

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SECTOR JOURNAL

SUMMER 2020



**UK Tech
Accelerating
WAN Data
During
Covid-19**

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CONTACT

Sodexo has added 40 mobile testing units (MTUs) to its existing portfolio of COVID-19 testing sites across the UK

The leading global services provider is now responsible for a total 59 testing sites following the transfer of the MTUs from the Ministry of Defence.

MTUs travel around the UK, increasing COVID-19 testing capacity in remote areas, in care homes and prisons, and can be set up in approximately 20 minutes.

Each MTU has the capacity to carry out more than 400 tests.

Swabs are collected on site and taken to one of three mega-labs to be processed, with results expected within 24 hours.

Sean Haley, regional chair, Sodexo UK and Ireland, told GPSJ: "I am immensely proud of how teams throughout Sodexo are helping fight the threat posed by COVID-19.

"Supporting the Government in increasing the testing capabilities of the UK is vital both in safeguarding the health of the nation and in getting the economy going again. Sodexo is playing its part and will continue to help combat this pandemic."

Alongside the 40 MTUs, which are deployed from 10 regional sites, Sodexo operates 16 regional drive-through testing centres and three local walk-in centres.

Sodexo's staff have been training with military personnel in preparation for taking over the MTUs.

Each MTU is run by two teams, each covering a week-long period, and can be deployed anywhere in England within 12 hours.



Innovation platform will improve innovation and collaboration in Worcestershire's business community

Worcestershire Innovation (WINN) has launched a new innovation platform, which aims to drive crowd innovation across Worcestershire, introduce smaller firms to larger companies and encourage collaboration.

Thought to be the first innovation platform of its type in the UK, the WINN platform is powered by Idea Spotlight, the idea management solution from software & services firm Wazoku.

Events and roundtables are usually held by WINN but due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, they have been postponed. The innovation platform will provide a way to continue idea sharing and discover new opportunities. Businesses can sign-up to the platform, develop a business profile, find supportive content,

begin conversations and respond to challenges.

Jessica Antley, Senior Project Manager, Innovation, Worcestershire County Council said: "Our innovation platform is something that has been in the pipeline for a while, but the uncertainty brought about by Covid-19 has only increased the need for businesses in the region to come together to solve problems."

"We already do a lot of work to encourage collaboration around innovation but needed a digital platform to allow our users to discuss and develop ideas together and to facilitate introductions and Wazoku has extensive experience on such innovation projects so Idea Spotlight was the ideal solution."

WINN started a successful pilot scheme in the fourth quarter

of 2019, which placed user requirements at the centre of its operations. Iterations were made based on this feedback, including the ability for users to now ask direct questions. Now fully launched, the aim is to get as many individuals and businesses signed up and engaging on the innovation platform as possible.

Councillor Ken Pollock, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Infrastructure said: "Sustainable economic growth and business growth has long been a key priority for Worcestershire County Council and part of that commitment includes the WINN initiative. This is a unique platform that we believe will be central to the future success and development of the county."

Idea Spotlight is used by businesses and public sector

organisations all over the world, including in the UK the Ministry of Defence, National Health Service, Department for Education and Hackney Borough Council. It's used to capture, evaluate, improve and implement ideas from across an eco-system and uses AI to ensure that all ideas are logged and stored until such a time that they become relevant in the future.

"The public sector in the UK has been progressive in its use of digital platforms to encourage innovation and Worcestershire County Council is a great example of that," said Simon Hill, CEO and founder, Wazoku. "It's highly focused on innovation to affect change within the county and the new platform is a powerful way to encourage collaboration amongst local businesses and really push that innovation forwards."

Industry-leading electric vehicle charging network installed at Swindon's landmark housing development

Award-winning electric vehicle (EV) charging technology has been installed at one of Swindon's largest housing developments in an industry-leading move to increase the use of environmentally friendly transport.

Installed in the ground alongside over a hundred parking bays at Wichelstowe, the technology will allow residents and visitors to charge their cars from shared parking spaces. This is one of the first developments in the country to include electric vehicle charging facilities beyond private driveways.

Environmental sustainability is a core commitment for the Joint Venture behind the development, which is made up of Barratt Developments and Swindon Borough Council. Over the next 20 years the partnership will deliver 3,000 new homes on the 250-hectare site, along with three primary schools and a secondary school, which is now open and extensive open spaces including

playing pitches, allotments and nature conservation areas.

The first phase of 208 highly sustainable homes are currently being finalised by five-star housebuilders Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes with the first residents moving in this summer.

Provided by market-leading EV technology company, Connected Kerb, the infrastructure will support over 130 charging points across the development with 20 active chargers immediately installed into shared parking bays. The unique split design, with chargers housed safely below ground connected to a small plug-in socket or wireless charging pad above ground, makes for a small, sleek roadside units.

Witnessing the first connections and cables being installed, Councillor David Renard, Leader of Swindon Borough Council and JV Board Member said:

"I'm proud to see Wichelstowe leading the way again with an electric vehicle charging network that is available to visitors as well



Councillor David Renard, Leader of Swindon Borough Council, Daniel Pavely, Project Director, Wichelstowe and Dr Chris Pateman-Jones, CEO, Connected Kerb with new EV charging point.

as residents and whether you live in a four-bedroom home with a driveway or a stylish waterside apartment. Having such an extensive network of charge points will help give people the confidence to make the switch to electric."

Wichelstowe project director Daniel Pavely added:

"In line with our strong commitment to sustainability and the environment, the electric vehicle charging network at Wichelstowe is bold and forward-thinking. Installed in the ground alongside parking bays, the technology will allow the residents and their visitors to be able to charge their electric vehicle from

the shared parking facilities - unlike many other developments where this is only really possible for people with driveways.

"As well as installing ready-to-use chargers, the system will make electric vehicles a realistic, practical choice for hundreds of residents who will be able to benefit and connect to an EV network."

Connected Kerb's chief operating officer, Andy Carr added: "The EV revolution is here and the Wichelstowe Project is an example of the innovative approach needed for the inclusion of EV charging infrastructure in new residential developments."

'Common sense' prevails for overseas doctors now able to stay in UK to sit exams

Doctors from overseas who faced bills of hundreds of pounds to stay in the UK after exams were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic will now be allowed to take their exams before and remain in the UK without additional charges, thanks to pressure from a range of organisations, including the BMA.

In March, the General Medical Council (GMC) postponed its Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB 2) exams - the final assessment needed before overseas doctors

are granted license to practice in the UK - due to concerns around its ability to meet social distancing guidelines. Initially the tests were suspended until June, before being rescheduled to August and September.

This meant that around 200 doctors already in the UK faced a visa renewal fee of £993 alongside continued living costs if they wished to stay to sit the tests. Many were unable to return home due to restrictions on flights and being unable to afford the air fare.

After the BMA wrote to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and the Home Office asking for

automatic visa extensions for these doctors, guidance has now been updated allowing them to stay in the UK long enough to take their rescheduled exams at no extra cost.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul, BMA council chair, said:

"This news will be of great relief to those international doctors who were stranded in the UK unable to work and who may have faced financial hardship due to the prospect of expensive visa renewal fees. Thanks to lobbying from the BMA and other organisations, these doctors will now be able to sit their exams

without having to pay to renew their visas and will finally be able to cross this one last hurdle necessary for them to work in the NHS.

"The NHS is significantly understaffed and we know it relies on our talented international colleagues to provide patients with the high quality care they need, so we are glad that the UKVI Office has listened and introduced a common sense policy that will allow them to sit their exams and contribute their skills to the NHS when they are needed most."

E.ON and Nissan announce major V2G project milestone

E.ON and Nissan have successfully deployed 20 vehicle-to-grid (V2G) chargers as part of a trial to demonstrate how electric vans and cars could play a role in supporting the UK grid and provide a profitable and sustainable solution for business fleets.

The install at Nissan's European Technical Centre in Cranfield is the first in a large-scale V2G trial co-funded by Innovate UK. The project will test and demonstrate how storing and sharing electricity in fleet vehicles' batteries can generate additional revenue for participating companies as well as supporting the power grid.

Having validated the technology at Nissan's Cranfield site, the project is now recruiting further participants for the trial and plans to deploy V2G chargers for organisations across the UK.

V2G technology allows electricity to flow in both directions to and from electric vehicle batteries, allowing energy stored in the battery to be sold back to the grid when demand for power is high. Vehicles can then charge when demand is lower or renewable generation is high, reducing reliance on fossil-fuelled generation, giving V2G a role in carbon reduction efforts.

The technology can also release capacity on the electricity networks which distribute power around the country. In collaboration with UK Power Networks, the trial will go on to explore opportunities for customers to earn revenues from this as a service.

Luke Ellis, V2G Programme Manager with E.ON UK, said: "Now that we've proven the technology's capabilities with these 20 installs, we're a step closer to bringing it to market. This is about commercialising a vehicle's bi-directional charging capabilities, with clear advantages for businesses either already with a fleet of electric vehicles

or those that are ready to make the transition to electric, and demonstrates how E.ON is providing solutions for customers that will help make the air cleaner.

"Operating an electric fleet means already contributing to the net zero emissions target and saving money through local clean air zone exemptions; integrating your fleet with V2G technology brings greater cost savings and the chance to earn extra revenue. Fleet vehicles which sit idle overnight, or even during the working day, could see their batteries charged when demand is low, with the energy exported when demand is high, but still be charged and ready for use when required.

"V2G technology brings with it wider environmental benefits for society as a whole. It can be considered 'carbon negative' for its potential to reduce or even remove the need for fossil-fuelled generation to be fired up at times of peak electricity demand."

Peter McDonald, Fleet Director at Nissan Motor GB, said: "We know many fleets are not just looking at electric vehicle acquisition, they are also reviewing their energy infrastructure for a world where electric vehicles are fast becoming the norm. Nissan is collaborating with E.ON on this exciting energy infrastructure project to expedite V2G technology in the UK. Thanks to the LEAF and e-NV200 being V2G-capable, these EVs are well set for the future."

The V2G package for participants in the trial will be offered at a heavily subsidised price through grant funding made available through Innovate UK. Vehicles compatible with the technology being used in this project are currently the Nissan e-NV200 and the Nissan LEAF2.

As well as E.ON and Nissan the V2G project consortium (known as e4Future) includes Newcastle University, Imperial College London, Northern Powergrid, UK



Power Networks and National Grid ESO. The V2G platform used on the trial utilises a combination of E.ON's existing Virtual Power Plant software as well as a charger operating system provided by E.ON's e-mobility partner Virta.

The project is part of the V2G programme, funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the

Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), in partnership with Innovate UK. Part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency investing in science and research.

Contact V2G@eonenergy.com for more information about the project and how businesses with fleets can get involved.

Highways Maintenance: Why we must learn from the past and fund the future to deliver real solutions for road surfaces and potholes

Experts take a close look at the complex challenges road surface engineers face in developing solutions to improve the quality of the UK's highways and road networks for GPSJ

The first thing most people think of when considering the challenges for road surfaces would be the infamous pothole. In fact, while it is essential to repair potholes to keep road users safe, they are merely a symptom of the many underlying causes that affect the quality of a road's surface.

When it comes to solving the pothole crisis in the UK, experts at the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) suggest that treating these defects is simply not enough. Potholes are a symptom of road surfaces that are not fit for purpose because of the changes transport has endured over the years and most importantly, due to a lack of funding.

Many factors come into play when identifying the real cause of poor-quality road surfaces in the modern world. Increasing populations, growing numbers of vehicles on the road, rising consumer demand and the strain on the freight sector with the advent of online delivery services have all caused a major impact on the durability of roads due to increasingly frequent use.

Consider the arrival of GPS; this innovative technology has made it easier for road users to navigate UK infrastructure, while in turn, it has resulted in the overloading of road surfaces with heavy traffic flows and heavy vehicles utilising routes that may not have seen these levels of

traffic previously or may not have been designed for this type of use to begin with.

Treating the cause, not the symptom

To lay a solid foundation for the UK infrastructure, and prepare road surfaces for the future, a focussed engineering strategy is needed in the approach to potholes. Engineers and authorities must look at solving the causes of potholes, rather than treating the symptom.

Well-engineered, regularly maintained road surfaces and the use of quality materials is the only real way to defeat the notorious pothole. Strategies that focus on proper maintenance of road surfaces before they deteriorate would prevent a huge number of defects seen on our roads.

Sealing, strengthening and renewing road surfaces are the most important ways that defects can be minimised through preventative maintenance. These may seem like disruptive and expensive measures, but in terms of whole life cost they could eradicate potholes and prove more cost effective.

Challenges with new technologies

Modifying road surfaces to accommodate connected and automated vehicles present a variety of challenges for the future. Installing sensors throughout the network will

be the first hurdle. Roads may also become burdened with increasing wear and strain if connected vehicles all follow a set singular path.

Ultimately, the main challenge for engineers and authorities has remained the same since the 1800s, producing longer lasting, more durable road surfaces.

The industry is currently developing and trialling a range of new surface materials to provide longer lasting roads. The latest innovation gaining attention is the 'plastic road'. Surprisingly, the amount of plastic in this form of modified bitumen represents less than 0.5% of the mixture.

While the use of modified bitumen is not a new concept, it is concerning that there are currently no standards and specifications surrounding bitumen modified with plastic. More troubling perhaps are the issues of what happens to the plastic waste byproducts when these surfaces deteriorate. The implications to the environment and surrounding ecosystems should be studied more widely before these surfaces are rolled out nationally.

The road to the future is paved with lessons from the past

An influential nineteenth century Scottish engineer and road builder, John Loudon Macadam, advocated that roads need to be properly maintained and funded.

This sentiment rings ever true in today's modern world. With the increasing changes and challenges we face in planning the future of transport, there is a growing need for advanced engineering, proper maintenance and increased funding to ensure our infrastructure is fit for purpose.

TRL has been working alongside Transport Scotland to develop a cutting-edge new surface course material. The material, known as TS2010, has the potential to last for 20 years, twice as long as many materials currently used throughout the industry, effectively doubling the life expectancy of UK road surfaces.

Introduced in November 2010, TS2010 has been through extensive development and is now well into the assessment phase. Annual visual assessments indicate the material will last twice as long as materials previously used on Scottish trunk roads.

Maintaining the UK's extensive road network is vital for the future of transport. There are rapid changes ahead for the transport sector with the arrival of connected and automated vehicles and electric and ultra-low emission technologies set to change the face of UK infrastructure.

Now more than ever it is increasingly important to develop a focussed engineering

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Keeping cycleways and highways open through the winter

James Wilson is the founder and MD of VALE Engineering (York) Ltd - recognised today as the market-leading UK manufacturer of high-quality, robust and easy-to-use winter maintenance, weed control and turf care equipment for local authorities.



Liquid De-icer/Snowbrush Mini-Tractor Combi is a popular choice for cycleways with VALE Engineering offering free demos to councils.



The TS6000 is the newest and largest highways gritter from VALE Engineering and has the same capacity as an 18T gritter wagon.

Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the way people live, work and travel, with a dramatic rise in the popularity of cycling. As a direct consequence, in July the Government launched Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking. In his foreword, PM Boris Johnson says it "aims to kick off the most radical change to our cities since the arrival of mass motoring. We announced in May £2 billion of new funding for cycling and walking – representing a sixfold increase in dedicated funding, the biggest increase this country has ever seen. That will pay for first hundreds, then thousands of miles of protected bike lanes, so anyone can ride safely." Local authorities also need to ensure appropriate winter maintenance for new and existing cycleways.

How safe will your cycleways be when winter comes?

Gear Change correctly states that: "As important as building a route itself is maintaining it properly afterwards. In winter, cycle lanes are usually the last place to be cleared of snow

and ice, if they are cleared at all. Routes must be properly maintained and [...] Route proposals should always include a clear programme of maintenance. Surfaces must be [...] safe in all weathers." How can you ensure cycleways in your authority are a 365 day-a-year success story, rather than a summer sensation that thrives during the Covid pandemic and then peters out?

Liquid De-Icers are by far the best way to ensure cycleways are safe during winter months as the use of grit reduces ice, yet also introduces a hazardous surface to cycle on as residue grit is slippery. This reduces a cycle's braking and steering capabilities, making gritting a Health & Safety nightmare. VALE Engineering's Liquid De-icer/Snowbrush Mini-Tractor Combi was designed specifically to work on cycleways, becoming the equipment of choice for local authority clients including major metropolitan districts and unitary authorities as well as retail parks and airports. Ongoing R&D ensures that VALE Engineering can also offer a selection of flexible solutions to

meet new demands.

Combining tried and tested technology developed over 20 years, the Liquid De-icer/Snowbrush Mini-Tractor Combi is fully approved and road legal. This market-leading design incorporates both liquid de-icing sprayer and front-mounted snowbrush. Local authorities are encouraged to contact VALE Engineering to request a free demonstration of the Mini-Tractor Combi which features a multitude of ingenious features:

- electrically controlled spraying nozzles including automatic stop/start and automatic sensors to control the application rate – adjusting the output dependant on the forward speed and turning the nozzles off when the tractor comes to a stop and instantly turning them on when moving away.
- built-in suction fill device for ease of filling the liquid de-icer tank.
- deep sump (not flat tank) ensures consistent application of liquid de-icer with no risk of air being sucked into the system.

- 400-litre tank as standard, allowing 22kms of traditional cycleway to be treated at a precautionary rate of 15 ml/m², with options to increase spray width to meet Gear Change aspirations.

Highway winter maintenance and other options

Founded in 1999, VALE Engineering is generally recognised today as the market-leading manufacturer of high-quality, robust and easy-to-use winter maintenance, turf care and weed control equipment including CDA lance and ATV-mounted systems. Winter maintenance designs include snow ploughs and multiple cost-effective towed-gritter options (all incorporating the company's unique POZI-FEED auger system), as well as de-icers. All VALE designs are designed and manufactured by the company at its Yorkshire facility.

For more information, please visit the company's informative new website www.valeuk.com, email info@valeuk.com or telephone 01904 738533.

#SayNOtoRockSalt

#SayYESToEcoGrit

Traffic accidents, potholes, road deterioration, trip hazards on pavements and in car parks, There seems to be an epidemic happening all around us affecting every city, town, village and the connecting roads in between. Why is this happening? What can we realistically do about it?



What can be done?

The solution is surprisingly simple but it would require us all to make a little change. Many little changes can make a life changing difference, as all of us are affected on a daily basis by these problems. With this kind of change we would all start to see the results in our lifetime.

The change in question is to stop putting down untreated rock salt onto our roads, pavements and car parks over the winter period. Brine and pure de-icing salt aren't much better either.

What's wrong with what we are doing now?

In their current form, these products are super corrosive and terrible for our environment and ecosystem. They are not even

that affective, sometimes having to be put down multiple times a day, as these products have a low absorption factor. They are also only active to temperatures of -7C and anything below that renders them useless (the ground temperature is often colder than the air temperature).

Their corrosive nature is evident all around us if we stop and look. Where grit bins are placed at sloping junctions and on hills, the roads are much worse than the surrounding areas. It doesn't matter if the surface is tarmac (asphalt) or concrete, rock salt will eat its way through the surface as the hard grit embeds itself into the smallest cracks and holes. With the high volume of traffic we have on the roads, this causes the whole surface area to weaken

and deteriorate much quicker than we can fix. Potholes need to be permanently fixed without cutting a section out (Thermal Road Repairs leads the way with this technology), nothing else will do but because the whole road surface is getting eaten away, as soon as you fix one pothole another will appear near by because of the weakened surface.

Highways England recognise a deterioration annually of 3% to the road network which must run in the £10b's, even £100b's in damage annually when you work out how many roads we have and this is increasing each year with new housing estates being built everywhere so the problem is only going to get worse, not better and if our weather starts to worsen in the future, we are going to have a real problem on our hands.

Are the products we are using now that bad?

Nature over millions of years has locked away many "nasties" inside the rock salt to protect the planet and we are spreading it back around before we've even treated it, no wonder it's cheap. Urea is touted as a safe alternative to rock salt but in reality, if adopted on a national level would put our waterways and sea at risk of toxic algae blooms (more info in online article) which would be devastating for us.

Is there any hope?

Fortunately yes, and it comes under the name of EcoGrit Concentrate.

EcoGrit can be applied traditionally like rock salt, it works to a temperature of -20C and is 80%, yes 80% less corrosive.

It also has a much higher absorption factor meaning it doesn't need to be put down as often and in low traffic areas can last a number of days depending on snowfall.

It has the ability to be mixed with water so it can be applied by spray. In this form it works to about -8C (100g per litre) but can cover a larger area than in grit (granular) form. It's ideal for steps, fire escapes, paths and entrances to buildings. It creates no mess and isn't walked into buildings.

EcoGrit has no storing or handling restrictions and does not fall under COSHH regulations. It can also be used in large amounts (nationally) without harm to the environment unlike Urea.

It is a natural, bio-degradable product with inbuilt rust inhibitors. It is non-toxic and safe to use around children, plants and animals (non-harmful if ingested).

EcoGrit can be used as an anti-icer, de-icer or anti corrosion liquid.

Please help rebuild our country!

Keeping a few buckets on hand will prevent us from having to close schools or key services and allow people to queue safely this winter.

We know we need to make a change as we can't keep destroying our roads quicker than we can fix them, otherwise we will never be a nation that can truly grow again.

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Continued from page 7

strategy for the future and adopt strong policies to maintain and strengthen the foundations of the UK's road network.

Advances in technology are set to change the face of transport, making it crucial to innovate road engineering principles and practices to ensure the UK's infrastructure is fit for purpose.

Pothole investment will be vital to the economy

Investment in pothole repair and prevention is vital to the UK economy according to many industry insiders. Councils have been repairing far less potholes in recent times than they had done previously, and there is now a greater awareness of the condition of the nation's roads and more calls for greater government intervention to tackle the growing pothole crisis.

New technologies such as vehicle automation and smart infrastructure have huge potential to improve safety and reduce fuel consumption, but the impact of these new technologies on existing road infrastructure should be examined to ensure road surfaces are fit for purpose in the future.

While it is essential to repair potholes to keep road users safe, they remain only a symptom of various underlying causes. Experts at TRL suggest that engineers and authorities must look at solving the causes of potholes, rather than treating the symptom.

Many factors can cause road surface deterioration, such as increasing numbers of vehicles on the road, rising consumer demand and the strain on the freight sector with the advent of online delivery services.

Well-engineered, regularly maintained road surfaces and the use of quality materials is the only way to defeat the notorious pothole. Strategies that focus on proper maintenance of road surfaces before they deteriorate would prevent a huge number of defects seen on our roads.

Indeed, maintaining the UK's extensive road network is vital for the future of transport. We must adopt strong policies to maintain

and strengthen the condition of the UK's road network to ensure our roads are fit for purpose.

TRL is involved in many leading projects, including the development of cutting-edge new surface materials that will double the life expectancy of UK road surfaces. TRL is also involved in a new initiative called VOCAL Roads – a non-commercial group aiming to bring together stakeholders in the highways management community to optimise the collection and application of road condition data.

Safety Concerns

IAM RoadSmart has recently expressed concern over new figures recently released that show the number of potholes repaired by local authorities last year fell by a fifth.

New figures from the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) annual survey of councils show that 1.5 million potholes were filled in 2019/20, compared with 1.9 million in the previous 12 months. Getting all roads back into a "reasonable, steady state" would cost £11.14 billion and take 11 years.

Previous surveys of more than 7,000 IAM RoadSmart members showed a clear majority (88%) thought the condition of our roads had deteriorated and over half those surveyed (56%) said they had to take avoiding action on every journey to dodge potholes.

Nearly half (over 3,400 respondents) said they had experienced damage to their vehicle as a result of hitting a pothole. Some 27% said they needed to steer around a pothole every day.

The UK's largest road safety charity recently welcomed the £2.5 billion shot-in-the-arm for filling the huge backlog of potholes - but warned at the time of the budget announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak in March this year that a long-term plan is urgently needed to cure the problem for good.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research,

told GPSJ: "Pothole damage is not just inconvenient and expensive, it is a massive safety concern.

"Now is not the time to divert essential local authority resources away from the number one priority of keeping communities safe and cared for during the Coronavirus lockdown.

"However, drivers and riders pay a premium through their taxes for investment in roads and any long-term diversion of funds will cost more in the long run.

Local authorities must consider now the resources that will be needed to restore the UK's roads, so that when traffic volumes return to their normal levels, the road network can play its part in getting the economy moving again."

Highways Safety & Maintenance

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) has clarified the position of their highways key workers during the current Covid-19 lockdown to GPSJ.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to maintain the highways network in as safe a condition as is practically possible with the resources that they have available at all times. This is still vital work, keeping goods moving and deliveries flowing, for vital NHS and social care support workers, the emergency services, and all who are working to support communities in this unprecedented time.

Roads are now seeing an almost normal return of traffic levels now the UK lockdown has eased in most areas, so it is vitally important that the road network remains safe to use – after all, every journey begins and ends on a local road.

Key workers travelling on foot, by bike, on public transport or their own car to and from work will continue to rely upon roads and footways being repaired, and bridges that are safe to cross. Road gullies are being emptied to avoid unnecessary flooding and roadside grass is cut so they

can see other traffic when leaving their properties, places of work and road junctions.

Our highways workers are continuing to carry out that work: controlling the activities of public utilities (as they continue to maintain supplies to homes, hospitals and other places of work) and helping to keep disruption to the movement of goods to local shops and supermarkets to an absolute minimum.

Mark Stevens, Chair of ADEPT's Engineering Board told GPSJ: "We need the public to understand that our contractors are working for local authorities, to keep our roads safe. Everyone working in highway maintenance is performing a critical role for the nation. They are our 'Highways Heroes' and they need our support."

'Highways depots and offices will remain open, winter gritting will continue, potholes will continue to be filled and other work on the highway network will continue – because it has to in order to keep the country going. We are hugely mindful of the welfare of employees and contractors, so we will be practising social distancing and ensuring that it happens in practice."

Although the way in which each highway authority will fulfil its responsibility will vary depending upon the local circumstances, each will hold as close to a 'business as usual' position as they can during these challenging times.

Getting the UK back to work around Covid-19

The Prime Minister recently set out the first steps in the strategy to rebuild Britain and fuel economic recovery across the UK as we start to get back to work around the Covid-19 pandemic. He said the government would give employers “more discretion” over how employees can work safely – whether by continuing to work from home or attending a Covid Secure workplace. He also stated the government knew that employers have gone to “huge lengths” to make workplaces safe.



A complete return to work can only be achieved if workers are confident that safe working can take place including social distancing, personal hygiene and other environmental controls have been put into place. With many workers preferring to work from home the Prime Minister certainly has a challenge on his hands convincing workers to return to large city centre offices.

Working from offices

Since early July, many businesses, industries and

establishments returned to work with social distancing measures in place. However, for many businesses the post Covid-19 workplace looks very different. Adapting and being flexible to the new demands of work life is a key part in moving forward, but how are businesses planning on implementing this?

One company GPSJ spoke to, Flexioffices, have done some research to better understand the impact of Covid-19 on businesses and how they are reprioritising business and employee needs.

The results were vast and very interesting.

It was found that 74% of businesses have been significantly impacted as a result of Covid-19, and 2 out of 3 employers say that maintaining employee morale during the pandemic has been a challenge.

The most significant change that faces businesses is their office space. Given the overheads in property letting and the proven capabilities of employees working from home, it isn't a surprise that businesses are going to look at

reducing their space and rent. When thinking about their future office space, 21% of respondents say the size of their office space will be the most important consideration, 19% say price and 19% say location.

36% of businesses in London are looking to move away from their current city, 56% are encouraging more flexible working hours, and 39% of those who are looking to move want more flexible contracts.

24% of those in 'people' roles say that the one thing

they want to change is access to more breakout spaces and communal areas. However, 23% of managing directors and senior decision-makers say price and size of office space are the most important factors when making a decision about a future office space.

On the return to work, many businesses will need to implement changes and processes in order to facilitate a safe working environment and protect their staff. However, that might not be so straightforward. Across the board, businesses are most concerned with implementing social distancing measures in the office (21%), implementing new technology (15%), and needing increased flexibility in their premise's contracts (16%).

So, we know that organisations are looking to move, they are looking to move quickly, and they are looking for flexible contracts, but what about the spaces themselves? Well, 57% of businesses will be looking to downsize and more specifically 44% will be looking to downsize and encourage their people to work remotely. It seems the face of the UK workplace is changing like never before.

44% of people who currently own their office space are looking to rent next time. 42% of businesses in London are now moving or considering moving as a direct result of COVID-19, however 53% of the rest of the UK are less inclined to move. For those considering moving, 58% will be downsizing. Of those planning to move/considering it, 55% will be looking to make a decision in the next 3-6 months.

Michael Dubicki, Director of Business Development at Flexioffices told GPSJ: “Covid-19 has had a profound effect on businesses. Ultimately, it has asked deeper questions of the office. What does the office actually do? Why do we have them? Do we need them? The pandemic has asked businesses to re-look at office space and include the perspective of how it affects people – their productivity, their wellbeing, how they interact



together and engage in positive experiences.

“Because of this, Flexioffices decided to conduct a survey of UK businesses to find out more about changing attitudes to the workplace and what it is likely to look like after COVID-19.

“Alongside the expected focus around price and location, the primary drivers affecting the thought process around office space are now heavily weighted towards a much greater focus on future flexibility of contracts, wellbeing of people and the quality / cleanliness of the environment, coupled with an overwhelming desire to reduce the overall size of space being occupied.”

The NHS IT approach

Public sector services have required a much different approach around Covid-19 as home working for many employees hasn't been an option. The NHS has made use of online digital services more than ever, with most GP visits now being carried out in a virtual

setting using video conferencing. There has been a much more accelerated use of IT and digital technology for diagnostic and communications between allied NHS organisations. This has however presented some challenges in more rural UK communities with some broadband speeds and connectivity frustratingly not up to the standards expected.

Evan Wienburg, co-founder and CEO, Truespeed, a full fibre broadband supplier, told us: “This pandemic has changed the way the nation works. Moving forward, many organisations will move to a model in which office-based staff work from home for all or part of the week. To get the UK economy working at full pelt again, government and many business leaders will need to embrace this hybrid home/office way of working. This will involve government working in lock step with ultrafast broadband providers to accelerate ultrafast, ultra-reliable broadband roll-outs to huge areas of the country still struggling with substandard

copper-based services. As we start to rebuild our fractured economy, providing people with the digital tools and full fibre broadband infrastructure they need to work effectively and productively from home is a must-have.”

The NHS Covid-19 digital challenge

In response to the extreme challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, one Healthcare Trust, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, has pushed forward with its innovation strategy to ensure it delivers the very best care for patients in the region, achieving astounding results.

The BCHC ensured it stayed ahead of the curve by utilising world-class digital transformation technology to track its operations and coordinate the effort of its 4,500 members of staff delivering well over 100 clinical services in a wide range of community settings throughout Birmingham and the West Midlands.

It is estimated that the new technology has saved NHS team time by 20% during the pandemic, liberating information for better decision making and quicker action, equating to a saving of approximately £200,000 of public money and thousands of hours across the organisation.

It created the COVID-19 Contingency Planning Hub - a digital platform that has been key to the Trust's efforts to manage the pandemic locally, enabling it to mobilise and galvanise staff, as well as manage the availability of PPE, keeping staff safe and ensuring they have the equipment they need.

In doing so it was able to meet the increased demand facing its vital community and specialist services, as well as accurately measure the impact of the pandemic as it evolved.

Led by the BCHC's Information and Performance team, the Trust built on existing investment in transformation technology to respond rapidly to the crisis, creating the cutting-edge system that allowed the Executive and Management teams to track and visualise capacity across the organisation for a fully coordinated response.

The hub dashboard has been the most used system by managers across the organisation. There have been over 15,000 web form submissions, 300,000 items of data, 9,000 automated emails and over 50,000 dashboard views since early March. Feedback from users has been positive, reducing the need to chase information from within the organisation and freeing up team members to use their time more effectively.

Integral to the team's emergency response was the utilisation of the Digital Process Transformation platform from a UK tech company, NDL, that is driving forward innovation for the public good. Its solutions are built with a community of public sector organisations to ensure its technology empowers people

to work smarter and be more productive. It provides the tools that enable NHS Trusts to create ground-breaking solutions, such as the COVID-19 Contingency Planning Hub.

Through a programme of work, led by Steve Pollard, Head of Information and Business Intelligence, BCHC developed a Trust-wide system of e-forms and dashboards using a combination of NDL's FX programme and existing dashboard solutions.

Steve Pollard said: "Without access to centralised information, the challenge of responding to the pandemic would have been much harder. Those challenges continue to exist and evolve and having the right technology in place is crucial to making decisions quickly and based on accurate data. We were able to develop new solutions rapidly using code light development tools hosted on a scalable, virtual infrastructure. As a result, we've been able to achieve significant time savings that have enabled the team to focus on delivering the best patient care, instead of chasing missing information."

Ashley Murtagh, Director of Performance Information & Contracting at BCHC said: "The hub has supported the Trust in responding to the pandemic in a coordinated and responsive way, providing centralised insight and the necessary tools to help us monitor and manage the impact effectively. The pace at which solutions have been developed, tested, deployed and adopted is testament to the team and the technical tools they have used."

Alan Collinge, Business Intelligence and Information Services Manager added: "The toolset has provided much needed analytical insight quickly and demonstrated the speed of turnaround from concept to moving to a live environment. Our users were able to enter data into the NDL FX forms with little training and any issues that arose were quickly rectified."

Tom Wright, Head of Digital Engagement at NDL Told

GPSJ: "What the team in Birmingham have achieved highlights the critical role that digital transformation can have in times of crisis. During these unprecedented times, the Trust has used the NDL FX tool to deploy e-forms rapidly and effectively. In doing so, they have been able to confidently make important decisions, ensure that information is available to those that need it and ultimately, deliver the best care possible. As the pandemic evolves, the challenges it presents to NHS Trusts across the country continue to be varied and pressing. Now is the time to consider our recovery strategy and ensure we are fully equipped to respond as necessary"

Integration of public services

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top, the chairwoman of the House of Lords Select Committee on Public Services, told GPSJ: "Covid-19 has presented our public services with one of the gravest challenges in recent history, and we have seen heroic efforts from frontline staff to ensure our communities are supported during lockdown.

"However, the crisis has also highlighted some fundamental weaknesses in the design of public services, such as the lack of integration between health, social care and other services. The committee will explore how the lessons from coronavirus can inform public service reform.

"The pandemic has shown what's possible, but how can government and leaders ensure that the transformation seen in some services remain once the crisis is over?"

Building on collaboration

In addition to the role of charities and other community groups, the inquiry will focus on the integration of public services, inequalities in how people access those services and the outcomes they experience, and the relationship between local and national services.

The coronavirus outbreak has already encouraged "radical thinking in some areas", the committee said in a statement, which has resulted in "collaboration across the voluntary sector, NHS and social care providers, police, local authorities and community services."

Infrastructure projects

A Downing Street spokesperson told GPSJ: "In the Autumn, the government will publish a National Infrastructure Strategy which will set a clear direction on core economic infrastructure, including energy networks, road and rail, flood defences and waste.

"The Government also intends to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland - working with the devolved administrations to identify where we can get spades in the ground, build our communities, and create jobs faster for citizens across the United Kingdom. We will also carry out a review to look at how best to improve road, rail, air and sea links between our four nations to create a more connected kingdom.

"Through the Barnett formula, the UK Government has already given the Scottish Government £5.4bn, the Welsh Government £2.4bn, and the Northern Ireland Executive £1.7bn in capital funding for devolved areas this financial year. We would encourage them to accelerate infrastructure projects in the same way that the UK Government is doing.

"This government is committed not just to defeating coronavirus but to using this crisis to tackle this country's great unresolved challenges of the last three decades."

How do we ensure working from home works for UK plc in the long term?

The way we live our lives, how our businesses operate, and how our country runs have changed substantially since the Covid-19 pandemic began. Some of these changes may be temporary, while others - such as the increase in remote working - might be here to stay. ONS statistics indicate that almost half of the UK's workforce was mainly working from home in June, up from around 5% in 2019.

And a recent report by Ciena revealed that more than two thirds of those currently working from home expect to continue doing so - at least in part - even after restrictions are eased.

As we move forward into the unfolding 'new normal', it's clear that organisations of all shapes and sizes will need to weigh up the pros and cons of office-based staff continuing to work from home for all or some of the week. Alongside the consideration of softer issues such as the impact on mental health, creativity and team building of any permanent shift towards home working, there are the more tangible financial aspects on the organisation - such as the potential cost savings on office space. Not to mention the environmental impacts of reducing road and transport usage and office energy consumption.

Local authorities have a critical role to play in ensuring this transition runs smoothly and efficiently - whether that's through providing incentives for local businesses to create and retain jobs, ensuring our local trade and business hubs are equipped with support/resources, or fast-tracking the physical and digital infrastructure necessary to rebuild our local economies.

Connectivity and Covid-19: copper is holding us back

While there won't be a 'one size fits all' solution, all eventualities will need to have one thing in common in order to make the transition successful: universal access to ultrafast, ultra-reliable connectivity. Whether the 'new normal' lends itself to a more remote working model, a return to office premises, or a blend of the two, gigabit-capable connectivity will be the fulcrum underpinning the country's recovery.

So whether people are logging on from the office, their kitchen, or a local cafe, the productivity of UK plc must stop being hampered by the spinning wheels and network dropouts that are still - unfortunately - commonplace across large swathes of the country. That's because the existing copper-based broadband infrastructure is struggling, slow and unreliable, meaning that for many organisations operating during lockdown has been challenging, stifling productivity and therefore opportunity and prosperity.

On the road to recovery

Fortunately, the latest reports show that 22% of the UK now has access to gigabit-capable broadband, a promising

acceleration towards the government's target of nationwide access within the next few years. With fibre optic networks, the digital functionalities many depend upon for their jobs - such as video calls, voice over IP and cloud-based business tools - all work perfectly even during peak periods. Full fibre infrastructure is an investment in the UK's future; speeds can be remotely increased for decades to come so the infrastructure can hold its own as needs increase, even up to 10Gbps. It's the gold standard of connectivity - exactly what is now needed to get businesses and services back on their feet and fighting fit in the digital economy.

The announcement of 'Project Speed', following the Prime Minister's committed £5bn to support the rollout to the harder-to-reach 20% of the UK, is a welcome reinforcement to the effort being spearheaded by smaller independent providers up and down the country. These providers - like Truespeed - are building brand new fibre optic networks to deliver ultrafast, reliable connectivity 24/7 to rural areas as well as historic cities across the country.

We're now at a critical juncture where local authorities must work ever closer with their communities and local broadband providers to greenlight gigabit-capable infrastructure builds. Whether that's by fast tracking contract tendering, signing off on rollout plans or working with local providers to ensure government funding is invested where it is most needed, local government leaders will play a key role in unlocking the UK's digital transformation.

Evan Wienburg, CEO, Truespeed

Will your back-up generators work in the event of a power outage?

Clearly there are big challenges facing the public sector today. Ensuring continuity of power is of critical importance at this challenging time. Gary Hickey, Specialist Fuel Divisions Director at Adler and Allan, explains the issues of microbial contamination in back-up generator tanks operating in the public sector, and how a focus on testing and storage integrity is critical.



As a result of heightened regulatory measures to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and reduce reliance on fossil fuels, the composition of the fuels we use has changed dramatically in recent years.

Traditionally when straight hydrocarbon fuels were used, you could have a back-up generator tank that was 50 years old and never been cleaned out, and as long as that suction point – the point where the fuel leaves the tank – was above where the water and sludge was sitting, there would be no issues at all. This means that in the event of a power cut, it would take over and generate power for as long as the fuel lasted. But when biofuels were introduced about 11 years ago, all those tanks started to fail.

The reason was, when these biofuels came into contact with water, they created a microbial contamination in the tank – microbes such as bacteria and fungi that live in the interface

between the water and fuel cause havoc to both the performance of the tank and the fuel itself.

Microbial contamination of diesel fuel occurs when water finds its way into a tank as a result of condensation, rainwater penetration or from the air.

Modern biodiesel is especially hydroscopic, attracting and holding water molecules from the surrounding environment.

The presence of water encourages microbial growth which either occurs at the interface between the oil and water or on the tank walls.

This kind of contamination not only accelerates tank corrosion, it can block lines and filters and significantly reduce the performance of the fuel itself.

Biodiesel is made by reacting vegetable oil with other common chemicals. The bugs love vegetable oil, they feed off it and multiply very quickly, and this can be a particular issue to tanks that have little use such as back-

up generators in hospitals for example.

Because biodiesel absorbs a lot more water than diesels of old, it can lead to significant degradation in fuel performance and usability if not managed properly.

Subsequently, as diesel is commonly used for emergency power generation, the potential for microbial growth exposes hospitals and the like to considerable operational and reputation risk.

If an event such as flooding does cause a power cut, many hospitals have the facility to switch over to oil. A full tank of diesel fuel can maintain power for an entire hospital for about eight hours. But if that fuel has been sat there for years vegetating in the tank, the second it is put into use, it will break down.

Once microbial contamination starts it can grow very quickly. From one year to the next you can have a clean bill of health to heavily contaminated fuel.

There was a site in Suffolk that would run their generators once a month for half an hour to make sure they were running well, but actually, when they had a power cut and they started putting it on full load, within about three hours the system broke down because the fuel wasn't fit for purpose.

With even small amounts of water in a tank system, reformulated fuels can create a maintenance nightmare such as biological activity, increased corrosion, blocked filters and lower pump flow rates. Testing has therefore evolved from a best practice discipline to a critical part of the tank maintenance process.

Investing in remedial work should now be essential to your operations, especially when you consider microbial induced corrosion can accelerate tank corrosion by as much as 1mm per year, meaning a new steel tank could fail in less than seven years.

The key to all of this is how seriously you look after your storage tank. Biodiesel is a breeding ground for micro-organisms that will affect the oil and damage the tank.

Every time you put a new load of fuel through a tank, it's adding another contaminant, but all of this can be avoided if you're checking your fuel regularly and making sure it is water free.

More importantly, it's not just the tank that's going to be an issue, it's the fuel above it too, which is a very expensive commodity. If you've got 50,000 litres of diesel in a tank, that's £25k of fuel at risk of contamination, and that's without considering the fact it might not work in the event of a power outage when you need it most.

If microbial contamination has occurred, experts can uplift the fuel, remove the residue from the tank and polish the fuel before returning it so that the generator will provide power when required.

However, with increased demand on capacity at this challenging time, the best course of action is prevention. Experts like Adler and Allan provide regular tank testing and maintenance, because an absolute focus on storage integrity has never been more critical for today's public sector back-up generator.

Will your back-up generators work in the event of a power outage?

Ensure continuity of power at this challenging time

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ENVIRONMENTAL RISK REDUCTION

Procurement must become centre stage in the NHS if we're to cope with the public health demands of the nation

Jonathan Wedgbury, Genmed's chief executive officer, provides advice about how NHS supply chains and procurement strategies need to change following the coronavirus disease pandemic.



The English lexicon has changed markedly in light of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic with language like social distancing, lockdown, viral load and furloughing all now in common parlance. Perhaps what is surprising is that words like 'procurement' and 'supply chain' have been heard equally as frequently. The media headlines around the whole issue of personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline clinical staff have been beamed into homes up and down the country on a nightly basis.

Undeniably there have been

issues. Reports of medics finding it harder to access any sort of PPE, manufacturers talking about unanswered emails for equipment orders, hospitals running out of items, planes sent to Turkey to collect emergency supplies, and a failure of demand management, all adds up to a steady stream of headlines that haven't painted a pretty picture of the profession at times.

Clearly there are mitigating reasons for all this and answers as to why things occurred are never simple. Frankly, we're living in exceptional and unprecedented times. Most of us could not have imagined a couple of months ago how we would be living today. Furthermore, the NHS is a complicated, fragmented, multi-faceted organisation – a diverse entity with numerous needs and requirements, hampered by a history of financial pressures. Even more diverse and complicated is the social care sector where we have seen equally harrowing headlines.

So, and with the benefit of hindsight, we should take the opportunity to learn from what has happened and use this to see what can be learnt to move us forward positively. How we can use the current experience to transition and run the NHS for the better and prepare for when Covid-20, 21 or 22 – or some other virulent virus – comes along?

First, this is a great opportunity for procurement to demonstrate the strategic role it has to play in NHS activities. No longer should it be seen as simply as an enabler to get medical supplies ordered, ensure that the lowest price is paid and that invoices are settled. Procurement has a much more important role to play assessing, for example, what are we buying

and why, where we get items from, understanding the power regimes in the marketplace, are alternatives reviewed thoroughly, can IT be used to boost order efficiency and so on. And it should even include getting into the granular detail of what each NHS department or consultant spends on a per patient basis so that productivity improvements can be identified and targeted.

As part of this, greater strategic sourcing initiatives are required to examine the relevant attributes from sourcing from multiple providers, how inventory is managed over time to ensure stock is rotated properly and is within 'shelf life'. Further, we should review our reliance on overseas suppliers or whether local sourcing and the development of UK manufacturing should be a bigger part of the product buying mix.

Shining a light on procurement is not new. Improving procurement processes was the focus of Lord Carter of Coles' report on operational productivity and performance published back in 2016¹. The NHS has seen many changes as a consequence, but perhaps in certain areas we haven't gone far enough to challenge existing practices and check their robustness?

Second, supply chain resilience will become the new topic for discussion. Good practice regularly involves a thorough audit of chains so that there's a detailed and comprehensive understanding about the source of equipment and consumables and therefore a clearer appreciation about the NHS' ability to react, cope and maintain services in the event of a health crisis. In-depth risk analysis and due diligence of suppliers has to be carried out to know precisely

where products are made, are they fit for purpose, whether they meet legal, medical and ethical standards, the different logistics steps in the delivery chain to get them from site of manufacture to UK hospitals, the risks associated with this, suppliers' financial stability and capability to truly deliver contractually and so on. It is all about understanding the robustness of the supply chain and how you de-risk and mitigate any issues found so as to avoid scrabbling about to find items in an emergency – or even day-to-day – when demand is at a premium.

Third, the pre-occupation with price needs to be balanced with 'value'. For example, what is the impact of not being able to buy PPE now? The answer is that we are probably spending between five and 10 times more getting it from elsewhere in the world and air freighting it home. And then, of course, there is the impact on the health, confidence and happiness of clinical staff – let alone the patients themselves – when it comes to hands-on treatment. A greater awareness, sensitivity and acknowledgment of this must be on the agenda.

Fourth, as we come out of Covid, NHS managers will need to review the whole medical ecosystem to look at how procurement and the organisation of it can be improved for the country. More than likely shared services will play a bigger role with the private sector engaged to assist based on their subject expertise. Inherent in this is that there should better pooling of resources and co-ordination between the Department of Health, NHS Supply Chain and third party organisations probably via a shared services collaborative platform. This should be bolstered with

'pushing and pulling' of information across the whole NHS system so that co-ordination of procurement activities is enhanced.

Whilst the recriminations around what was and was not done and the timeliness of these efforts will be with us for a while, as a profession procurement has an opportunity to take some positive lessons from what has been an unprecedented few months for

the whole world. It would be remiss of us if we didn't take this opportunity to adapt and learn from the coronavirus experience and change our approach to procurement in the NHS. We need to adopt best practices regardless of which industry we take it from, create the right industry partnerships and collaborations and hire the right people with the expertise and know-how to

drive things forward effectively. Through this we can achieve the performance, efficiency and value for money that the NHS deserves.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/499229/Operational_productivity_A.pdf

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Fast and furious tech adoption could break NHS services

Covid-19 has accelerated the NHS technology agenda – including a sharp rise in video consultations. But we now need to learn from this to realise a bigger opportunity to create sustainable and intelligent digital patient pathways based on evidence, writes Alan Lowe, chief executive at Visionable.



The NHS has had to be very speedy in its technology response to the Covid-19 crisis, witnessing around five years' worth of digital advancement in as many weeks. We have seen a health service that has changed its appetite for risk amidst the pressure to do things fast and furious when suddenly faced with the challenge of being physically removed from patients. But as the dust settles, the moment to pause and ask the questions needed to ensure services don't become broken in the longer term is starting to arrive.

Covid-19 will fundamentally change commissioning approaches, forever. It already has. Until now, methods of commissioning pathways have persisted to rely on face to face interactions, with little thought for reimbursing and incentivising people who might want to create a digital pathway that could be life changing for patients and the people responsible for delivering their care.

Now we have a different lens – keeping people safe in their home – a fundamental new driver that will influence how services are commissioned regularly into the future. If we are to do that in an effective, sustainable way, we can't just throw technology at the problem. We have to ask the right questions about the design of services, about where technology

and people fit in that design, and we need to start learning quickly from the answers.

Catching up on five years' of learning to un-constrain the geography of care safely

With five years' worth of tech adoption comes an equivalent breadth of learning for the NHS to catch up on.

Video technology is one notable area that has seen tremendous sudden growth as the NHS has had no choice but to adopt it speedily. But the health service now needs to understand where it hasn't worked, as much as where it has.

People designing services now need to ask how they can intelligently integrate newly adopted technologies like video into the patient pathway, where it is and isn't appropriate, and what they need to augment video with in order to allow services to fully utilise it.

That means understanding when blood tests, urinary tests or imaging is required, for example. It means asking if some of these examinations could be done by post or when a healthcare facility is required – if that can be a nearby facility to the patient, with other aspects of the pathway at home.

Augmenting that video might mean utilising mobile MRI scanners, approved blood pressure cuffs, Bluetooth scales, and other appropriate devices that could be located in the home.

It means thinking about people too – and particularly for healthcare professionals – whether they have the right skillsets in place so that a nurse visiting a patient's home can perform various roles that removes the

need for different specialists to enter that home. Can that nurse, for example, take a photograph of wound care, that prevents several colleagues unnecessarily entering the house?

It means thinking about a great many variables. And if a multi-disciplinary approach is needed – can we create virtual MDTs that maximise time effectiveness and availability for clinicians and that reduce their own exposure to risk of infection.

In all this we need less haste and more careful consideration as we move at pace – we cannot just throw these things into the wild. We need to employ healthcare system thinking – otherwise we risk doing things fast and breaking things.

We need appropriate devices that collect and provide the right information safely. We need to consider how to onboard datasets. And we need to think about how people use those devices, how it works for the citizen, what data the pathway needs, how that data will be used, how you manage that long term, and create a pathway that is congruent and based on user centred co-design.

The fundamental question to answer is – how can we un-constrain the geography of care safely?

Putting the citizen at the centre

Putting people at the centre almost sounds like a buzzword – perhaps because it's something people in healthcare have been trying to achieve for a long time.

But if you put the Covid-19 predicament to one side, virtualised pathways still have enormous potential to change

lives. And so responses to Covid-19 could now be more than replicating a physical meeting. This is our real opportunity for meaningful change.

Take the redesign of renal pathways as an example. Many people on renal pathways have historically been unable to work or remain in education because of the intensity of interaction with the hospital. They had to go to places – to hospital for tests, meetings and consultations. Virtualising that pathway has allowed people to remain in work or education.

We are now seeing less inconvenience for the patient as pathways start to digitise – from the risk of getting Covid to getting in the car and creating Co2 emissions – the downside of coming into the hospital is being gradually eliminated.

But for this to be done safely we cannot rush and buy any old video conferencing tech. We need to create a second generation of teleconsultation where the resources of the healthcare system are configured around the patient's digital interaction with their providers.

There's no denying this is a complex piece to solve from a technology point of view and a service provision perspective. We need to start to understand it now, we need to match clinical need to availability and we need to map it and blueprint what good looks like.



The imminent challenge of non-Covid-19 patients within the NHS and how Lexacom will support new ways of working in healthcare

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only caused worldwide deaths and suffering but has also resulted in a dramatic change in healthcare working practices. In the post Covid-19 world, there will need to be a re-evaluation of how healthcare is delivered and managed.

There will be more reliance on remote working together with the need for efficiency and flexibility in working practices. With the whole of the NHS focused on the pandemic, there are now hundreds of thousands of non-Covid-19 patients waiting for primary care referrals and secondary care clinic appointments, not to mention surgery waiting lists. This equates to an avalanche of referrals, letters and other documents which will need to be created quickly, efficiently and accurately.

Document creation is fundamental to the healthcare system, whether it be from the clinic or from home during telemedicine consultations, by secretaries typing out letters or using speech recognition to automate document creation. The UK-based company, Lexacom, is ideally placed to help support these changes by leading the way in digital dictation, speech recognition, remote transcription and document management.

"In the coming months, the backlog of non-Covid-19 patients is going to place a further strain on UK healthcare administration. Lexacom is proven to increase efficiency and speed up turnaround times of referrals, letters and other documents. NHS trusts require quick answers as soon as possible and

Lexacom provides the security and accuracy that medical professionals need. Our solutions can also be instantly accessed and embedded into existing admin systems and can be used remotely. This will be essential for future working practice" said Dr Andrew Whiteley, Managing Director, Lexacom.

Lexacom has been delivering workflow solutions to the healthcare, legal and professional markets for the last 20 years. Their vision is to help organisations around the world increase their professional productivity and to drive operational excellence through innovative, reliable and cost-effective solutions.

Furthermore, Lexacom has recently been included in the newly released NHS SBS Digital Dictation, Speech Recognition and Outsourced Transcription Framework. This allows NHS trusts and other healthcare organisations to directly access Lexacom's portfolio of software and hardware.

With over 60% of general practices using their software, Lexacom are in the unique position of improving the links between primary and secondary care and to support the NHS during these challenging times. "Being included on the SBS framework further strengthens the long-standing relationship we have as a trusted and approved partner within the healthcare sector and we are proud to be recognised for this" said Dr Whiteley.

During this pandemic, healthcare delivery has changed to cope with the unprecedented situation. In the post-Covid-19

world, changes will need to develop to support the best service for patients, improve workflow and efficiency and to keep both staff and patients safe. Lexacom has a proven track record of delivering this by ensuring easy access to world-leading digital dictation, AI speech recognition and remote transcription technology.

For further information, please contact **01295 236910**, sales@lexacom.co.uk or see www.lexacom.co.uk.



Andrew Whiteley



Bristow & Sutor set to support Transport for London

Bristow & Sutor is excited to announce that they are now working with Transport for London (TfL). Since May 1st, 2020, Bristow & Sutor has been collecting unpaid Penalty Charge Notices at warrant stage for all road charging schemes and also traffic enforcement contraventions.



Bristow & Sutor is one of the UK's leading players specialising in debt recovery and has over 42 years' experience in the collection of local council tax, non-domestic rates and unpaid Penalty Charge Notices.

Winning the debt management and enforcement contract with TfL has resulted in the production and implementation of new letters, business rules, action codes and reports. Bristow & Sutor employees have adapted their own processes to fully immerse themselves in the TfL way of working, strategically positioning their service delivery to reflect an extension of the iconic TfL brand.

Investment in the use of technology is key to the Bristow & Sutor approach and success of recent years. The company has a range of innovative portals, apps, and debt recovery tools which gives debtors an easy, secure

way of making online payments; resulting in efficient route information to aid the reduction of Enforcement Agents (EAs) carbon footprints.

Bristow & Sutor has delivered the new TfL project against challenging milestones, hitting every deadline required, and now see this success as a prime example of the company's capability and reliability when implementing new contracts and transferring existing needs painlessly.

Andy Rose, CEO at Bristow & Sutor, says, "Bristow & Sutor is delighted to be embarking on a new partnership with TfL. Our aim is not only to successfully action existing cases, but to be recognised as the number one performer and innovator throughout the duration of this contract. Winning new contracts such as TfL, means significant expansion and job opportunities

over the coming years. We already directly-employ over 168 EAs around the country.

"Our talented and hardworking team has worked painstakingly over the past weeks and months to ensure this project will perform optimally. Coupled with the unprecedented interruption of COVID-19, it has been a remarkable achievement by our tremendous team to ensure we are ready and raring to go".

Regarding COVID-19, in accordance with the Government measures to combat this virus, EAs are not being deployed until social distancing measures have subsided. However, Bristow & Sutor has undertaken a massive mobilisation exercise to help foster a 'business as usual' approach, albeit without enforcement visits. Portals, apps, emails, telephone lines and debt recovery tools all remain accessible for debtors who

need to discuss their situation. Consequently, the company has already been able to begin the compliance process for this new project with TfL.

Bristow & Sutor prides itself on delivering an ethical, compliant and high-quality service to the public and private sectors. Agents regularly assist debtors with completing questionnaires, setting up payment arrangements and directing them towards support and advice where appropriate. They are trained to the highest standard and use modern technology and data to achieve market-leading performance, whilst protecting the most vulnerable in society and the reputations of clients.

Covid fighting UK innovation gains export success

Evolve Scientific Products (ESP) based in Chesterfield has today announced an international order for its ProGuard+ multi-surface cleaner. A surface cleaner that provides long-lasting effective protection against the Covid-19 virus that could make moving towards an end of lockdown safer and securer for everybody, particularly those in key professions.

Mark Nolan, Director of ESP said, "We are so proud of ProGuard+, a cleaning agent developed over the last 30 years here in the UK. Originally the product was designed to act as an anti-mold agent, but with technological developments and refinements it's now recognised as an eco-friendly multi-surface cleaner that kills then protects against bacterial infections and germs. ProGuard+ attacks surface biofilms then coats the area with a positive electrostatic charge that repels any nasties for up to 4 weeks".

"The product can be used as a general cleaner on any surface but also due to its formulation it can be used on areas such as door handles, banisters, lift

buttons, and general touchpoints by just spraying and leaving. The coating wraps itself around such points giving long-lasting protection. Other such toxic disinfectants become obsolete once dry allowing infections to re-contaminate and spread.

Available in a premixed 750ml Spray, Concentrate and Santising wipes Pro Guard offers a great cost-effective way to not only clean but protect areas for hours, even weeks. This is proving to be a great success in hotels, nursing homes, public transport and general meeting areas. ProGuard+ is also a deodorizer leaving a fresh scent behind from its nontoxic formula".

Mr Nolan continued, "We are of course keen that

this product is used to help the UK's fight against the virus, but currently most of our orders are for export, particularly Spain, Eastern Europe and the US.. Which is good for the UK economy during this shutdown but it would be nice to have more interest here in Britain".

ProGuard+ uses a unique electrostatic cleaning technology that has been developed by U.K. scientists over the last 30 years to provide the highest level of long-term protection that no other SINGLE product can deliver. Safe to humans and animals, plant-based, non-toxic, non-corrosive and biodegradable ecologically sanitises to hospital-grade standards. Neutralises odours without leaving residual

chemical smells. Suitable for food preparation areas and taint free. It removes biofilm formation on 99% of surfaces.

TESTED TO:
ISO9001
ISO13485
EN1276 (MEDICAL GRADE)

<https://evolve-sp.com/proguard/product/>



Evolve Scientific products in use



Products delivered to Europe

Why the Covid backlog mustn't slow down councils' response to the climate emergency

By Stephen Stead, director of strategy and digital services at SSE Enterprise's distributed energy business

COUNCIL officials have shown incredible leadership during the coronavirus pandemic – from supporting vulnerable citizens through to maintaining essential services, local authority workers have been at the forefront, ensuring the wheels of local government keep turning.



Now, many will be returning to their desks for the first time in months. They'll be greeted by bulging inboxes and in-trays as they begin to catch-up on the projects that had to be put to one side to cope with the first wave of the virus.

Yet, while the backlog of work that's been piling up during the lockdown will be immense, it is fundamentally important that this does not overshadow the longer-term threat of climate change.

With circa three quarters of local authorities having now declared a climate emergency, now is the time to create a "better normal" and not just a "new normal".

That same leadership that local authorities showed during the lockdown must now come into play in response to the climate emergency. Councils don't need to do it all. However, they have a key role as a catalyst for decarbonising their local communities and in tandem,

stimulating economic recovery and growth.

Boosting the local economy by making buildings smart

The simplest way of reducing carbon is to use less energy. Deploying energy efficiency measures across building stock has the added value of generating work for local contractors. Getting the basics right is an essential first step – from fitting insulation and double glazing to energy efficient

lighting. A greater benefit can be achieved through the deployment of low carbon assets such as solar, energy storage, and high efficiency boilers or heat pumps supported by alternative funding models ranging from a basic Salix loan, through Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) to an Energy-as-a-Service model.

In tandem, further benefits can be delivered by making buildings "smart". Depending on building type and size, this may involve

the installation of a Building Management System (BMS) to provide energy optimisation and core control. With or without a BMS, sensor-based services can be applied that utilise measurement, intelligence and control to drive efficiencies. For example, occupancy sensors to tailor lighting and heating or to enable needs-based cleaning.

Smart building technology can also speed-up the return to work following lockdown. They can monitor room and desk occupancy and police separation. Post Covid well-being can also be improved. For example, SSE is installing innovative air purification technology that removes common harmful airborne substances and has been shown to be effective in reducing the infectivity of bacteria and viruses.

Buildings as revenue generators

Reducing carbon comes hand in hand with saving money when it relates to power. Additionally, it can also present a revenue generation opportunity. As the country moves to zero carbon, the penetration of intermittent solar and wind into our power system will increase. However, unlike coal and gas power plants, wind and sun cannot be controlled. Hence the energy system needs a way of balancing generation and load to align to a new world of low carbon generation intermittency.

To achieve this, markets have been established that pay asset owners to turn electrical demand and generation up and down in order to keep the system in balance. A building is essentially a large load. Even more so when heat pumps are installed and EV chargers connected. Where solar and storage are installed, it can additionally deliver controllable generation. As such it can allow organisations such as SSE to control its assets and generate revenues for it. Alternatively, it could simply use this smart control to accommodate local power network constraints and therefore defer investment.

Powering the switch to electric vehicles

Carbon reduction is not just about power. It is also about transport.

As the number of EV models on the market increase, so too does consumer appetite to convert although this will remain muted until confidence in availability and speed of chargers increases. In short, to feel fully comfortable with an EV vehicle, charging needs to be a pop-in event, not just an overnight stop. Local authorities can impact this by influencing third party charger deployment. They can also lead by example with their own fleet, incentivise the conversion of grey fleet, and influence EV bus deployment.

There is also a revenue play here. As take up increases, so too will the demand for forecourt style EV charge hubs. By targeting their own fleet and/or that of large local businesses, sufficient anchor demand can be enabled to seed their funding, hence providing convenience infrastructure for the wider community. These hubs can be fed by solar power through private wire, increasing both green credentials and earning potential. They can be done on authority land, fed by authority solar power, or even done in partnership. All of which would generate much needed revenue.

What's often overlooked is that each of those EVs is in fact a portable battery, so when power isn't needed to turn its wheels then it becomes a resource that can be plugged into the grid to either store the excess electricity being churned out on windy or sunny days, or to feed energy back into the wider system to meet moments of peak demand, like when everyone turns on the kettle at half time during the cup final, or when the adverts come on during Coronation Street. Each of these events supports wider decarbonisation whilst having revenue generation potential.

Turning up the heat on decarbonisation

Carbon reduction is also about heat. This is undoubtedly the biggest challenge with winter peak heat demand being around four times that of power. This challenge is not simply one of scale. It is also one of technology and cost. Heat networks can be limited both technically and commercially in terms of the number of homes that can viably connect. And

where a heat network is not viable, a standalone heat pump is a poor cousin to cheaper, smaller, but, crucially, higher carbon gas boilers. Furthermore, individual property level heat pumps can exacerbate constraints in local power networks and could well result in increased connection costs where deployments cluster.

Due to their economies of scale where densification is sufficient, heat networks are without doubt the preferred choice to decarbonise heat. Their ability to transport waste and recoverable heat, from, for example, industrial processes, water, air, ground and even sewers makes them a powerful tool to help deliver heat decarbonisation. The Climate Change Committee and BEIS see heat networks as playing a crucial role in the pathway to net zero. So how can we increase the number of properties that can viably connect?

The starting point is to consider that, at the same time the government is pushing the rollout of heat networks, it is also encouraging the deployment of both fibre and EV charging networks. Were the local authority to align trenching, the civils element of each element can be greatly reduced, hence improving commercial viability.

Where heat pipe building penetration is an issue, building level heat pumps can be deployed. Their associated operating cost can be reduced by connecting to a private electrical network, which, in turn, connects to local renewables, storage, EV chargers, and large local load, providing a local renewable energy system. Not only can the central heat pump that drives the main system be connected to this network, but also the heat network reach can be improved by running spurs off of the private wire network to outlying heat pumps and associated localised smaller networks. These in turn could target pockets of waste heat therefore further improving viability.

Sitting above all of this, is an overarching control system spanning heat, power and transport. This will use heat and power storage and demand flexibility to smooth peaks and troughs and to generate revenues that subsidise the system. Finally, Energy-as-a-Service funding models can be applied to take the financial pain away by blending asset costs into the ongoing service cost and smoothing this across both heat networks and standalone heat pump deployments.



Stephen Stead

Public sector digital transformation: Helping enterprises to survive the COVID-19 pandemic

By David Trossell, CEO and CTO of Bridgeworks

With furlough and support for businesses and the self-employed ending soon, the stark impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is being felt by individuals and organisations of all sizes. Government and public sector organisations are doing their utmost to support

as many people and organisations as they can, which has put pressure on their websites and their ability to offer online services, as well as on their ability to respond and communicate with everyone in need of assistance.



So, how can government and public sector organisations help enterprises as well as individuals to survive the global COVID-19 pandemic? Well, the government can offer financial support, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which enabled organisations to furlough their staff, with the government picking up 80% of employment costs.

Help has also been given to the self-employed through the

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. As well as grants, businesses have been able to access loans, and the Stay at Home policy has transformed the working landscape by showing that remote working can work. However, as lockdown eases, there are, equally, questions about how the government can continue to encourage enterprises to retain staff, rather than cut jobs.

Increasing digital demand

The demand for access to many of the services, loans and grants – particularly as many public sector organisations have also in kind furloughed many of their own employees – has put an increasing load on the government and public sector – including from a website accessibility and an IT perspective. With nearly everyone working from home seeking clarity and information,

the pressure on government and public sector services has been several magnitudes larger than normal, and the ability to scale and maintain services has been a real challenge.

Cyber-security concerns became apparent when it became clear that cyber-criminals were keen to use the COVID-19 pandemic to exploit people's fears to extort money out of them. Hacking also became a major

problem – even for public sector organisations. Sometimes we see the very worst of humanity during the worst catastrophe of a lifetime, with cyber-attacks on medical and other organisations. It is so easy to overlook security whilst fighting this virus. That's why moving the data offsite securely to a disaster recovery site was and is imperative to recover from these encryption attacks.

Internet positives

Let's face it, the internet comes in for a lot of criticism with its email spams, cyber-attacks, phishing email, botnets for attacks and more concerningly, a worldwide platform for extremism and false information. But before we condemn and blame it for all evils, how would we have survived this pandemic without it? In some ways we have been, and I am not dismissing all the deaths and suffering the world has gone through this year, we are lucky that it has happened in this decade and not in the 90's or 80's.

to be delivered to your door or office? Those types of tasks, and more – including applying for grants and loans in the way we do today would have been rare, if not largely impossible to do in the same manner that we expect them to occur now.

The web has been keeping us safe and well during the lockdown. If the pandemic had occurred in the 1980s and 90's, how would we have managed to feed ourselves during lockdown? Instead of the internet, we would have relied on the radio, television, newspapers and perhaps even an Orwellian picture of "speaker vans" touring the country broadcasting their message for information. So, how would we know the truth? The web enables individuals, businesses and public sector organisations to not only deliver services and to communicate, but to also gain access to a widening range of sources.

So, despite all its failings, the internet has made this pandemic much safer for us than it would

functioning while keeping their staff safe.

WANs and Digital transformation

This pandemic and work from home has forced many CEOs and CIOs, both in industry and in the public sector, to rethink their digital transformation strategy from "would be nice" to "let's get this done now!" With digital transformation, those organisations that are dispersed geographically need to be able to rely on high speed and secure data transmission over long-distance WANs.

In reality, it should not take a pandemic to force digital transformation, but many are using this opportunity to move some of their processes and storage to the cloud. Many are also now investing in the cloud for back-up-as-a-service (BUaaS) and Disaster-Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS), along with using it as an archive. What many fail to appreciate is the time to move the data in and out of the cloud. This is where WAN Acceleration can play a big part in moving data to the cloud as part of a digital transformation upload or as part of a BU/DRaaS.

WAN Optimisation has traditionally been used as a solution. However, with high bandwidth WAN connections and encrypted data mandatory in many fields, WAN Optimisation struggles to cope now - even at the lower bandwidths. To maximise the capacity of these new high bandwidth WAN capabilities we need to start to look at WAN Acceleration.

This technology mitigates the effects of latency and packet loss, it is both data and protocol agnostic. This means it can accommodate multiple different transfer protocols simultaneously, it can accelerate encrypted data without the need to change the data. This has the added advantage of moving the encryption from the firewall and use the more powerful servers to perform the task and move the keys from the firewall to deep inside the organisation.

Big data proliferation

We are creating massive

amounts of data as we hunt for the cure. It is not only critical to share the vast amounts of data created and shared with other organisations, such as universities and pharmaceuticals as soon as possible, but it is critical to protect this data, too. Where we previously did this once a day, we should now think about it multiple times a day and the need to put distance between sites means. That is why we offered our products to medical research organisations, universities, government and public sector organisations, and private enterprises involved in the fight against COVID-19 – as better utilised WANs can improve big data analysis and project collaboration.

Meanwhile, the way we are now, and for the foreseeable future, work has changed out of all recognition from the beginning of the year. The daily commute into the workplace has, for the moment, all but disappeared. This pandemic has shown that we can be as, if not more, efficient when



Just think back (for those that are old enough and those that are not, ask your parents) to the early days of the internet with dial-up modems running at between 4.8Kb and 9.6kbs – yes kilobits. How would you have been able to work from home, search the internet for information, communicate with groups of colleagues worldwide, continue working to keep the economy working as best as possible, place orders for food and goods

have been only a few short years ago, and that has to be somewhat down to the credit of our public sector, and the information and advice provided via their websites. Not only for us as individuals but, as a CEO to help keep my staff productive and safe.

In some ways, the internet with the bandwidth and capacity now available to the home has been the saviour for many individuals, helping them to keep working and for enterprises to continue



working from home. The air quality has risen dramatically, and many are questioning the rationale of the commute and the central office. Many are seeing more of their family than ever before. The new normal has brought about many positive changes, which can be supported by the public sector with digital transformation being at the heart of everything they do, and everything everyone does.

Post-lockdown recruitment gets green light at Bristow & Sutor

Traffic accidents, potholes, road deterioration, trip hazards on pavements and in car parks, There seems to be an epidemic happening all around us affecting every city, town, village and the connecting roads in between. Why is this happening? What can we realistically do about it?



Bristow & Sutor, one of the UK's leading local authority debt recovery specialists, is resuming recruitment and hiring for Enforcement Agents (EAs), Collection Officers and several ad hoc roles within the business. Collections and enforcement agencies have been on the front-line of businesses affected by social distancing measures, but with Government legislation allowing visits to resume next month, the company is looking to grow once again.

Bristow & Sutor already directly employs over 450 people across the UK to provide end-to-end debt collection and credit management support for clients in local and central government, as well as the private sector. The inability to safely undertake visits and inspections in recent months saw EA members of staff furloughed and, despite technological investment ensuring

customer support staff remained available, almost all recruitment activity had to be placed on temporary hold.

All furloughed EA staff at Bristow & Sutor have continued to receive training and certification, so they would be prepared to work as soon as it was announced as safe to do so. >From a local authority perspective this was essential, as businesses who did not retain staff will now need to recruit to replace, whereas Bristow & Sutor are immediately recruiting to grow. This is especially important when considering the company has recently won a number of key new business projects, including collecting unpaid Penalty Charge Notices at warrant stage for all road charging schemes and traffic enforcement contraventions for TfL (Transport for London).

Many local authorities are keen to resume collections and enforcement activity as soon as possible, to help fill the holes left

by loss of revenue streams and to help provide increased support to those impacted financially by the coronavirus pandemic. From Monday July 20th, Bristow & Sutor began supplying reconnection letters to debtors, giving them the opportunity to set up flexible payment arrangements and discuss changing circumstances before services recommence from the 24th August.

Andy Rose, CEO at Bristow & Sutor, says, "At Bristow & Sutor, we remain advocates of the direct model of employment, so we are delighted to be able to resume hiring again. We have already seen a significant number of clients instruct us to prepare for sensitively making visits to their debtors. It is our committed intention, to the very best of our ability, to protect our workforce, ensure the safety of the vulnerable in our community and work with all partners and customers during these uncertain times."

Bristow & Sutor has been collecting local authority revenue for over 42 years. The business has successfully acquired £6million pounds on behalf of clients during the COVID-19 lockdown and recently won Silver at DCXA'20 in the Digital Transformation and Change category.

For further information please visit: www.bristowsutor.co.uk

A national energy data platform, YODA

- **Siemens, together with partners Energy Systems Catapult and National Innovation Centre for Data, is creating Your Online Digital Architecture (YODA), a national energy data platform for Innovate UK's Modernising Energy Data Access project**
- **YODA will enable better local energy management and support the drive to decarbonisation by providing a central energy data catalogue, an energy map of generation and demand, and an asset register for all new energy assets such as wind and solar farms, electric vehicle charging points etc.**
- **Energy innovators, generators and users can tell Siemens how they want to use the energy data platform through a series of on-line workshops early in June**



If you are an energy app developer or energy innovator; a local authority energy manager or an electric vehicle (EV) charging provider; a grid or micro-grid operator; an academic or one of the many other energy-interested individuals or organisations, Siemens would like to hear from you. You can have your say on what you need from a national energy data platform and how you want to access it. Siemens have won a project with the UK Government's innovation-agency, Innovate UK, to develop an energy data platform. The platform, Your Online Digital Architecture (YODA), will integrate sources of information throughout the energy system and curate a central energy data catalogue, an energy map of generation and demand, and an asset register for

all new energy assets, such as electric vehicle charging points, wind and solar farms. Siemens will run a series of workshops throughout early June to understand key stakeholders' needs and ensure these are reflected in the future platform design and fully support projects being carried out by energy producers, distributors and consumers. A concept design for the data platform will be shared openly toward the end of the initial discovery phase in mid-July. This work will build on Energy Data Best Practice and the Energy Data Taskforce to establish an industry baseline of research which could be practically utilised by businesses and organisations throughout the UK to expedite digitalisation and develop products and services to improve

energy efficiency in generation and usage. 2030, the UK's target date for Net Zero is less than a decade away. Most of the assets and technologies that make up the energy system of today will be present in the future decarbonised system, albeit facing increasing strategic and operational challenges with the continued rise of distributed energy, electrification and digitalisation. The Modernising Energy Data Access (MEDA) project was established by Innovate UK in autumn 2019 and invited competitive bids for projects to solve the fundamental problem of exchanging digital energy information between disparate stakeholders to enable the development and testing of products and services which can be commercialised and

scaled. Siemens, with its partners Energy Systems Catapult (ESC) and National Innovation Centre for Data (NICD), is one of three successful entrants through the first round and going forward with developing their project concepts. Andrew Smyth, Head of Customer Success, Software at Siemens, explains "We are very excited to be working on the MEDA project and are passionate about creating a platform to enable both visibility of the national energy system and to support the drive to decarbonisation. The workshops will explore how energy users are challenged and constrained by the current energy system and how a central data platform could aid their future aspirations. The workshops are planned to allow all participants an opportunity to express their views". Dr. Richard Dobson of Energy Data Taskforce adds "Energy Systems Catapult's mission is to unleash innovation and open new markets to capture the clean growth opportunity. The ability to seamlessly share and access data is absolutely fundamental to this. We're excited to be working with Siemens on Your Online Digital Architecture to deliver a critical part of the modern, digitalised energy system we need." Details of the workshops, which all run between 1st June and 9th June at 9.30am and 1.30pm on the 3rd, 4th, 8th and 9th June plus 9.30 on Friday 5th June, are available on the project website www.siemens.co.uk/yoda.

Cost effective enforcement of mandatory cycle lanes

By Tim Daniels, Client Development Director, Videalert Limited



Since 22nd June, councils in England have had the power to use CCTV to issue penalty charge notices to drivers who park or load illegally in mandatory cycle lanes. This was ratified by the government's Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General (Amendment) Regulations 2020 which allows approved camera devices to be used for the enforcement of parking contraventions.



This new legislation adds cycle lanes to the list of parking offences enforceable by CCTV included in the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 2015/1001). This list of parking contraventions includes bus lanes, bus stops, bus stand clearways, keep clears outside schools and red routes.

Councils can now take action against illegal parking on cycle lanes which creates an obstruction that forces cyclists into the main carriageway. According to the DfT, this accounts for around 15% of all cyclist casualties. Improving road safety will also increase the number of people taking up cycling and facilitate a modal shift from vehicles to bicycles, thereby reducing congestion and air pollution in our cities.

Enforcing parking contraventions in mandatory cycle lanes should therefore become a key element of the planned clean air and low emission zones in some of our

worst polluting cities. Sustrans, a walking and cycling charity, has previously stated that clean air zones will not solve air pollution on their own and that a behavioural shift away from vehicles is needed. What is now clear is that improving air quality requires a variety of approaches including encouraging people to see cycling as a real alternative to their cars, particularly travelling to and from the workplace.

This has been brought into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic when the reduction in traffic, combined with a drop in industrial and commercial activities, resulted in a significant decline in air-polluting emissions. The images of empty city centres, roads and motorways gave us an unprecedented glimpse into how air quality is improved when emissions are drastically cut.

Technology Solutions

Councils wanting to deploy CCTV enforcement can use DfT Manufacturer Certified hosted solutions that are quick and easy to install as they do not require

the procurement and deployment of any equipment within council IT infrastructures or software on local PCs for evidence pack review. Importantly, this type of service requires no ICT involvement from councils and can be delivered through a variety of flexible commercial models, including fixed monthly rental cost per location or fixed fee-per-PCN, to improve efficiency, increase income and deliver greater budget control.

Videalert's fully managed Civil Enforcement as a Service (CEaaS) solution covers the planning, supply, installation, commissioning and ongoing maintenance of all necessary on-street equipment with the latest digital cameras and associated communications connectivity.

It includes the installation of ONVIF-compliant digital HD CCTV cameras, which operate in unattended mode to capture high quality images to minimise discard-rates, increase productivity and help reduce the number of appeals. These cameras can be redeployed to other locations as compliance improves. Mobile enforcement vehicles can also be used tactically to enforce multiple locations identified as having low levels of driver compliance. Captured evidence packs are stored on the hosted platform for secure access and review over the internet. Validated evidence packs are sent to the council's back office system to issue penalty charge notices.

Importantly, Videalert's hosted platform is multi-tasking and supports all parking

contraventions enforceable by CCTV simultaneously. It also supports the enforcement of moving traffic contraventions including banned turns, box junctions, weight restrictions and bus gates as well as the monitoring and management of clean air and low emission zones. The platform additionally enables councils to cross correlate the impact of improved driver compliance with the improvements in air quality using Air Quality Monitors that provide real-time data on the level of airborne particulates and harmful gases such as nitrogen dioxide and carbon dioxide at different times throughout the day and night. The air quality data can be combined with CCTV data to strengthen and validate the business case for the adoption of moving traffic enforcement restrictions to improve the effectiveness of clean air and low emission zones.

However, installing CCTV cameras to enforce parking contraventions in mandatory cycle lanes is just the start and significant change will only happen as a result of behavioural change in motorists, whether this is to get on their bikes or adopt a more considerate approach when parking. Simultaneously, to increase compliance, enforcement technologies such as those provided by Videalert will enable councils to play their part in further reducing the unacceptably high level of accidents involving cyclists.

For more information please visit www.videalert.com

Highland Marketing welcomes new member to its advisory board



Nicola Haywood-Alexander

Nicola Haywood-Alexander, an experienced NHS chief information officer and co-founder of Tech4CV19, joins the expert group that advises the health tech agency and its clients.

Highland Marketing has recently welcomed a new member to its advisory board of respected NHS IT leaders and health tech industry professionals.

Nicola Haywood-Alexander, a chief information officer and digital transformation adviser, who has worked in both the NHS and the wider public sector, has joined the expert group that provides advice to the health tech agency and its clients.

Nicola is also co-founder of Tech4CV19, a volunteer group of digital health and care leaders working with industry bodies to make sure tech companies can support the health service through the coronavirus emergency. One of the advisory board's current concerns is how to maintain the NHS and care sector 'pivot to digital' during the Covid-19 crisis as it starts to

resume routine activity, and Nicola will bring a fresh perspective to its debates.

Susan Venables, co-founder and client services director at Highland Marketing, said: "We met Nicola through our own involvement with Tech4CV19 and were immediately impressed by her commitment and determination to make a difference to the NHS.

"Tech4CV19 is looking to identify the role that tech can play in supporting the health and care system and to make sure that companies with innovative solutions can put them in front of policy and decision makers. "That aligns perfectly with Highland Marketing's long-standing ambition to find "health tech to shout about" and to communicate it to the NHS. We are looking forward to working with Nicola as the service emerges

from the Covid-19 crisis and looks to reset, not just to recover, for the future."

Nicola was CIO at Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust prior to her recent decision to embark on healthcare entrepreneurial activities to help move digital transformation at pace in the area of greater need. She has spent most of her NHS career in Yorkshire, where she was digital director at South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw integrated care system, and CIO at Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust.

Before moving into the NHS, she worked in the higher educational and research, local and regional government and engineering sectors

Nicola said: "This will be a great opportunity to engage with other colleagues and contribute to the

thinking and understanding, and to shape the new direction digital healthcare is taking. I'm especially keen to maintain momentum

around designing and delivering solutions that are patient centric and data driven.

"Highland Marketing is the most influential PR and marketing company in the sector, so I had no hesitation in accepting the invitation to join its advisory board. I am sure it will be a great vehicle for promoting those discussions and helping to shape future thinking."

The Highland Marketing advisory board meets regularly to discuss issues around healthcare IT. It also acts a sounding board for the agency's content, marketing and PR teams and for strategic clients.

Dr Lorraine Johnston, Associate Professor and Programme Leader of the MSc Strategic Leadership for Public Services Degree Apprenticeship, Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University

Responding to the lack of higher-level strategic and public leadership skills is an area of increasing concern for national and international governments seeking to drive more inclusive and sustainable growth. Dr Lorraine Johnston from Northumbria University, Newcastle, believes the answer for many lies in Degree Apprenticeships.

The extraordinary levels of disruption caused by the ongoing global pandemic, together with the uncertainties of Brexit and austerity, has changed the way that public goods and services are delivered beyond all recognition – and the combined impact has caused unparalleled pressure for public sector leaders.

For many in senior leadership roles, navigating a path through disruption is daunting, ambiguous, and a risk driven strategy, which is particularly unsettling for some. In public sector organisations, agencies and enterprises delivering crucial public goods and services across the UK, the current circumstances have exposed a need to upskill and reskill both new and experienced public sector workers – including local and national government decision-makers, policymakers, managers and administrators – to ensure that they are equipped to deal with the challenges of today and those that lie ahead.

Survival of frontline service economies, in continuously changing and disruptive environments, requires more responsive and adaptive leaders. It's more important than ever that officers and executives are supported to develop and enhance their strategic leadership

capabilities. They must be empowered to gain and build new skills in key areas such as innovation, enterprise and partnership working, economic efficiency, competitiveness and digital expertise, in order to drive the economic recovery and deliver greener and more sustainable, inclusive growth.

Public sector employers are grappling daily with new ways of thinking and working. They are seeking to establish how best to navigate the path through the ongoing disruption and questioning what higher-level leadership knowledge and skills are required in areas of enterprise, health, government, policing, education and social work; they are considering how to upskill the workforce during such unprecedented change and how to safeguard the longevity of public services. I believe that one solution lies in employer-led Degree Apprenticeships.

Degree Apprenticeships provide personalised, practical and tailored staff development. Importantly employers are involved at all stages to co-design a programme that is fit for purpose and meets their specific organisational needs. Upskilling the workforce in this way, enables employees to gain a professional, higher-level master's qualification that is directly relevant to their role and sector. Significantly, it also allows for knowledge and learning to be transferred directly into the workplace.

The government backed two-year degree apprenticeship programme is, according to the Department for Education, 'a job with training' (DfE, 2019) and offers strategic leaders a unique opportunity to combine full time work with 'off the job' university study. Employers can also take advantage of the

national government funded apprenticeship levy, which can significantly reduce the cost involved.

At Northumbria University, our Senior Leader Degree Apprenticeship is specifically designed for aspiring and substantive leaders and managers within public service organisations who really want to make a difference. This innovative and flexible, work-based postgraduate course is designed to integrate world-leading research insights with apprentices own professional experience to further enhance their skills, knowledge and expertise.

With one of the largest cohorts of public administration scholars and some of the world's leading academics in this area, our aim is to develop and deliver exceptional graduates, equipped with the latest strategic leadership skills and professional knowledge so that they are best-placed to lead through the extraordinary economic, environmental, social, technological and political difficulties of our time.

A partnership approach to study allows for a dedicated and highly skilled coaching team to facilitate the degree apprentice through their learning journey. From the outset we work with the employer and employee to develop a commitment statement outlining a tripartite agreement. Regular tripartite meetings ensure that combined objectives, project goals and aspirations for skills development, are met.



Those undertaking the programme will draw on individual knowledge and experience to date; engage in debate on issues and topics of contemporary leadership and management practice; develop capability to critically analyse leadership behaviour and actions of organisations; and hone strategic leadership problem-solving skills with reference to current and future challenges.

Almost overnight, Covid-19 redefined the challenges, work and workplaces of the public sector, with many organisations having to play a leading role in the pandemic response. The pace of change and level of pressure is unprecedented but equally the work and worth of public servants is magnified and, in many cases, widely celebrated.

There is now a real need to build on the successes, embed strategic leadership and new ways of working, continue a commitment to innovate and importantly, invest in the development of those required to lead in the years ahead.

For further information and guidance on how to apply for Northumbria's MSc Strategic Leadership for Public Services Degree Apprenticeship and how to achieve your career development ambitions please follow the link below: www.northumbria.ac.uk/senior_leader_public_services Alternatively contact degree.apprenticeships@northumbria.ac.uk

Everbridge Launches Fully Integrated Critical Event Management (CEM) Solution in Europe That Helps Organizations Mitigate Crises and Manage the Safe Return to Work After COVID-19 Lockdowns

Everbridge, the global leader in critical event management (CEM), has announced the expansion of its award-winning software platform in Europe, just as businesses, healthcare facilities and governments focus on the safer return of people to offices and other public places following COVID-19 lockdowns, and navigate multiple crises at the same time—spanning the coronavirus pandemic, active shooter situations, terrorist attacks, severe weather, supply chain disruptions, IT outages, cyber-attacks and other incidents.

Over 5,000 global firms rely on Everbridge to keep their people safe and organizations running in anticipation of or amid critical events, whether natural, digital, or manmade. The Everbridge CEM solution provides an integrated, end-to-end approach for managing all phases of a critical event, accelerating the time to identify and resolve threats, and providing a unified, organizational view to facilitate more coordinated action. CEM helps organizations, such as Goldman Sachs, Tiffany & Co., and Nokia identify and assess the severity of events; determine their relevance to an organization's people, assets, suppliers, and supply chains; automate taking action to mitigate threats and track progress; and analyze performance to improve future response. The Everbridge CEM solution leverages 225 out-of-the-box, pre-existing integrations, more than 100 communication modalities, and 22,000 risk data sources to provide a unified enterprise-wide, end-to-end platform that digitally transforms the critical event management

process. For customers currently using Everbridge software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications in Europe, the common architecture allows for seamless and rapid upgrades from the existing point solution to the full CEM suite.

Everbridge CEM also includes COVID-19 Shield™: Return to Work and Contact Tracing, which help organizations manage the complex process of returning to the workplace and other public spaces during the pandemic. This turnkey solution incorporates a specialized coronavirus-specific data feed to alert on new outbreaks, changes to local policies, and transportation / production disruptions that could hinder supply chains. It also offers quick-start templates and integrated modules to Know Your Risks, Protect Your People, and Protect Your Operations and Supply Chain. Organizations can get up and running in 48 hours or less. To date, customers have used the Everbridge platform to deliver over 400 million COVID-19-related communications.

"There has never been a more important time for organizations to manage risk, communicate with their employees and get people back to work safely," said Javier Colado, Head of International, Everbridge. "Adopted at enterprise scale by a growing number of organizations in the U.S. and now available in Europe, Everbridge's critical event management solution provides a comprehensive approach for leaders planning how to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and manage the many threats that continue to occur at the same time. This CEM launch will both benefit organizations headquartered in Europe and multinationals who operate there."

Everbridge's CEM expansion offers several new enhancements tailored to Europe: enriched risk data leveraging the world's largest vetted database of threat incidents, severe weather tracking and updates, transit disruption updates, and an expanded database of key points of interest including

nearby hospitals and embassies. These new data sources benefit multinationals using CEM worldwide, as well as Europe-based organizations.

"At Accenture, the safety and well-being of our people is always our top priority. So it's important that we have the ability to reach our people quickly wherever and whenever they face a potential threat to their security," said Arlin Pedrick, Chief Security Officer, Accenture. "Our Emergency Management System has proven to be invaluable in supporting our people before, during, and after a significant event."

In addition to more than 1,000 customers in Europe, Everbridge also provides Public Warning systems on a countrywide level and is the only company with five European countries deployed, including Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and Iceland.

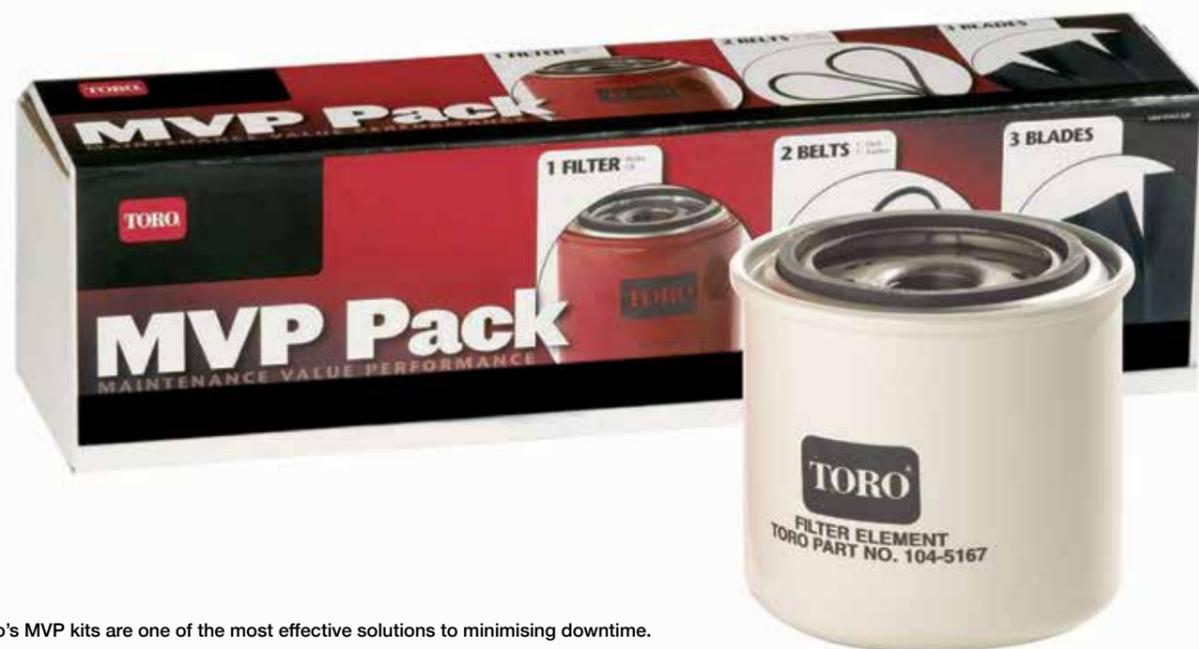
The Everbridge CEM solution is available today and complies with major data regulations, including GDPR, ISO 27001 and C5 in Germany.



MORE KITS, MORE VALUE

And that means more time working, not waiting

Toro's MVP (maintenance value performance) kits are widely known as one of the most effective solutions to minimising downtime. And for 2020 there's a new pack available through UK distributor Reesink Turfcare offering more value and more time working, not waiting.



Toro's MVP kits are one of the most effective solutions to minimising downtime.

MVP kits were designed with specific maintenance and repairs in mind and extending the range of handy kits is the new Blade pack for the Groundsmaster 1200. It joins, among others, Groundsmaster Deck Kits, Groundsmaster Blade and Belt Kits and Groundsmaster Caster Wheel Kits.

All packs have one thing in common, they help save time and money. They help you track maintenance and bring peace of mind that you have the parts you need to keep your equipment on the job. So, instead of spending valuable time sourcing individual

parts as issues arise, grounds teams can purchase all the parts they need for a particular maintenance or rebuild job in one convenient box that comes with the added benefit of saving up to 20 percent in repair expenses.

Michael Hampton, Reesink Turfcare parts manager, comments: "Now more so than ever, machinery repairs and downtime need to be kept to a minimum and costs in check. It has never been more important for machines to work as an extension to the team, efficiently and effectively. And that's where MVP kits come into their own, having

all the required parts included in a single package to make ordering and completing the job easier and less expensive."

Each pack come with instructions giving advice on when to perform specific maintenance tasks depending on the model and the number of hours of use, helping to prevent running machines into the ground and incurring unnecessary costs to repair them.

Michael continues: "Cutting grass efficiently is at the forefront of groundskeepers' minds and highly productive machines are the means to achieving this.

Downtime is a costly obstacle. Toro's MVP kits enable you to react and resolve maintenance or repair issues immediately, keeping uptime at an all-time high."

Added to this, if used to perform regular maintenance, MVP kits keep cost of ownership low and allow for more accurate forecasting when setting budget aside for parts and servicing.

Investing in Toro MVP kits is, says Reesink Turfcare, a wise decision. For more information contact distributor Reesink's Toro parts department on 01480 226854, go to reesinkturfcare.co.uk, or visit your local dealer.

FCC Environment continues to impress with Toro



Toro's T4240 high-output cylinder mower has proved to be a reliable part of FCC Environment's maintenance fleet.

For several years Toro machinery has been helping FCC Environment's grounds maintenance department achieve excellent results for its clients, which is why it continues to invest in Toro.

Richard Moss, FCC Environment's grounds foreman, explains: "We have several clients we work with on a range of projects and across all types of surfaces, from parks and public sports grounds, to highway verges. So it's very important for us to have reliable machinery that helps us achieve results that keep our clients happy."

Making up the bulk of FCC Environment's maintenance fleet are three LT3340 heavy-duty triple mowers and a T4240 high-output cylinder mower which were purchased four years ago, and most recently a LT-F3000 triple flail mower.

"The T4240 and LT3340 mowers we've had for four years and we invested in a LT-F3000 triple flail mower last year," Richard

tells us. "We needed another machine to help with an increase in our workload and it wasn't really a question that we would look to Toro again and it's certainly a decision that has paid off! Not only has the LT-F3000 really impressed me thanks to its versatility coping with both long and short grass, leaving an excellent finish every time, but also, despite the wet weather at the start of the year, all the Toro machines have still seen excellent results and really impressed our clients."

The 21-person-strong grounds team at FCC Environment are out in force every day using Toro machines during peak season, which is why reliable machinery and excellent after sales service make up the vital combination that Richard looks for in a machinery

partner, something that together Toro and UK distributor Reesink Turfcare provide.

"We have such a full on schedule that the biggest problem we could face would be machinery downtime," says Richard. "If our machines were constantly breaking down or it took too long to order parts in for repairs, it would be disastrous. Good reliability is why our frontline grass cutting machines are all Toro. We've seen this in action with our T4240 and LT3340, and despite being in use nearly every day for four years, our machinery downtime has stayed at an absolute minimum."

"Not only are Toro machines incredibly reliable, but the after sales service from Reesink is excellent," Richard concludes.

Statkraft selected on UK Re:fit Energy Performance Contract framework

Statkraft, Europe's largest producer and a developer of renewable power, has pre-qualified as new supplier for the Re:fit Energy Performance Contract framework. The Norwegian state-owned energy company can now provide public organisations in the UK with fully funded behind the meter solar solutions. Re:fit is jointly owned by the Greater London Authority and Local Partnerships and helps public organisations to save time and money, by avoiding lengthy procurements.

"We are so proud of being part of the framework. It's a great example where Statkraft can deliver what matters," says Alex Goodall, Head of UK Solar – Markets, responsible for Statkraft's fully funded solar turnkey solutions for private and public sectors. "Statkraft can provide a funded off-balance sheet solar solution, without incurring any type of land lease. This efficiently helps to lower bills and carbon emissions for local councils, government departments, the National Health Service, universities/colleges and schools. We support public organisations with the renewable energy revolution, reducing CO2 in response to the climate emergency."

Statkraft's offering

Statkraft will offer solar power purchase agreements (PPAs) that fund install, maintain and insure any solar PV and storage solutions, on or near sites. It would be a private wire ("behind the meter") PPA, regardless of whether the public organisation leases or owns these buildings and/or sites. Given that the proposition is capex free/fully funded by Statkraft, the consumer would be able to achieve PnL savings from day one, in the region of approximately 30% on delivered power. The solution is also lease-free and off-balance sheet, e.g.

does not constitute an operating lease under IFRS16. This funding approach is very suitable for public sector customers, as the generated renewable electricity is paid for via the PPA. This ensures that public sector funding and any savings generated, are used to support front line services.

About Re:fit

The renewed Re:fit framework is live from April 2020. It has a capacity to deliver up to £1.5 billion of public sector energy improvements, over the next four years. In the past eight years Re:fit has been a successful tool for public organisations to provide tailored energy renewable and efficiency solutions. The programme will help to provide lower bills and CO2 emissions for local and/or government authorities.

The renewed Re:fit framework is jointly owned by the Greater London Authority and Local Partnerships, a joint venture between the Local Government Association, HM Treasury and the Welsh Government. It helps public organisations in England and Wales to save time and money while at the same time enabling the public sector to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

About Statkraft:

Statkraft is a leading company

in hydropower internationally and Europe's largest generator of renewable energy. The Group produces hydropower, wind power, solar power, gas-fired power and supplies district heating. Statkraft is a global company in energy market operations. Statkraft has 4,000 employees in 17 countries.



Trust Toro genuine parts when it's time to work again

With longer, coarser grass, ahead, choose your bottom blades carefully

Grounds teams across the nation are likely working at a reduced rate due to the focus on essential services, but grass growth stops for no one. When maintenance routines return to normal, make sure your cylinder mowers are ready for the challenge with genuine Toro bottom blades.

Toro parts UK distributor Reesink Turfcare has some advice for grounds teams preparing their machines for work – choose your bottom blades carefully. Michael Hampton, parts manager at Reesink, says: "Bottom blades can be an area where buyers decide to cut corners, choosing an inferior, spurious part in order to save money, but that doesn't make long-term sense when you have a Toro machine and short-term that could be even worse.

"You need to be sure your machine can go out there and deal with potentially months of uncut grass effectively, with ease, delivering the best possible finish when there's lots to do and you don't want to be relying on 'will fit'

parts for that."

Well-maintained bottom blades are vital in producing a quality cut and genuine Toro bottom blades are the best there are, outperforming 'will fit' inferior quality parts. Research at Toro headquarters in America proves this point. In tests focused on many physical characteristics, in particular the flatness of the blade and positioning of the chamfered mounting holes, results showed that unbranded bottom blades failed in over 50 percent of Toro's quality specification standards.

Michael continues: "Grounds fleets will be put through their paces when the time comes to start cutting more areas, or more frequently, again. Not only will it be

high season but there's likely a lot of backlog to deal with. The last thing the team needs are delays dealing with worn, damaged or blunted bottom blades or wasted time waiting for replacement parts."

Reesink is still open for business and teams in our service centres, warehouses and across our supply chain are working tirelessly to deliver parts for our customers. Drop them a line at info@reesinkturfcare.co.uk or call Spare Parts: **01480 226854**.

Guarantee the best quality cut and after-cut appearance with genuine Toro bottom blades.



A14 improvements: telent and Highways England collaboration sees works completed months ahead of schedule

As Coronavirus restrictions continue, essential workers and remote support staff have continued to support vital projects to maintain and improve the UK's national infrastructure.

One such project is Highways England's A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme – a £1.5 billion project involving essential updates to a critical part of the country's transport infrastructure – which was completed in May 2020, eight months ahead of schedule. With years of experience, telent played an integral role in delivering the technology for the programme. From the initial designs to the final wirings on site, one theme remained constant: collaboration.

Vital infrastructure

The project was undertaken as part of Highways England's Complex Infrastructure Programme (CIP), which enables and delivers some of the largest, most complex projects in Highways England's portfolio. The A14 is of local, regional, national and international significance, and the section of the route between Huntingdon and Cambridge carries a high level of commuter and long-distance traffic, while also providing a strategic link between the A1 and the M11 motorway.

The aims of the works include:

- A major new 12-mile bypass to the south of Huntingdon between Swavesey and Brampton Hut
- A wider A1 between Brampton Hut and Alconbury junctions
- Wider sections of the existing A14
- Improvements to Huntingdon town centre
- New local access roads

A safe pair of hands

telent's National Roads

Telecommunication Services (NRTS) team provided end to end communications services, required to connect the CCTV cameras and signs to improve traffic flow, safety for road users, and provide real time information for drivers. More than 270 new technology assets were delivered, connecting to a national network of over 30,000 service delivery points. telent's Regional Technology Maintenance Contracts (RTMCs) team supported the scheme by providing ongoing design and commentary and commissioning support, ensuring it was delivered ready for a seamless handover.

The Highways England contract for the operation and management of NRTS involves supporting more than 4,300 miles of England's strategic road network (SRN). Likewise, telent operates three of Highways England's RTMCs. The contracts cover the continued provision of technology maintenance services and include assets that are critical to the efficient and safe operation of the SRN. telent will continue to maintain support as part of its NRTS service for Highways England until 2026.

Overcoming the obstacles

While a 20km section of the project was built offline, the rest of the scheme involved working adjacent to live traffic. Adding to this challenge was the need to avoid night works, meaning on-site working times and operations had to be carefully planned and coordinated.

By working closely, telent was able to identify and contribute to the development of measures

to gain off-site access to at least 90% of the key equipment sites on the scheme allowing 24/7/365 maintenance without Traffic Management. The close working relationship that was established between telent and the A14 team resulted in an agreement being reached to re-schedule the NRTS works in the offline section to later in the programme so that the telent teams could work as efficiently as possible.

Going the extra mile

Collaboration remained consistent throughout the length of the project. The A14 Integrated Delivery Team (A14 IDT) consisted of a number of designers and constructors. The combination of telent's NRTS and RTMC teams, working collaboratively with the A14 IDT, was an example of telent's end-to-end services in action and a key reason for the early opening of the new road.

Early on, the teams started to consider how stages of activity could be delivered without disruption to the ongoing construction activities, preventing the time-consuming task of revisiting sites, or causing unnecessary delays and standing time for critical works. By ensuring close collaboration between telent and the A14 IDT, the infrastructure could be completed to the highest standard with the input of all parties at the outset.

All in all, telent hopes to play its part in ensuring that projects involving a wide range of stakeholders can be run as efficiently and productively as this.

Andy Hopes, telent Regional

Project Manager who led the NRTS team said:

"Collaboration was the key to the success of the project. We were able to introduce several programme efficiencies through joint planning, coordination of resources, and working creatively together to keep the programme on track. The collaboration between telent NRTS and RTMC programmes was significant to the success of the commissioning phase, working closely together and, on occasion, undertaking elements of each other's work providing further benefit."

Steve Clarke, Contracts Manager for Transport responsible for the RTMC team on the project said: "It has been a pleasure to work collaboratively with the A14 scheme, as they have made the roadside technology a primary consideration in the overall design and implementation of the new section of A14. From initial design through to commissioning of the new technology, close liaison between all parties has been key to the great success of the scheme. My special thanks go to Steve Page and our team of Engineers on the East RTMC contract for enabling this significant achievement for Highways England."

Zhaga standards break barriers to smart and connected lighting

Zhaga is an open and global consortium of lighting companies that creates interface standards for components of LED luminaires. Zhaga so enables multi-vendor eco-systems of interoperable products.



Zhaga has now applied its vision to connectivity and smart streetlighting. The standard in the Zhaga Book 18 was published in November 2019 and is called "Smart interface between outdoor luminaires and sensing / communication modules". This standard defines a smart luminaire interface, including mechanical socket and communication and control aspects, so that a sensor/communication module can be externally mounted on the luminaire supported by plug-and-play. The interface is in this respect similar to the USB slot on a computer.

The increasing digitisation in many areas of our society presents new challenges to manufacturers, specifiers, installers and users of lighting installations. The long lifetime

of outdoor lighting is very difficult to match with the dynamic developments in digital technology.

This inability to combine the long-lasting nature of the lighting infrastructure and the rapid changes in digital communication and sensor technology has led to an underutilization of the lighting infrastructure for smart applications and has regrettably reduced the solution toolbox for smart city and smart buildings. This has hampered progress in this space.

To resolve the challenge and secure a central place for lighting in smart city, a connectivity solution for lighting should at least meet the following requirements. From a functional point of view, the solution should enable the lighting to connect to the IoT, enable light management

through control and energy and status reporting, and support beyond lighting applications. From a more methodological point of view, the solution should be future proof and easily upgradable to keep pace with rapid developments in digital networking technology. It should also be based on standards to avoid vendor lock in.

Zhaga has now addressed this problem by creating a new interface standard for outdoor luminaires. This standard turns the streetlighting infrastructure into a strong enabler for smart cities.

Luminaires with the Zhaga interface can be equipped - in field - with sensor/communication modules to extend their initial functionality. In one case, the module includes radio communication, and enables remote light control and the transmission of diagnosis and energy data to a central management system. In another case, the module includes sensors. In yet another case, the module includes even more advanced smart city applications for e.g. city security of environmental control.

The Zhaga vision on connectivity hinges on the interoperability between luminaires and sensor/communication modules of multiple vendors.

To create trust in interoperability, Zhaga has defined a certification program to accompany its standards. The program is carried out by independent test houses and the certification status of products can be verified through a publicly accessible database and through logos which are trademarked to prevent misuse.

The logo also presents business advantages to end-users, as it encourages a wide supply of innovative solutions and multi-vendor sourcing options. For manufacturers, the certification logo offers a strong marketing tool, and shows that the product derives added value from a strong product eco-system.

The Zhaga interface future-proves a luminaire and ensures that it can keep pace with rapid developments in digital networking, sensing and smart-city technology. Modules incorporate the developments and are easily replaced. An installed base of luminaire with the Zhaga interface drives innovation in the module market; innovations in the module market add value to the lighting infrastructure. A certification and logo program create further trust in the interoperability of luminaires and nodes from different vendors.

The Zhaga smart interface standard for streetlighting, the Zhaga Book 18 was published in November 2019. First certified products and infrastructure installations are now available. In April 2020, Zhaga has also published a standard for indoor lighting, based on an approach comparable to the one used for outdoor.

Zhaga smart interface specifications will have a major impact on the value of the lighting infrastructure for connectivity and on the investment decisions of city governments, specifiers and utility companies. It will drive innovation in sensor/communication modules incorporating new smart applications.

secgen@zhagastandard.org

Dedicated fleet management delivers agile, trusted service and innovation at the City of London Corporation

The City of London Corporation, the governing body of the City of London, promotes the city as the world's leading international financial and business centre and attracts new business to the capital, and across the UK.

It partners with local communities to increase skills, employment and opportunities for Londoners, including through the City Bridge Trust. It also works to enhance the capital as a hub of culture, history and green spaces for citizens.

Challenges

The City of London Corporation was relying on an ageing fleet of multifunctional devices (MFDs) and printers across its diverse facilities, from the Guildhall headquarters and Barbican property estate, to schools and the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre. Challenges included the lack of common print policies across the estate and an inability to dynamically monitor print volumes and act quickly upon changes in device usage.

"We wanted to shift from a traditional supplier/customer relationship to a partnership that could help us not only make cost savings but also advise on continuous optimisation," says the City Corporation's Commercial Lead for ICT, Rajiv Rathod. "Konica Minolta provided a commitment to delivery and showed a strong intention to work with us to transform end-to-end delivery."

Following a competitive tender process on the RM3781 Framework (developed in collaboration with Crown Commercial Service (CCS), Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) and Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO)) Konica Minolta successfully retained this contract.

Konica Minolta proposed an innovative managed services

approach – one aimed at creating an even smarter way for employees to work, streamlining processes and reducing costs. This included fleet rationalisation and the adoption of a consumption-based pricing model, designed by Rajiv, for improved transparency of volumes output and cost savings.

More than 500 Konica Minolta MFDs are now deployed across 80 sites within London and the South-East, all backed by Konica Minolta's SafeQ security controls to protect sensitive information and PrintFleet, the next generation fleet management solution.

One challenge was to effectively manage this fleet day-to-day and optimise it for future operation. Previously, fleet management was provided by a disconnected group of staff across the City Corporation. This sometimes led to a delay in resolving fleet issues; while the lack of unified insight also undermined accountability (for example, who was printing what, and from which device).

"The advantage of our relationship with Konica Minolta is their focus on continual improvement," says Rajiv. "Working in partnership, we jointly recognised the need for a single, dedicated fleet management resource – one that would not only deliver instant, on-site support, but also provide proactive, professional advice on how we could enhance our document processes."

Solution

A full-time Konica Minolta Fleet Manager is now embedded within

the City Corporation's IT function.

Rajiv comments, "The Konica Minolta Fleet Manager is committed to helping us succeed. If an issue occurs, they take responsibility – even if that issue isn't directly attributable to the print fleet. There's no finger-pointing; they simply work to resolve the issue with everyone in the background before it can escalate into a more serious problem."

Konica Minolta recently extended this fleet management solution into the City Corporation's on-site print room. Both mono and colour devices are supported by Konica Minolta on a managed service delivery model, which offers a more predictable cost model and improved quality of output, while freeing staff time to focus on other print opportunities. The solution includes a workflow solution that supports the printing of payslips.

The Managed Print Service also encompasses the City of London Police and the Central Criminal Court at the Old Bailey. City of London Police is responsible for protecting one of the most challenging environments in the UK whilst leading the national campaign to fraud. Konica Minolta is ensuring the Managed Print Service meets the City Corporation's stringent security requirements.

Benefits, Results and Return on Investment

This on-site, dedicated single point of contact – with full accountability and ownership of print related issues – has

helped save the City Corporation significant time, money and resources.

By accessing Lot 3 on the RM3781 framework and adopting the new commercial model devised by Rajiv, the new managed print solution has reduced the print costs by half, resulting in almost £2.5 million in predicted cost savings over five years. It is also now easier to monitor print use and identify and accommodate individual departments' print needs. The new devices also print faster and are more reliable.

The Fleet Manager is instrumental in this success. Everything from monitoring consumables and break-fix issues, to fleet rationalisation, and associating machines to volume are in the Fleet Manager's trusted hands. Crucially, this frees up time, money and resources that Rajiv can devote to other pressing public authority tasks.

Rajiv concludes, "I manage many business partners for the City Corporation. Konica Minolta is a key strategic partner we work very closely with, and we are confident that the partnership's strong performance will continue."

For more details on Konica Minolta's services please contact:

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E: info@konicaminolta.co.uk
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IGEL ready program opens edge OS for unlimited partner integration

Over 90 partners already integrate hardware, software and applications into IGEL platform; new program expected to double partnerships by 2021, creating an ecosystem for endless possibilities particularly in the public sector

IGEL, the edge OS leader for cloud workspaces, today announced the launch of IGEL Ready, a new program that opens up the company's core enterprise software for any technology partner to integrate and validate their products.

Technologies from over 90 companies are already integrated within IGEL's platform – including Microsoft, Citrix and Zoom, and that number is expected to double by 2021 with the freedom afforded by IGEL Ready. Ultimately, the program creates an ecosystem where customers can consider compatible devices and applications across a range of categories, quickly deploy to their virtual desktop or cloud workspace, and securely access from any device equipped with IGEL software.

The news comes at a critical juncture for IT. Widespread cloud migration and a surging distributed workforce have transformed how enterprises manage and secure endpoints, fueling demand for virtual apps, desktops and cloud workspaces. In 2019, Microsoft invigorated the market with the long-awaited launch of Windows Virtual Desktop, which publicly embraced Linux at the endpoint.

These conditions are driving growth and leadership for IGEL, which recognized early on that its edge operating system and management tools could help businesses migrate to the cloud overnight. When installed with IGEL OS, any x86-64 device – including Windows desktops, laptops, HP or Dell Wyse thin clients and MacBook devices – can connect to any cloud, including AWS, Azure, Citrix and VMware. With IGEL, enterprises can easily repurpose

existing hardware and manage thousands of endpoints from a single interface, all with the added security of a lightweight, read-only Linux OS.

"The timing is right for IGEL," said Jed Ayres, CEO, IGEL. "Over a decade ago, we saw an open opportunity in the market with the growth of the cloud and virtual desktops. We decided to shift focus and perfect our simple, yet powerful edge operating system, ultimately positioning IGEL for tremendous growth. Today, we're entering a new era as we transition to an open platform that's primed for partner integration."

IGEL has emerged as a leading voice on the edge, and a trusted partner to enterprises. In 2018, the company crossed the \$100M revenue threshold, and today is seeing demand skyrocket as remote work rapidly transforms modern life.

With the IGEL Ready program, businesses can now tap IGEL's prolific partner network with even greater confidence to provide employees with the most essential tools and capabilities to do their jobs securely and effectively. In its 20-year history, IGEL has fostered relationships with some of the biggest names in hardware and software, including Amazon, AMD, Intel, VMware and Cisco. In 2019, IGEL was announced as the first Linux-based OS certified for Windows Virtual Desktop.

For technology partners, IGEL Ready presents a compelling opportunity to share their products with a growing, relevant market and provide a heightened experience for customers.

"For 20 years, Citrix and IGEL have worked closely together to deliver simple, smart

and secure solutions to our mutual customers," said Pratik Shah, Director of Product Management at Citrix. "Now, we're excited to expand our partnership with the launch of IGEL Ready to ensure that our validated solutions can be easily identified, and that our customers can be assured they are running the most up-to-date versions that have been tested for performance and interoperability."

IGEL Ready is now accepting applications from any hardware, software or peripheral company interested in integrating and verifying their technology with IGEL. The company is already working with more than 150 partners to introduce them to the program, including Goliath Technologies, Lakeside Software, LG Business Solutions, Liquidware, Login VSI, PrinterLogic, Sennheiser, Tehama, Cherry, ControlUp, deviceTRUST, Fluendo, Tricerat, SecMaker, OnLogic, Systec & Solutions, BUURST, Channel Mechanics, Veridium and EPOS.

After meeting specific hardware and software requirements to ensure compatibility, the applications will be featured on the customer-facing IGEL Ready Showcase under eight categories:

- Cloud Workspaces / VDI / DaaS
- Communication and collaboration
- Software and applications
- Endpoints
- Peripherals and others
- Printers and scanners
- Security
- Analytics

By participating in the program, partners will be able to reach over 3,000,000 IGEL OS-powered endpoints, more than 17,000 IGEL customers and thousands of resellers.

To learn more and start the application process, visit igel.com/partners/technology-partners/

To explore the IGEL Ready ecosystem of solutions, visit igel.com/ready

Investing for the long-term pays millions for community projects

Three councils' investments with CCLA sees over £2 million in returns for local communities

Against a backdrop of government funding cuts and the Covid-19 crisis, careful stewardship of financial resources is even more crucial to maintain essential services such as highways and transport, waste collection, children's services and social care, and to support community projects.

In these difficult times, it's hard to imagine that many councils have money to invest in local economies, green spaces or community projects – but that is exactly what neighbouring Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils in rural Worcestershire have been doing.

By allocating funds to CCLA's Local Authority Property Fund (LAPF) and Diversified Income Fund (DIF), both councils have strengthened their financial positions for the benefit of the local community.

Investing £12 million across the two CCLA funds, Malvern Hills Council has managed to preserve its reserves and purchase land for industrial development and carbon capture. With Covid-19 costing the council around £3 million of its £8 million annual budget so far, this pot of reserve money has played a crucial role in being able to maintain activity. "Income from the funds has helped to buffer reserves," says Deputy Chief Executive Andy Baldwin. The council is generating between £300,000 and £400,000 more income every year, meaning it hasn't had to cut services. "We would have been forced to make difficult decisions if we hadn't used the money to invest. We may have had to increase charges or cut non-essential services such as funding to the Malvern theatre

or our sports and leisure facilities, or make staff redundancies," says Mr Baldwin.

Similarly, Wychavon's £10 million investment across the funds has proven to be beneficial. Returning over £800,000 in dividends over four years, the council has been able to award funding to parish and town councils, support regeneration in the area, fund apprenticeships, scholarships and grants to the voluntary sector, as well as channel money into local projects such as the development of a destination community shop, selling local produce to support the rural economy. Vic Allison, Deputy Managing Director for Wychavon District Council explains, "CCLA has a good return, is relatively safe and we know we can lock away funds for five years or more and be pretty certain we're going to get a capital return, as well as an annual dividend."

With its city council status, Plymouth City Council in the south west of England faces even more demands on its resources. Finance director, Andrew Hardingham acknowledges that the 90% cut in the council's revenue support grant has meant the council has had to look at alternative ways to fund community services. Driven by the need to be more commercial, Plymouth has put around 30% of its overall investments with CCLA's LAPF and DIF generating around £1 million annually in returns. "The return on the fund is equivalent to an increase of 1% in council tax across the piece and provides the equivalent of residential care for 25 people for one year. It has helped us to ensure the underpinning of these vital services in this era of austerity."



Thanks to the regulatory framework currently in place, CCLA's funds may be treated as treasury investments, rather than capital. This removes the need to set aside taxpayer funds for non-cash movements in valuations, something Andy Baldwin notes makes the investments, "even more financially advantageous to us and is a big reason we invested with CCLA".

Andrew Hardingham agrees, "It was among very few funds set up in a way that allowed us to operate within the treasury management rules so we could say that the CCLA funds are market leaders and innovators in the space to support local authorities."

Reassured by the quantity and diverse nature of its public sector investors, Mr Hardingham feels "the strength of the fund is that it appeals to all parts of the local government sector" while acknowledging "the objectives of CCLA are more closely aligned with social value objectives of a local authority".

Indeed, CCLA's strong connection to the public sector

and its unique governance is integral to how the firm operates¹. "CCLA is a purpose-built solution for local authorities and is supported by the LGA. It seems to fit with what the councils are about," explains Vic Allison.

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¹CCLA has been managing the investments of charities, faith-based organisations and local authorities since 1958 and is owned by its clients.

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future results. The value of investments and the income derived from them may fall as well as rise. Investors may not get back the amount originally invested and may lose money. CCLA Investment Management Limited and CCLA Fund Managers Limited are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

CCLA
GOOD INVESTMENT

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

Reesink UK supply system delivering customers what they need in lockdown

The UK is entering its third month of lockdown and throughout Reesink UK has been focussed on delivering the best possible service to its customers in these unprecedented times.

Here we talk to Michael Hampton, Reesink's parts manager about delivering its UK customers what they need when they need it: "Of course the situation is far from normal, but what we have here at Reesink is a new normal. One which we're delighted to say is working.

"Customers should not have noticed any difference with regards to parts ordering and

support. We have a complete range of all items in stock and we're still able to have orders ready for dispatch in ample time for delivery within 24 hours to our customers.

"We have experienced some issues with our carriers, but those problems were expected, we had a contingency and they didn't last long. So far we have been able to deliver our customers' requirements whether that's delivering to their location or via non-contact collection."

Michael says most orders pertain to maintenance and repair work: "The majority of our orders are for repair work to keep essential equipment operational

and working safely. Contacting us for genuine spare parts is the same as it always was for customers. Emails, phone and internet are all running as usual and there have been no delays to responding to our customers' enquiries."

Reesink, who is the UK distributor for Toro golf and sports fields equipment, grounds machinery, irrigation products and genuine Toro Parts, among many, has been continually impressed – and thankful – throughout these weeks of lockdown for the people working tirelessly throughout the entire supply system that has meant it's seemingly business as usual for its customers. Michael

concludes: "Maintaining business as usual in these unprecedented times takes a village and everyone has stepped up to continue delivering the kind of reassurance the company strives to give customers lockdown or not and that's minimum downtime, maximum productivity and more customer service."

Reesink is open for business and teams in the service centres, warehouses and across the supply chain are working tirelessly to deliver parts for customers. Drop them a line at Spare Parts: **01480 226854**, visit reesinkturfcare.co.uk or email info@reesinkturfcare.co.uk.



Reesink UK's supply system is delivering customers what they need in lockdown, including genuine Toro parts.

GREENER Towns & Cities Feature



The government's ambitious green planning revolution for UK towns and cities has been hailed as long overdue and with a pledge to reduce emissions to net zero by 2050 the children of the future should have much healthier and much longer lives.

Of course going 'green' shouldn't be all about reducing carbon emissions and creating economic

energy saving schemes it should also be about creating living and working environments that are conducive to good all round mental health. A combination of both environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing buildings, workplaces and public spaces in our towns and cities is the key for improving the populations mental and physical health.



GREEN PLANNING

Last year the government unveiled plans to create a 'Future Homes Standard' which aims to see fossil fuel heating systems, such as gas boilers, replaced with clean technology options such as air source pumps and solar panels. Widely hailed as 'an environmental revolution in home building', the aim is to cut carbon emissions by up to 80% for all new homes by this time.

Leading certification and compliance authority, Bureau Veritas welcomed news of the government's ambitious green planning revolution

As part of this, the government has launched an open consultation, until January 2020, on how Parts F and L of the Building Regulations can be upgraded to optimise energy efficiency in new homes. The first stage of the consultation concentrates on efficiency

requirements for new homes in 2020, with the government's preferred option to implement a 31% decrease in emissions. It is expected that this will be succeeded with the introduction of a net zero carbon status for new homes by 2025.

The government will also consult on an ambitious revamp of current planning rules in order to create a simpler system that works for all, and seek to create its first ever design manual to promote the building of 'beautiful, well-designed homes that people are proud to live in.'

Although the full ramifications of the planning reforms remain to be seen, the consensus is that they will impact the roll out of existing property schemes and developments – as architects and developers struggle to plan around the transitional period.

Andy Lowe, Director of Building Control at Bureau Veritas told GPSJ: "It's no surprise that the government's recent pledge to

reduce emissions to net zero by 2050 has been succeeded with increased environmental focus on the housing sector. The reality is that this target, the first of its kind for any major economy, will simply not be met without the virtual elimination of emissions from UK buildings – yet it's estimated that the UK's 29 million homes, which account for 14% of total UK emissions, are using more energy than before.¹

"While the proposed changes are, therefore, crucial to ensuring new builds are fit for the future – it is important that the impact they will have on the construction industry is carefully managed, particularly in terms of existing developments whereby developers will need to adapt to any restrictions and cost implications caused by a legislative upturn."

"In terms of best practice going forward, we'd recommend for developers to seek expert advice so that they can ensure they

remain on top of the changes as and when they emerge, and have a future-focused strategy in place to negate as much impact as possible.

"Of course, as with any type of legislative overhaul, we understand it may mean extra complexity and cost, however the reality is that the green agenda is only going to increase in the years to come, meaning it is more of a case of 'when' rather than 'if' in terms of the path to a low carbon economy. Thus, in the long-run the changes will go a long way in helping developers ensure their properties are fit for the challenges of tomorrow, today."

Despite the government's pledge on reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 some organisations have expressed their concerns over the future of the UK's parks and green spaces.

COUNCIL CARBON REDUCTIONS

Many councils are now seeking help from outside sources to ensure they are doing everything they can to reduce carbon emissions in the most effective ways.

Friends of the Earth and CDP has launched their 31 Climate Actions for Councils. This resource, for councils and local authorities, demonstrates what climate actions would best benefit their area – both for people and planet. The impact behind the data is what the 31 actions are built on – the co-benefits of climate action.

Councillor Claire Holland, Deputy Leader of the Council (Environment and Clean Air) in Lambeth told GPSJ: "I am not going to lie, it has felt huge. Overwhelming at times. I wanted someone to give me a handbook and say 'great you have declared a climate emergency, here is the list of actions you now need to take, which is why this resource from Ashden, and Friends of the Earth

is welcome.

"We spent the first 6 months of last year shifting the culture of the organization so that staff and councillors understood that this affects all of our work. That this is not just something for our Sustainability Team.

"We have to bring people with us. We know that effects of climate change disproportionately impact our most disadvantaged communities. And it is essential we don't exacerbate that inequality."

The 31 actions can be viewed graphically, and councillors, sustainability officers – anyone with an interest in carbon-saving data – can delve into the data provided in the spreadsheet too. This is built on a 'town' of 100,000 residents and can be extrapolated to fit the size of any town or city.

Helen Hayes, MP for Dulwich and West Norwood said, "It is a brilliant document providing a really practical guide to help councils to identify the actions they can take to reduce carbon emissions.

In 2020, we should be talking about a decade of progress and how to build on it, but instead we currently stand to exceed both the 4th and 5th carbon budgets, with preparation for COP26 which we are hosting in a state of disarray.

Citizens are putting climate change at the top of the political agenda, creating a democratic mandate for change – as local councils we can lead the way.

"Both citizens and councils are limited in the action they can take in the face of such an enormous challenge, and they both need leadership and resources from local government. Leadership in the form of policy and legislation and public spending.

"Leadership also comes in the form of empowering local councils the freedom to work even more closely with their communities and to commit resources accordingly."

These 31 actions will allow local

authorities to address the climate emergency whilst addressing inequality at the same time – fundamental if we are going to succeed.

Despite the government's pledge on reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 some organisations have expressed their concerns over the future of the UK's parks and green spaces.

One council is planning to build a solar farm as it seeks to become one of the greenest councils in the North West.

Oldham Council is looking to submit proposals to build a 900kw solar farm in Failsforth.

The development would help boost their drive to become the greenest borough in Greater Manchester and help the council's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2025.

Electricity generated from the site would be used to supply the council.

The solar farm would add to

the 120kw rooftop panels already operating on the Tommyfield Market in Oldham.

Councillor Abdul Jabbar, Deputy Leader of Oldham Council, said: "Over the last ten years the council has been forced to make millions of pounds in savings, so we need to come up with imaginative and economically sound ideas which benefit the borough and its people but don't rely on traditional energy sources.

"This solar farm would help us become more energy sufficient in a time when fuel bills are continually rising.

"We want to lead the way as a 'green' council and that's why

we've become the first local authority in the UK to announce our intention to be a Green New Deal Council.

"The Green New Deal will set out how being more environmentally friendly can bring real economic benefits to local people and businesses over the next 10 years including lower fuel bills, more jobs and training opportunities.

"We also know tackling climate change is important to residents and rather than just talking about it we have made the decision to act. The growing climate change crisis is too important to ignore, and we can all do our bit."



GREEN SPACES



Research conducted by Fields in Trust has demonstrated clear physical health and mental wellbeing benefits from regular use of the UK's parks and green spaces, yet these vital community assets are not equally distributed. Around 2.6million people in Great Britain live more than a ten-minute walk from their nearest park and are missing out on the physical health and mental wellbeing benefits as well as opportunities to connect with their neighbours. Any future loss of parks and green spaces will disproportionately impact the most disadvantaged and underrepresented communities across the UK.

to take steps to legally protect parks and green spaces for future generations to enjoy.

Speaking to GPSJ, Fields in Trust Chief Executive, Helen Griffiths said: "At a time when parks and green spaces are increasingly under threat Watch This Space is supporting community groups and individuals to celebrate their value and their proven physical and mental health benefits. These are valuable places; places where we can all move, breathe, run and play. We need to champion and support these precious spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy forever. Because once lost, they are lost forever."

The average amount of green space per person in Great Britain is just over 35 square metres, less than half the size of a six-yard box on a football pitch; however, only 5.7% of the park and green space provision in Great Britain is legally protected with Fields in Trust. It is up to all of us to act to stem the decline and disappearance of our nation's cherished parks and green spaces. Fields in Trust are calling for the current level of park and green space provision to be maintained and encouraging communities to fight for those green spaces vulnerable to loss or development.

Set out in three sections, "Watch This Space" encourages communities to love their local park and celebrate what it has to offer. Section two recommends an overview of how local parks are being managed for the long-term. Finally, the third section is an easy-to-use guide to the planning system should you encounter an imminent threat of development on your local park or green space. With the publication of "Watch This Space", Fields in Trust is highlighting the urgent need to secure and maintain those parks and green spaces we currently have. The charity wants local government and landowners



Envirovent welcomes research showing link between indoor air pollution and respiratory problems in children

Harrogate-based EnviroVent, one of the UK's leading ventilation specialists, has welcomed the recent report by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and the Royal College of Physicians which demonstrates that respiratory problems among children may be exacerbated by indoor air pollution in homes, schools and nurseries.

The report, based on a RCPCH commissioned systematic review of 221 studies, presents evidence linking indoor air pollution to a range of childhood health problems including asthma, wheezing, conjunctivitis, dermatitis, and eczema. Sources of indoor air pollution include smoking, damp, the burning of fossil fuels and wood, dust, chemicals from building materials and furnishings, aerosol sprays, and cleaning products.

The authors warn that indoor air quality tends to be poorer in low quality housing where ventilation may be inadequate or insufficient.

Rebecca McLean, Marketing and Product Director at EnviroVent, said: "We acknowledge the findings of this report and what this means in terms of how poor indoor air quality affects young people. We have seen many times how an effective ventilation system can transform the air quality in a home and can have significant health benefits for its occupants. Now this learning needs to be taken forward, so social housing providers, homeowners, schools and nurseries are more aware and can take effective action."

The report recommends that local authorities should have the power to require improvements where air quality fails to meet minimum standards in local authority schools and houses. This should be extended, according to the authors, beyond damp and mould (where powers already exist) to include other pollutants.

The report recommends:

- Legally binding performance standards for indoor air quality to include ventilation rates, maximum concentration levels for specific pollutants, labelling of materials, and testing of appliances
- Air quality tests when local authority construction is complete and before the building is signed off
- Compliance tests after construction stages and assessment of buildings once occupied – this may require ring-fenced resources for local authorities to take enforcement action.

The report recommends that local authorities should follow the NICE guidelines for 'Indoor air quality at home'. It warns "exposure to indoor air pollution from cookers, damp, cleaning products and fires can irritate the lungs and exacerbate asthma symptoms." It encourages people to ensure rooms are well ventilated, especially when cooking, drying clothes inside, or using sprays, solvents, and paints.

Professor Jonathan Grigg, Paediatric Respiratory Consultant from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) said: "We're finally paying attention to the quality of our outdoor air and this is long overdue. It's harder to get population level data on the quality of indoor air but the evidence in this report paints a worrying picture. Children in the UK spend most of their time indoors, with just 68 minutes spent outside on an average day. Too many of our

homes and schools are damp and poorly ventilated – this is adversely affecting the health of children." The report says local authorities should provide free indoor air testing for residents. It recommends a national fund to support improvements for low income residents who report issues with ventilation and air quality.

Professor Stephen Holgate, Special Advisor for the Royal College of Physicians, said: "Poorer households have fewer choices about where to live and where to go to school. More than three million families live in poor quality housing in the UK. Most will not have enough money to make improvements and have no option but to make do with damp, under-ventilated environments. We need to offer support at local authority level – likewise with schools. If we ask our children to spend their childhood days in unhealthy spaces, then we're storing up problems for future health."

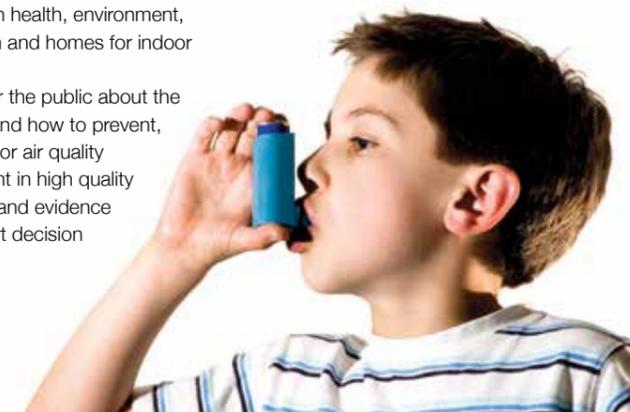
The report 'The Inside Story: Health effects of indoor air quality on children and young people' makes further recommendations:

- A cross-governmental committee to co-ordinate working in health, environment, education and homes for indoor air quality
- Advice for the public about the risks of, and how to prevent, poor indoor air quality
- Investment in high quality research and evidence to support decision making

The Inside Story: Health effects of indoor air quality on children and young people is jointly published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). It is funded by Allergy UK, Airtopia, Asthma UK, BEAMA, British Heart Foundation, British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology, Dyson, and the Greater London Authority.

EnviroVent offers a range of Positive Input Ventilation (PIV), Mechanical Extract Ventilation (MEV) and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) solutions to the new build and refurbishment sectors. Its award-winning products are UK manufactured and can be installed by its own dedicated team of nationwide installation engineers, who also provide after-sales support. The company also offers Indoor Air Quality testing.

To find out more about EnviroVent's ventilation products and services call on **0345 27 27 810**, email enquiries@envirovent.com or visit <http://www.envirovent.com/>



'Go Ultra Low' status achieved as 2025 all-electric car target set by Nottingham-based McCann

Nottingham-based civil and electrical engineering firm McCann has committed to making its entire fleet of company cars all-electric by the year 2025 - after the business recently achieved 'Go Ultra Low' status.

McCann has already invested heavily in the future of its fleet of company cars over the previous 12 months - making 53% of its vehicles either electric hybrid or fully electric. Spearheading the fully electric car route are Carl Lancaster - Operations Director and Simon Gardiner - Director (Peter James Homes) who have both recently taken possession of the fully electric, Audi e-tron.

Six 7.2kw electric charging points have also been installed at McCann's Nottingham head office at a cost of £50,000, with further investment in the next generation of 22kw charger units planned over the coming years to handle the growing fleet of electric hybrid and all-electric cars.

The company has now been

recognised for its efforts by achieving 'Go Ultra Low' status and set itself the target of using plug-in hybrid electric (PHEV) or all-electric vehicles by 2021, and then going all-electric across its fleet of company cars by the year 2025, significantly reducing its impact on the environment.

"Everyone now has a responsibility to help tackle climate change where possible, and we're passionate about making our own commitment by investing in the future of transportation for the business and factoring this into both our short and long-term business plan," says company MD, John McCann.

One of McCann's current diesel cars typically emits between 140-180 Co2 g/km, whereas the

Audi e-tron 55 Quattro, earmarked as the 'car of the future' for the business, emits 0 Co2 g/km emissions and will still cover a range of 245 miles from a single, full charge. A transition period is now in place for all company directors and management to move to all-electric vehicles by the year 2025.

"Not only does changing to all-electric cars reduce our environmental impact, it also brings with it cost-saving benefits," adds John.

"Enough diesel to cover a 245 mile range would typically cost £44.60, whereas a fully charged electric car covering the same distance would cost the business £14.86,"

McCann is not only setting

targets in relation to its fleet of company cars - all of the businesses HGVs and vans are now fully compliant with the latest Euro 6 emission regulations and will continue to adapt to the latest guidelines as technology evolves.

Paul King, McCann's Fleet Manager, added, "The technology to make our company vans and HGVs run on electric is still a work-in-progress but as soon as this becomes widely available to the industry, we will definitely look at it as an option going forward.

The hope is that one day our sector can be fully electric and eradicate the need for fossil fuels."

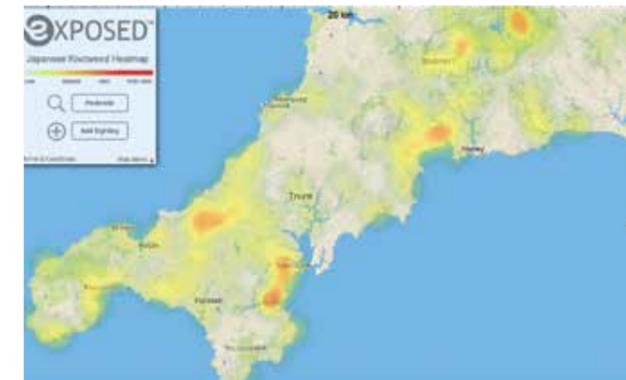
For more information about McCann, visit:

www.mccann-ltd.co.uk.



Mapping the Japanese knotweed problem

Japanese knotweed is the problem that just keeps on growing. Described by the Environment Agency as "indisputably the UK's most aggressive, destructive and invasive plant", it's now thought to affect 4- 5% of homes in the UK and the most conservative estimates put the cost of treatment at around £166 million each year.



As people become more informed about the risks associated with knotweed and its impact on property values, they are becoming bolder in pursuing encroachment cases through the courts. The growing number of successful legal cases in recent years has sounded the alarm for those who fail to act to prevent the plant from spreading. They may find they are required to not only pay for treatment and legal expenses, but also to compensate the victim of encroachment for any diminution in the value of their home.

Local councils are at the coal face of the battle and can find themselves on both sides of the fence: simultaneously at risk of legal action as a landowner if knotweed on public land is left untreated, while also using Community Protection Notices and ASBO legislation to aid homeowners who are themselves victims of encroachment and who may find themselves unable to sell their property as a result.

The vast majority of homeowners see their local council as being the first port of call in a row over Japanese

knotweed encroachment. A survey carried out in 2019 by Environet UK and YouGov found that 42% of homeowners would contact their local council in the first instance if knotweed was at risk of encroaching onto their property.

This faith in the ability of local councils to help deal with the problem could be a result of a Bristol City Council's successful use of ASBO legislation in December 2018 to prosecute a landowner who allowed Japanese knotweed to encroach into the gardens of seven neighbouring homes, following the issue of a CPN.

Whilst this blunt instrument should force action, it does not provide the affected homeowner any compensation for their losses, where a claim in civil nuisance would.

Awareness among the general public is growing, with 78% of UK adults now aware of the plant according to the latest research. Infestations are considerably easier and cheaper to treat if they are discovered early before they have a chance to take hold and spread, so vigilance by

local residents is vital. A recent report by the Environmental Audit Committee called for a "citizen's army of volunteers" to spot and stop invasive species before they become established, highlighting how people power can be harnessed to assist in the fight against Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).

Local authorities keen to get on top of the problem have an opportunity to capitalise on this growing awareness and use it to help them build a local picture of the Japanese knotweed landscape using a new online heatmap, 'Exposed', that has been developed by experts Environet UK. Available for free to councils to host on their websites, the interactive tool could be of considerable benefit in the fight against knotweed, tracking infestations in the local area and encouraging the engagement of the local community in spotting and reporting new sightings.

Launched in early 2019 and already populated with thousands of infestations across the UK, Exposed is designed to build a local and national picture of the Japanese knotweed problem, with hotspots clearly marked in yellow and red. Users can enter their postcode to discover the number of known incidences of knotweed within a 4km radius of that location.

In addition to checking for sightings near where they live, the general public is encouraged to help populate the heatmap using the 'Add Sighting' feature and attaching a photograph of the plant so it can be verified.

As well as understanding the extent of the problem in their

borough and creating a sense of collective responsibility, Exposed will also assist councils in their efforts to protect council-owned property and land that may be affected by Japanese knotweed, enabling them to act earlier to treat it before it becomes well established and more challenging to tackle.

Nic Seal said, "Local Authorities have a huge role to play in the fight against invasive plants, particularly Japanese knotweed which can cause significant damage to property and its value if left untreated.

"By adding Exposed to their armory, they can build awareness of Japanese knotweed in their local area and encourage people to be proactive in spotting and stopping the spread of the plant, potentially savings hundreds of thousands of pounds every year."

Exposed is available free of charge to Local Authorities, including Borough and County Councils and there is no obligation to use Environet UK for treatment services. Interested parties should contact Environet UK for an iframe code by calling **01932 868 700** or emailing nic.seal@environetuk.com



LOCAL TRANSPORT

Glasgow City Council's overall ambition to become the UK's first city to become fully carbon neutral has seen them purchase five fully electric, zero emission, low floor small buses to Community Transport Glasgow (CTG) as part of a strategy to move to a fully electric fleet. The Orion E fully electric buses have been supplied by Mellor.

CTG is a charity committed to providing high quality, accessible, door-to-door transport to vulnerable individuals and groups throughout the city, transporting 75,000 passengers each year.

The Mellor Orion E was first launched in 2017, with an

enhanced model introduced last year. It is the world's first completely electric completely low floor small bus designed to operate effectively in both the commercial bus market and with parallel services, such as welfare and dial-a-ride demand responsive services.

Graham Dunn for Community Transport Glasgow, explained to GPSJ: "We decided two years ago that the time had come to take the plunge and start integrating electric vehicles into our fleet with a view to being all electric by the end of 2020. At the time our fleet was made of old diesel minibuses, some with more than 300,000 miles on the clock and with the advent of the Glasgow low

emission zone, we needed to take action. We sought funding which was provided from Scottish Power Energy Network (SPEN) through the Green Economy Fund to initiate the change. This is already transforming our organisation and the services we provide to our passengers.

"Our first Orion E entered service last December and we will have all five delivered by the end of February. It is great to see these exciting new buses which operate on the latest electric technology as part of our fleet. They will make a massive contribution to improving air quality in the city as well as contributing to Glasgow's ambition to be carbon neutral ahead of 2030."

Left to right: Gerry Irvine of Community Transport Glasgow, Stephen Haywood, National Sales Manager for Mellor with Graham Dunn, Fleet Manager for Community Transport Glasgow.



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