APSE looks forward to seeing more details of how the AP will work in practice.

- *For a more detailed breakdown of the measures introduced in the Action Plan, please download "Briefing 23-19: Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan" from the APSE website.*

For more information about how your authority can stay up to date with the latest in litter and fly tipping management, please sign up to our Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing Advisory Group, free for APSE members, via the APSE website.

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New guidance to cut emissions across public sector buildings and estates will help “save taxpayers millions”

Energy Systems Catapult have designed new ‘Public Sector Decarbonisation Guidance’ which will simplify the steps to cleaner, greener, cost-effective hospitals, prisons, libraries, schools, leisure centres and more.

A new ‘greenprint’ to reduce emissions and energy demand across public buildings and estates, has been officially launched today by Energy Systems Catapult.

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Guidance, developed with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and the Government Property Function, equips public sector organisations with new tools and proven approaches to make decarbonisation simpler across their sites, such as hospitals, schools, leisure centres, museums and universities.

New and unique resources have been based on real-world insights and experience gained from the award-winning Modern Energy Partners (MEP) programme, a ground-breaking partnership across Government Departments, the NHS and Energy Systems Catapult, which has worked with 42 sites to discover the best ways to decarbonise public sector estates.

The suite of tools, templates and checklists includes guidance to help public sector organisations consider their overall decarbonisation solution, what this could look like, and the role that technology can play.

The Guidance will be instrumental in helping public sector organisations build successful applications for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and other government funding initiatives, such as the Low Carbon Skills Fund, and help maximise cost and energy savings from these projects. Resources include procurement support, including a list of routes and frameworks, as well as interactive, downloadable tools such as the Business As Usual Estimator, which uses building, site or portfolio energy data to give a baseline and forward look of energy, carbon and costs.

The public sector accounts for around 2% of UK greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and HMG has a target to reduce these emissions by 75% by 2037 as part of its Net Zero Strategy, compared to a 2017 baseline. £2.5 billion of funding is being invested through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme between 2020 and 2025 in support of this ambition.

This week, the Government announced the allocation of the latest tranche of funding made available through the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme. Over £400 million has been allocated through the latest round, with more funding to come over the coming weeks, to help public sector bodies across England install heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures. This brings the total investment through the scheme to date to over £2 billion.

The Guidance will further boost the progress of decarbonisation and energy efficiency across public estates, supporting public sector bodies from the first stages of developing a decarbonisation strategy, through funding, installation, and completion.

It is hoped that resources will stimulate tens of thousands of large and smaller-scale energy efficiency and low carbon programmes that offer long-term energy security and savings for the public sector, from changing to LED lighting systems, to replacing heating systems that rely on fossil fuels.

Lord Callanan, Minister for Energy Efficiency and Green Finance, said:

“By offering public sector bodies practical and simple advice we’re making it easier for them to drive down emissions from their sites – saving the taxpayer millions of pounds and helping us reach our ambition to reduce energy demand by 15%.

"Reaching Net Zero requires substantial action from the public sector as well as the private. This guidance will provide public sector organisations with the tools they need to explore innovative ways of decarbonising – from implementing new technologies to harnessing data."

Alex Burghart, Cabinet Office Parliamentary Secretary, said:

"Our Government Property Strategy makes a clear commitment to create a smaller, cleaner, and greener public estate. This guidance published today by Energy Systems Catapult provides expert advice to help support that mission."

"It's critical every area of the public sector works collaboratively and constructively to develop innovative methods of decarbonising. That's why this partnership with Energy Systems Catapult was created and I am delighted these cutting-edge tools have been released to help government deliver better public services for the long term."

Christine St John Cox, Lead of Complex Site Decarbonisation and Head of MEP at Energy Systems Catapult, said:

"Helping the public sector decarbonise doesn't just support cleaner, greener buildings – it means funds from energy savings can be redirected to vital services in the longer-term, benefitting patients, pupils and local places."

"For the first time, this Guidance brings together both the strategic and the technical knowhow needed to make decarbonisation easier across organisations – supporting decision makers, delivery teams, and the supply chain. By sharing approaches that are practical, consistent and proven in the public sector, we're providing organisations with resources they can rely on, and the clarity and confidence needed to accelerate Net Zero sites."

"We are continuing to work with Government and industry to equip everyone, across all sectors, with the data and approaches they need to turbocharge decarbonisation."

Mary Aladegbola, Net Zero Carbon Technical Lead for NHS England, said:

"The decarbonisation of energy is central to the delivery of the NHS's target to reach Net Zero by 2040. Through the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, we are able to invest in measures to reduce energy carbon and see a short-term return on investment for long-term benefit."

"This Guidance provides practical advice to help simplify decarbonisation projects, standardise approaches to ensure consistency and cost-effectiveness, and support NHS teams to succeed in our bids for government funding. The guide will be an invaluable resource in the arsenal of any professional who is looking for a systematic and integrated approach to decarbonising sites."

- *Steph Parker, Senior Advisor at Energy Systems Catapult, spoke on this topic at the APSE Energy Event in Nottingham on 27 April - APSE Energy regularly holds free events for our members - in-person and online - where we discuss the latest policy and technological developments in the sector. Discover the benefits of membership, contact energy@apse.org.uk*

CATAPULT
Energy Systems

New APSE Approved Partners:



Welcome **allianceleisure**



In White Oak Leisure Centre, Alliance Leisure delivered a brand new, state-of-the-art leisure centre for their client Sevenoaks District Council.

Alliance Leisure has been working in partnership with local authorities, trusts and leisure operators for almost 25 years, delivering transformational projects that create engaging active environments and support healthy, happy, and prosperous communities.

John Leaver, Head of Marketing at Alliance Leisure, commented, "Working with over 70 local councils every year and having attended many APSE events, we knew the time was right to apply to become an APSE partner and explore other opportunities together. I'm sure we can bring some innovative thinking in transforming leisure facilities and share the successful projects we've been delivering across the UK."

The award-winning leisure development company has delivered over 220 leisure facilities since its founder and Chief Executive Sarah Watts started the company in 1999. Those projects represent an investment value of over £300m in leisure infrastructure with projects varying from outdoor parks and play spaces, to large-scale refurbishments and new-build leisure centres. Alliance Leisure are also the approved development partner for the UK Leisure Framework, which is managed by Denbighshire Leisure, and provides a pre-procured route to market for operators looking to develop their facilities.

In addition to development works, Alliance Leisure also supports leisure operators across the UK in the promotion of their facilities and services through its marketing and training brand TA6. TA6 is focused on creating sustainable revenue streams, investing in staff development, improving the health of local communities and ensuring Alliance projects are a huge success.

Commenting on the new appointment, Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive said, "Having enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Alliance Leisure, APSE are delighted to have them on board our Approved Partner scheme. With Alliance Leisure's customer-first approach, there is no doubt that they will provide a real budget boost and market-savviness for our members, particularly at this time of serious financial uncertainty in the leisure sector."

- *To find out more about Alliance Leisure visit their website or find their profile in APSE's marketplace directory.*

Did you know that...

21% of all carbon emissions are from households within the UK, and
83% of those are privately owned?

Our recent report, **The Private Sector Housing Report**, highlights the urgent need for councils to prioritize private sector housing as part of its retrofit and net-zero plans.

Lendology CIC works in partnership with councils to help reduce the carbon emissions of privately owned homes by providing accessible finance.

To discuss partnership opportunities, contact **Emma Lower, CEO of Lendology** on emma.lower@lendology.org.uk



01823 461099

www.lendology.org.uk

Local councils and the opportunity to improve private homes

Lendology and APSE'S latest collaboration highlights the importance of supporting homeowners with reducing carbon emissions in homes.



Lendology, an APSE Approved Partner, has released 'The Private Sector Housing Report' highlighting the urgent need to support homeowners. Working with APSE, Lendology surveyed UK local councils about their housing improvement plans.

The survey found that many local councils recognise the need for supporting the uptake of "retrofit" measures, such as insulation, solar panels, and heat pumps, across the private sector. 21% of all carbon emissions in the UK comes from homes, which is more than all the cars on the road. The recent Government English Housing Survey found that 83% of homes are privately owned. This means that supporting homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes is vital to reducing carbon emissions.

Nearly all (96%) of UK homeowners are concerned about their home's efficiency, which is not surprising given the cost of living crisis and ever increasing energy prices. Our council partners have been supporting homeowners across the South West since 2005, and we are seeing a year-on-year increase in people investing in their homes with our renewable energy loan scheme.

Emma Lower, CEO at Lendology, says, "A vast number of property owners don't know how to improve the efficiency of their homes, nor how to fund it. Even the most environmentally aware find it hard to retrofit their properties because they can't find the right resources. Local councils have a key role in educating homeowners about what to do, where to turn for impartial advice, how to fund it, and who to trust as a funding partner."



The report is **FREE** to download from the Lendology website

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Over 80% of local councils expect cuts in their parks budgets



Wayne Priestley, APSE Principal Advisor, shares the findings from APSE's annual survey on the state of local authority parks

and greenspace services.

Two-thirds of those surveyed are experiencing a growing number of visitors to their parks

A new survey on the state of local authority parks and greenspace services finds 85% of those surveyed are expecting budget cuts of at least 5%, with almost 30% expecting cuts of over 15%. This, despite the survey finding close to two-thirds of those surveyed are experiencing a growing number of visitors to their parks.

The survey, conducted annually by APSE and now in its thirteenth year, found that 83% of those surveyed said budget cuts have led to reduced levels of maintenance and increases in unmaintained land.

The survey also found that almost three-quarters of respondents either agreed or agreed strongly that 'the squeeze on public sector resources is affecting parks and green spaces disproportionately to other service areas'.

Other key findings

Of the local authorities surveyed:

-  Biodiversity is now identified as the main environmental priority for parks services at 96%, up from 89.8% in 2022. The second highest priority is litter control at 70%.
-  71% expect training budgets to stay the same in the next 12 months – only 5% reported increases.
-  43% of respondents said they currently have apprenticeship schemes – An 18% drop since 2022 (61%).
-  The number of respondents receiving income 'through friends of parks groups' shows a significant decrease to 37% as opposed to 51% in 2022, which may be a reflection that some Friends Groups have not fully become fully active after the pandemic.

Speaking about the findings, Mo Baines, APSE Chief Executive, said:

"As our roads become congested and financial constraints in the home mean people are more in need of free access to pleasant and accessible greenspaces, the demand from the public for access to greenspaces continues to grow louder.

"However, APSE's survey makes clear there is a real belief amongst parks professionals that service quality may start to be seriously affected because of the ongoing pressures on budgets, changes to maintenance frequencies and a need for investment, particularly as visitor numbers are remaining high and, in many cases, increasing.

"What the survey also shows is that local authorities are successfully introducing new and innovative ways to sustainably manage parks. Whether this be through income generation, partnerships or alternative forms of funding, the most recent being the opportunities which may arise from Biodiversity Net Gain. It is hoped that central governments and other stakeholders will, in recognition of this innovation and best practice, provide the necessary support for local authorities and their parks managers in developing a sustainable future for the UK's parks and the multitude of benefits they bring."

A full analysis of APSE's State of the Market Survey on Parks Services 2023 can be viewed online by visiting www.apse.org.uk



Briefing 23/17
April 2023

BLACK MOULD AND CONDENSATION

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Tackling damp and mould in social housing



Following the tragic case of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, the UK government re-issued guidance to social housing providers in respect of addressing damp and mould. Informed by a recent roundtable discussion with APSE members, Principal Advisor, Vickie Hacking, highlights the approaches councils are adopting to tackle the issue.

In the aftermath of the tragic case of Awaab Ishak, who died of a respiratory condition caused by mould in his home, attention focused on the responsibility of all registered housing providers both private and local authority, to ensure that the homes they provide are well-maintained and of a decent standard.

On 22 November 2022, the Regulator for Social Housing wrote to all registered providers of social housing in England.

The Regulator for Social Housing requested that providers owning 1,000 homes or more provided evidence of:

1. Their approach to assessing the extent of damp and mould issues in their homes.
2. Their most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards.
3. The action they are taking to remedy them.
4. The process they have to identify and deal promptly with damp and mould cases when they are raised by tenants.

Providers with fewer than 1,000 homes have been instructed to inform the regulator immediately if they are not taking action to remedy damp and mould issues, or do not have a comprehensive understanding of the extent of potential damp and mould issues in their homes.

Key themes raised at the roundtable discussions

There was a variety of key themes that emerged from the discussions which included:

Expert advice - Local authorities advised that they had brought together a group of experts to provide evidence-based advice, including air quality specialists and academics.

Damp and Mould Taskforce - Councils highlighted that tackling the issues required a cross-agency and multi-service approach. Therefore, taskforces have been established that include representatives from services and agencies that enter people's homes. Examples of these included adult social care, social services, and health visitors.

As a result of the task forces training has been developed to assist in identifying damp and mould in properties and the mechanisms for reporting the problem.

Some councils also reported that they had adopted a change to the approach that had been used in the past, for example, rather than ask the tenants to clean the mould themselves, they are now asked to leave it as is to allow the inspector to assess the full extent of the issue.

Engaging with frontline staff - Training has been provided to all employees who enter people's homes to identify potential issues regarding damp and mould and they have been provided with mechanisms for reporting the issue to the building maintenance service.

Call centre staff have also received additional training to highlight the increased priority of the issue and the information that is given to the tenants when reporting the issue.

Communication with tenants - There was conscientiousness at the roundtable regarding the importance of communicating and providing clear messages to the tenants. It was reported in the session that councils had used a variety of channels to engage with tenants and to encourage them to report any issues that they were experiencing regarding damp or mould problems. It was commented that the approach of encouraging tenants to proactively report issues would cause an increase in the volume of calls and jobs. However, it was deemed important to ensure the scale of issues could be understood and the relevant action could be taken.

In addition, information has also been circulated to tenants regarding measures that could be taken to mitigate the risk of damp and mould becoming a problem in the house.

Technologies are being developed to integrate with fire alarms and carbon monoxide monitoring systems. This provides the added benefit of being able to monitor room temperatures and moisture in the atmosphere, thus highlighting potential issues before damp and mould forms

Response of the service - Various examples were provided in relation to how councils were responding to the reports of damp and mould in tenants' properties. The most common approach centred around the tenant reporting the issue online and supplying photographs of the affected areas. A trained operative then follows up and attends the property to assess the extent of the issue and the potential causes. This type of assessment was typically undertaken within days of the report being made to the council.

Following the initial assessment being undertaken, in addition to cleaning the mould, an appointment is then made with the tenant to undertake maintenance work to rectify the underlying issues such as repairs to the property, tenant education and assistance with fuel poverty.

Products and technology - The roundtable attendees provided a variety of products that they used throughout the process including thermal cameras and moisture meters for the initial assessments.

To protect properties from mould returning after remediation work had been undertaken, councils used iso-therm and thermos dry paints and installed atmos units.

It was reported that councils are now looking at using technology to be more proactive than reactive when it comes to the issues of damp and mould in properties and were piloting or currently drawing up plans to install monitors that are linked to software that would monitor and highlight any issues within the tenant's property. These technologies are being developed to integrate with fire alarms and carbon monoxide monitoring systems with the added benefit of being able to monitor room temperatures and moisture in the atmosphere, thus highlighting potential issues before damp and mould forms.

Get involved with the APSE Network

The attendees commented that pilots were being used to identify the most effective approach, develop effective tenant engagement strategies and provide tenants with assurance with regard to privacy issues and also to ascertain the data that can be collected and how this can be used in the future for asset management purposes.

Clearly these issues will be ongoing for some time and highlight the importance of effective repairs and maintenance strategies to the health and wellbeing of social housing tenants. The sharing of ideas in response to the new guidance, and more importantly avoiding future tragedies, such as that of the little boy, Awaab Ishak, will remain an area of concern within the sector. The sharing of information and best practice in how best to respond to concerns of damp and mould was made possible through APSE's Housing and Building Maintenance Advisory Group. These networking events are free to attend for APSE member councils.

- *More details on joining the networks can be found via the APSE website. Alternatively, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk*

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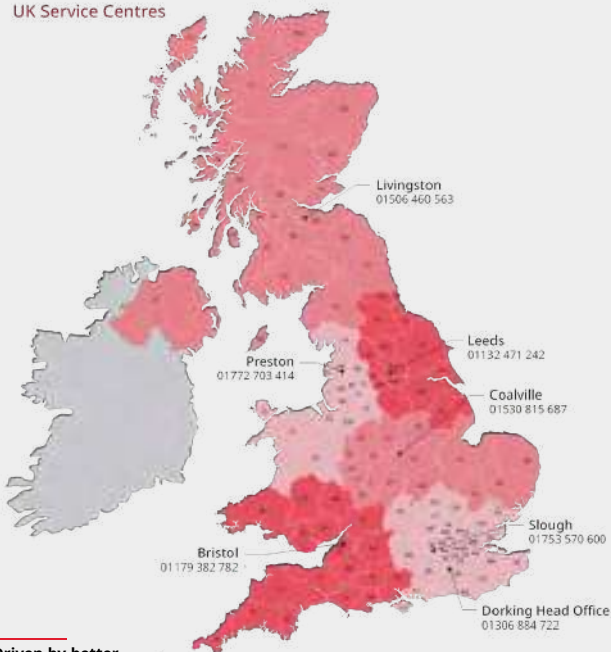


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Powering up Britain



James Jefferson, Energy Research and Project Officer, considers some of the key points from the Government's Policy Paper "Powering up Britain" and the potential impact on local authorities.

Last month, the Government published 'Powering Up Britain', stating that the document will be the:

"Blueprint for the future of energy in this country. By bringing together our Energy Security Plan, and Net Zero Growth Plan, it explains how we will diversify, decarbonise and domesticate energy production by investing in renewables and nuclear, to power Britain from Britain".

The release of Powering Up Britain coincided with the publication of a number of other documents by the Government, including the much-anticipated Government response to Chris Skidmore's net-zero review. The publication of these documents led to some dubbing the 30th March as the UK's 'Green Day'.

Grid

The report acknowledges that waiting times for connecting new generation and demand projects to the grid are currently too slow and the speed at which they are processed must be sped up significantly, with this being a high priority for the Government. Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan highlights five areas which it will focus on:

- Halving development time for transmission network projects;
- Taking a whole systems approach to network planning;
- Enabling an effective legislative and regulatory framework;
- Accelerating electricity network connections;
- Expanding and optimising our electricity interconnection with neighbours.

Nick Winser, the Electricity Networks Commissioner has been tasked with advising the Government on further action that can be taken to accelerate grid delivery, with the aim of this informing an action plan later on this year. Powering Up Britain also stated that the Government is currently working alongside industry and Ofgem to reform the grid connections process. A new connections action plan is expected to be published in the summer.

Offshore and onshore wind support

With the world's four largest operational offshore windfarms belonging to the UK, the report explained how the Government intends to continue to expand the deployment of offshore wind, with the goal of reaching 50GW of offshore wind by 2030.

The report outlines how the Government aims to have among the cheapest energy prices in Europe by 2035 and acknowledges that in order to achieve this, established technologies such as offshore wind

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will need to be rolled out at pace. However, despite this commitment to offshore wind, the report makes very little reference to onshore wind. As we await the Government response to the technical consultation on onshore wind and the National Planning Policy Framework, Powering Up Britain also referred to an upcoming second consultation on community engagement and benefits.

Solar

The report underlines the Government's ambitions for a fivefold increase in solar generation by 2035, reaching up to 70GW, which would generate enough electricity to power 20 million homes. Following on from one of the recommendations from Chris Skidmore's Mission Zero report, the Government will be setting up a taskforce to deliver on solar ambitions, with the aim of achieving large scale deployment of solar across brownfield, industrial and low/medium grade agricultural land. The report also states that there should be wide spread deployment of rooftop solar across commercial, industrial and domestic properties.

Once formed, the solar deployment taskforce is expected to publish a roadmap which will set out a step-by-step deployment trajectory to achieve 70GW of solar by 2035.

Hydrogen

The report states that: "Hydrogen is a potential energy solution for harder to electrify areas like parts of industry, heavier transport such as aviation and shipping, and potentially heating buildings", showing a clear desire to explore more wide spread use of hydrogen. The Government's aim is for the UK to have up to 10GW of low carbon hydrogen capacity by 2030.

In terms of how the Government will reach this aim, the report stated that the next steps include:

- Entering due diligence with 20 projects in the first electrolytic hydrogen allocation round;
- An aim to launch a second electrolytic hydrogen allocation round in Q4 2023;
- Aim to publish a response to the consultation on the design of business models to support hydrogen transport and storage infrastructure by the end of Q2 2023, with any further details on strategic planning to align with the production roadmap;
- Aim to publish a delivery roadmap later on this year to show how hydrogen production can be scaled up over the next 10 years;



- Publish the first revisions of the UK Low Carbon Hydrogen Standard this year.

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

One of the '25 key actions for 2025' from Chris Skidmore's Mission Zero report was for the Government to ensure the 'swift delivery' of the zero emissions vehicles mandate from 2024. In response to this, the Government has launched a final consultation on the zero emissions vehicles mandate which from 2024 would see car manufacturers have an obligation to sell an increasing number of zero emission vehicles each year up to and beyond the ban on the sale of diesel and petrol vehicles in 2030.

Further upcoming milestones for the Government outlined in The Net Zero Growth Plan include setting an end date for the sale of new, non-zero emission buses, a target for when entire fleets of buses should be zero emissions by, and an ambition to launch the Rapid Charging Fund which would increase the electricity capacity on the strategic road network and allow for the rollout of ultra rapid EV chargepoints.

Speeding up planning and networks

The Government are expected to respond to the consultation on changes to planning policy in England for onshore wind, so that a more localist approach can provide authorities with more flexibility to respond to the views of their residents. Offshore wind has also been recognised by the Government as being a "nationally significant infrastructure" which is included as part of the newly revised National Policy Statements.

Energy efficiency

Key commitments from the Energy Security Plan were that the Government will deliver energy efficiency upgrades through the Great British Insulation Scheme, extend the Boiler Upgrade Scheme to 2028 and that they are announcing an extension to the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, which will increase total grant funding available by £185 million. The report refers to a new Government target of reducing the final energy demand from buildings and industry by 15% on 2021 levels by 2030, stating that improving energy performance of buildings and supporting the roll-out of energy efficient products such as heat pumps will be vital to achieving this.

One of the documents that was published alongside Powering Up Britain was the announcement of a rebranded ECO+ which will be known as the Great British Insulation Scheme, the scheme will complement the ECO4 scheme. However, unlike ECO4, will only focus on single insulation measures, largely cavity wall insulation as this as seen as being the most cost-effective measure. Additionally, the Government also announced the Heat Pump Investment Accelerator competition which will aim to incentivise the manufacture of heat pumps within the UK. Registered businesses are able to apply for grant funding of up to £15m to fund investment in the manufacturing of heat pumps and strategically important components.

Direct references to local authorities

The report states that: "Local areas play an integral role in supporting the transition to net zero. Local authorities have strong powers, assets, and responsibilities across many of the areas where emissions reductions are needed".

Powering Up Britain states that the Government will continue to work alongside APSE Energy through their sponsorship of the Big Energy Summit, demonstrating the success of our annual event

The report states that the Government is supporting the capacity and capacity building of local authorities through the five regional Local Net Zero Hubs, the funding that will be provided by the UK Infrastructure Bank and Net Zero Go. Additionally, the report states that the Government are supporting innovation in local authorities through the Fast Followers for local authorities' scheme which allows local authorities to apply for a share of up to £6m to build the skills and capacities of the local workforce.

Following on from recommendations from Chris Skidmore's review into net-zero, the report refers to the newly formed Active Travel England which will support local authorities to develop and improve walking, wheeling and cycling routes in England. The Government underlined in the report how they are supporting local authorities with the installation of EV infrastructure through the LEVI and ORCS schemes which will be providing significant funding to local authorities over the coming years.

In response to the Net Zero Review's recommendation that there should be an annual Local Climate Summit, Powering Up Britain states that the Government will continue to work alongside APSE Energy through their sponsorship of the Big Energy Summit, demonstrating the success of our annual event.

APSE Energy comment: We need to act faster

Chris Skidmore's review into net-zero recommended that the Government set up an onshore wind task force alongside a clear road map for reaching the required levels of onshore wind to achieve a net-zero grid by 2035. However, in their response to the review, the Government stated that now is not the right time to set up an onshore wind task force, adding that the current focus is on developing local partnerships for onshore wind in England. We will have to wait and see what comes from the technical consultation into changes to the National Planning Policy Framework to promote onshore wind and the upcoming consultation on community benefits, however it is hoped that these consultations will lead to an end to the de-facto ban on onshore wind.

In the meantime, local authorities can only influence what they can. Making progress with their own action plans and meeting local targets is the priority.

- This article is taken from the APSE Energy Briefing 08/23 'Powering up Britain'. The briefing is free to download for APSE Energy members. For more information, contact James Jefferson on jjefferson@apse.org.uk

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Keeping direct cremation local

Cardiff Bereavement Services' Solace provides local funeral directors with an option which is both environmentally friendly and cost effective.



**The service has been
priced to be competitive
with local crematoria**

Since the pandemic there has been an exponential growth in direct cremations. It is a challenge faced by cremation authorities and our local funeral directors to compete with the national offerings available. Additionally, we are aware that some members of the public do not seem to understand that their loved one is not being cremated at a local crematorium and often ring our office to ask whether the cremation has taken place. Furthermore, the environmental impact of the deceased being transported to crematoria further away to, for example, certain crematoria in England, cannot be ignored.

In response to this, Cardiff Bereavement Services wanted to provide a local direct cremation option for those who wanted to choose this option for their loved one's funeral but did not want to have a cremation elsewhere. Cardiff Bereavement Services' Solace provision takes this service one step further. It provides local funeral directors with an option which is both environmentally friendly and cost effective. The service includes a member of staff, in our private ambulance, to collect up to four deceased from a funeral director's premises within a 20-mile radius of Thornhill. The ambulance is already owned and operated by Bereavement Services as part of their Public Health Funerals initiative.

To promote the service, a meeting was held with all funeral directors to let them know about the service and answer any of their queries. The main challenge from this was that some funeral directors are tied in with contracts with other crematoria. Some failed to grasp the trading benefits that the service could bring them and the cost-benefits it would provide and one was worried that we may be considering establishing a funeral directorship. They were sceptical that the local authority would be looking at a way to assist them. For some, the benefits were evident immediately and they were keen to start using the service and saw it as beneficial to their business model allowing to compete within this incredibly competitive marketplace whilst offsetting their staff, fleet and fuel costs.

The process works as follows; a cremation booking is made as per our usual deadlines. To provide our crematorium staff with oversight regarding collection requirements, the booking is made for an after-hours slot on the date agreed for the cremation service. The deceased is then collected by a uniformed member of our staff at an agreed time from the funeral director's premises and brought to Cardiff Crematorium for committal through the chapel and then into the crematory.

The service has been priced to be competitive with local crematoria. It provides funeral directors with an option to offer a direct cremation without having to use their staff and vehicles to transport the deceased to the crematorium thus offsetting their risk. Additionally, it stops several different vehicles being driven to the crematorium each day thereby providing an option for funeral directors to reduce their carbon footprint. If the pilot is successful we may look to purchase a carbon neutral vehicle.

For Bereavement Services it means that the bereaved from our locality are aware of the date that the direct cremation service will be taking place. This allows families the opportunity to come together on that date and remember their loved one if that is their wish and the cremated remains available within 48 hours. Moreover, their loved one has been cremated locally in the crematorium that they would normally have chosen should they have wanted an attended service. In Wales, this also provides the option for those whose first language is Welsh to have the option to have all their correspondence in Welsh.

The service forms part of raft of cremation options available to the bereaved. They now have the option of a direct cremation, a standard cremation and, from April 2023, an enhanced cremation service. The latter package will provide families, for an additional cost, full AV provision including a pro-tribute of up to 50 photos, a webcast, and a recording of the service. Additionally, they have the choice of a memorialisation option included; either a 5 line book of remembrance entry with a gold capital or artwork or a leased leaf on a memorial willow tree.

• Cardiff Council collected an APSE Innovation Award for this initiative at the APSE Cemeteries and Crematoria Seminar in Birmingham on 27 April. The PowerPoint presentation is available for download from the APSE website.



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The critical shortage of qualified mechanics



Rob Bailey, APSE Principal Advisor for Transport, discusses the significant

pressures on recruiting and retaining operatives and technical staff.

APSE's own research through our annual 'State of the Market Report' found significant pressures on recruitment with 76% reporting difficulty in recruitment of operatives and 81% reporting difficulty in recruitment of technical staff

Local authority transport depots are at a critical tipping point. Vacancy rates of 25% are not uncommon amongst technical staff and many staff are close to retirement. In the past, many would return as casual vehicle inspectors post retirement but even that avenue has now all but dried up.

The situation is worse in the private sector which shed significant labour during COVID. Many vehicle maintenance businesses that used to undertake subcontract work for councils either do not exist or no longer have the staff and expertise. Vehicles can take over six weeks before they are returned to their council operator, with significant knock-on effects on service delivery in areas such as highways and refuse collection.

A report by the Social Market Foundation published in December 2022 predicted that the automotive industry would face a deficit of 25,100 electric vehicle (EV) trained technicians by 2030. This, along with increased computerisation and efforts by manufacturers to monopolise the aftermarket space, are seen as key concerns within the industry today.

When identifying barriers to upskilling the workforce, the report listed low confidence in Government plans for EV transition, further education (FE) colleges capital constraints, and the need for more support for smaller workshops.

APSE's own research through our annual 'State of the Market Report' found significant pressures on recruitment with 76% reporting difficulty in recruitment of operatives and 81% reporting difficulty in recruitment of technical staff. Likewise, 36% reported problems with retention of operatives and 37% reported problems with retention of technicians. The average age of staff was 45 with a median wage of £15.01 an hour.

Councils have enhanced the role of their workforce through the use of market supplements and regrading but these increases have not kept pace with the wider market. Around 70% of the larger vehicle maintenance workforce also hold an HGV licence in a market where national hauliers and chain stores are offering substantial salaries to drivers with double digit inflation on pay reported by Logistix UK in 2021/22.

Councils have a long and proud tradition of developing skills via apprenticeship schemes, and APSE's most recent State of the Market Survey found over 96% of respondents run one. However, attracting applicants of the necessary calibre presents an increasing challenge. HGV apprentice roles in the general sector are poorly paid – from a reported £4.81 to £9.59 an hour or £12,480 per annum – whereas many qualified roles are now offering £40,000 plus per annum. Interestingly, the Apprentice Levy has stimulated demand at the other end of the spectrum with increases in those council officers studying at level 6 (degree level). But it is a moot point whether these same people will seek to work in frontline technical roles once qualified.

Compounding the skills problem is the fact FE and technical colleges have scaled back or closed many of their vehicles-related courses due to lack of local demand. Similarly, private garages no longer have the turnover or income to sustain an apprenticeship.

On a general note, the downward trend in the number of vehicle maintenance apprentices reflects a downward trend in the overall number of apprentices. Research from the London School of Economics and the University of Surrey exploring trends in apprenticeship take-up from 2015 to 2020, revealed that the number of overall apprenticeship starters declined dramatically over the five years. Numbers fell by almost a quarter from 2017 to 2018 which saw the move from Frameworks to Standards, new rules on the quality of training and the apprenticeship levy. According to the DfE, overall starts saw a further 18% decline during the pandemic from 2018/19 to 2020/21. Numbers have still not recovered, with DfE data showing that starts for 2021/22 remain 11% lower than in 2018/19.

It has been posited that the move to electric vehicles at the car/van end of the market may free up some roles as these vehicles typically require less servicing. However, local authorities typically run a wide spectrum of vehicles including cars and vans through to refuse freighters and highways vehicles. Though the range is steadily improving, at the heavy end of the market, electric options are still quite limited.

Vehicle maintenance has been affected by the recruitment challenge affecting the wider economy. Combine this with squeezed council budgets, and it seems the immediate future poses a significant challenge.

• *This article first appeared in LAPV on 21 April. For more information about how your local authority fleet service can benefit from APSE membership, please email Rob Bailey on rbailey@apse.org.uk*

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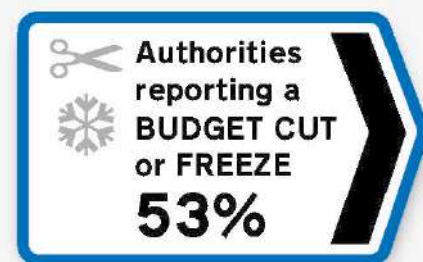
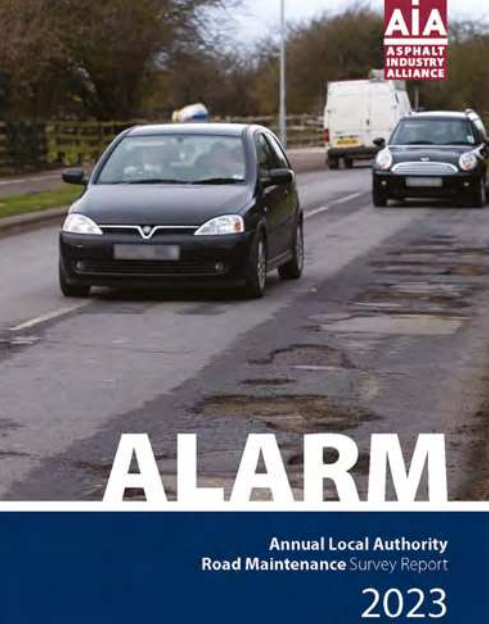


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No respite for local roads, reports ALARM survey

This year's Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey makes bleak reading, with worsening carriageway conditions and mounting costs set to spell more misery for road users.

The ALARM survey, published today (March 21, 2023) by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), reports that local authority highway teams in England and Wales only received around two-thirds of what they needed to stop our local roads from further deterioration and that more than £14 billion is now needed to fix the backlog¹ of carriageway repairs.

Despite the small increase in overall highway maintenance budgets reported, less is being spent on the carriageway itself and rising costs due to inflationary pressures mean engineers have reported being forced to postpone or cancel road schemes to make savings.

The data shows that in the last year, the gap between what local authorities received and what they said they would have needed to keep roads to their own target conditions and prevent further decline is now £1.30 billion – a jump of more than 20% on last year's figure and the highest amount reported in 28 years of successive ALARM surveys.

And, the cost of fixing the backlog of carriageway repairs is reported to have increased by a further 11% on last year's record figure to a new high of £14.02 billion – the equivalent of £68,000 per mile of local road in England and Wales – and would take an average of 11 years to complete.

Rick Green, AIA Chair, said: "Highway engineers can only do so much with the resources they are given and should be applauded for the steps they take to keep roads safe.

"Potholes and the condition of our local roads remain key issues for the public and the Chancellor went some way to recognising this in his Spring Budget. But the additional £200m one-off payment for local

roads in England, while welcome, is just not enough. It represents around 20% of the average shortfall in English local authorities' annual budgets and will do little to improve overall structural conditions and stem further decline.

"We all appreciate that there are difficult choices to make with demands and pressures on the public purse coming from every area, but not investing in local road maintenance only leads to worsening conditions, which impact on other locally provided public services, a rising bill to fix the problem and more road user complaints."

This year's ALARM survey received a record number of responses from 75% of local authorities in England and Wales. It reports local road funding and conditions based on information provided directly by those responsible for its maintenance. The findings of ALARM 2023, which relate to the 2022/23 financial year, show that in England and Wales:

- Local authorities would have needed an average of an extra £7.7 million each last year just to reach their own target road conditions. It would now cost £14.02 billion to tackle the backlog and bring the network up to a standard from which it can be maintained efficiently and cost effectively going forward.
- While half (51%) of local roads are reported to be in good structural condition, the remainder, more than 100,000 miles, could, without appropriate maintenance measures, continue to deteriorate to the point of needing to be rebuilt within the next 15 years.
- 18% of the network (almost 37,000 miles) is already assessed as having less than 5 years' structural life remaining.
- One pothole is filled the equivalent of every 22 seconds.
- Roads are only resurfaced on average once every 116 years.

Rick Green added: "To really improve conditions and create a safe, resilient and sustainable network, what's needed is a longer-term funding horizon from central government with more highway budget ring-fencing. This would help local authority engineers to plan effectively and implement more efficient works to protect and enhance the resilience of the local road network."

- *APSE Briefing 23-20 'ALARM Survey' summarises the main themes of the report including: funding, potholes, road surfacing frequency, utility openings, compensation claims and carbon reductions. You can download the briefing from the APSE website. For more information, contact Garry Lee, APSE's Research and Coordination Officer, on glee@apse.org.uk.*

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Damian Hughes
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