

APPENDIX 1

Cheshire East Council: external review of school catering service

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not-for-profit unincorporated association working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority frontline services, hosting a network for frontline service providers in areas including school meals. Through Performance Networks, APSE operates the largest public sector benchmarking facility with over 200 local authority members covering 16 service areas and data for the past 22 years. Clients benefit from the mass of performance data contained within the Performance Networks benchmarking database. This is used in almost all consultancy projects as it provides an instant benchmark to see value for money and where an authority can improve.

Consultancy Proposal Re: Service Diagnostic and Future Options Appraisal.

The scope and purpose of this external review:

- That the council provides catering services to fee-paying customers but predominantly schools. The service that is of primary focus is that of catering **services for schools** which has been experiencing increasing pressures, recently exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and despite some new clients, still resulted in a nett loss of customers in recent years.
- This has raised the strategic question, '**will the service be sustainable in the future and if not, what options need to be considered in terms of different /alternative delivery models?**' and you are seeking support to answer this question.
- Therefore, you are keen for the service to have a **full diagnostic service review covering performance, structure, potential efficiency savings, the competition, existing service offering including structured feedback from stakeholders**
- As part of this process, you require external input to provide a constructive challenge and to establish how well the **service performs through comparison with other local authorities and the commercial sector.**
- Based upon the above, to consider the position of the current delivery model compared to **alternative models** which may include formalised commissioning with other local authorities, use of other commercial organisations as delivery partners or full delivery external to the local authority.
- Overall, to support, via evidence, the council's decision-making processes to decide upon a delivery model that **is fit for purpose going forward and has flexibility** to respond to the changing education landscape particularly the increasing academisation of schools and the trading of specialist services such as school meals.



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Agreement has been reached that this review will involve 14 days of dedicated time to complete*

Our proposed solution

APSE Solutions uses a tried and tested approach to headline service review designed to provide an accurate picture of performance at minimum cost to APSE member authorities. Our diagnostic approach to service review can be carried out with as little as nine days consultancy input and will clearly identify areas where a more in-depth approach will generate service improvement or cost reduction. The diagnostic makes use of benchmarking data collected through APSE Performance Networks to indicate areas of poor performance and an on-site workshop to establish potential causes and solutions. Following lean principles and using appropriate analytical tools the team will then provide an overview of the potential for process changes to drive improvement as part of a diagnostic report.

Typically, the review will focus on:

- Financial performance,
- The competitive strength of the service,
- Performance against outcome requirements for the service,
- Service productivity and process efficiency,
- Management and culture,
- The latent potential for external income generation,
- Contribution to corporate objectives, e.g., external income generating opportunities, social & child health and wellbeing objectives.

We will review requirements and benefits throughout the project to focus on activities that offer the greatest value to the reviews' findings and outcomes, while working within the total number of days currently identified. As always, we will only charge for days actually used.

Reporting mechanisms back to the council

Following the collation of the findings based upon the review, a draft report will be issued to council leads to allow for any points of clarification or amendments to the report content.

* Once the report has been finalised, further discussions can take place to consider the report findings and recommendations and draw upon the expertise within APSE in considering next steps. This may involve further commissioned work as required to explore specific themes in order to reach a position that a sustainable delivery model is agreed by all stakeholders including elected members.

APSE leads for this commissioned review with Cheshire East Council

Ben Parsons: as Senior Consultant, will oversee the day-to-day delivery of the project and be part of the project team, working in partnership with the other consultants. Ben will play an important role, providing direction and ensuring full access to the support APSE can provide. In the unlikely event of any issues occurring between the client and APSE he will be able to swiftly intervene and trouble shoot any issues. Since joining the APSE team he has formed strong bonds with the other Consultants and his unique experience greatly contributes to the team. Ben has worked on a number of projects, either as part of team of consultants, or on a sole basis. These include providing an impartial critical friend role to Trade Unions, diagnostic service reviews of waste management and building cleaning, and benchmarking reviews. He joined APSE from his previous role as Waste Collections Manager with a Local Authority.

Tim Blowers: brings with him a particularly unique set of mass catering experience particularly appropriate to educational catering, where palatable, nutritional, low cost, fast service food are priorities. His experience includes military, private sector commercial, local authority direct delivery including the use of Central Production Units. All of which will undoubtedly be of assistance in the delivery of your project.

Timescales

It is anticipated that following consideration of this review specification by senior staff within the council and elected members, that the review would formally commence in July/August 2022 in terms of data collection and analysis following by stakeholder events as from September 2022.

Proposed breakdown of the review specification and allocation of time

The table below sets out in greater detail how the review will be conducted with suggested time allocations.

Details of methodology

Stage 1	Input from authority	Input from Solutions	Output
Project Initiation 1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of stakeholders and arrangement of participation. • The provision of all information requested by the consultancy team. • Clarity on the organisation chart for management, Kitchens and relief • Craft skills & Learning organisation • Number of schools and NOR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams meeting invite / link. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree final terms of reference, timescales, and protocol for conducting review. • Agree governance and reporting protocols. • Clarify required key objectives. • Obtain an understanding of any key sensitivities associated with project activities (political/union) • Agree attendees and arrangements for Workshop(s)
Data comparison 2 days per service PN member, with data submission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover • Service or business plan • Customer satisfaction measures – does the service know what the school clients want? Does the service communicate how they match performance with promises to their clients on a regular basis. Do the Operations managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis against family group, all service and bespoke group where appropriate. Assess comparative performance and direction of travel on cost and service delivery. • Unit cost data • Net cost data – i.e. taking account of external income • Sickness absence • Productivity measures • Customer satisfaction measures 	Indication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service cost and how it compares with relevant comparators • Potential for improvement in value for money • Performance against requirements • Potential for increasing external income • Potential for improvements in productivity

	<p>proactively visit clients and monitor service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take a view against commercial contractors we would need: Pricing of SLA's, Service wide annual profit and loss/ monitoring report ending March 21 and March 22, annual meals numbers (Primary); income (Secondary) for both years too; how the PPNs were applied; number of schools and type, Repairs and maintenance responsibility, dinner money collection/pre-ordering innovation; menus, sustainability of supply, reputation, addressing inclusion, flexing the menu, food parcels, Fit and Fed/HAF Information on the local competition – who, how many schools with each competitor etc How the service grows uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other relevant indicators For non PN member – prepare data collection template and provide remote support as needed to complete 	
<p>Operational Research / Accompanied site visits</p> <p>2 days.</p>	<p>Arrange observations of a diverse range of typical tasks at a diverse range of sites</p>	<p>Working observations and dialogue with frontline staff and stakeholders to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General working practices & localised characteristics. Identification of any particular factors 	<p>Clear understanding of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice of the customer Methodologies Processes Skills / training Service Standards Issues at a practical level

		<p>that are contributing to productivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the practical application of efficiency proposals. • Head Teacher / customer experience & perception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational staff feedback • Applicability of operational efficiencies • Management capacity • Structural suitability • Hidden savings
<p>Operational Research: School leaders forum</p> <p>1 day</p>	<p>Virtual /face to face meetings with school leaders to ascertain current/future thinking based upon experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with collective group of representative school leaders/ business managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on experiences over recent years • Potential models of delivery going forward.
<p>One day service workshop</p> <p>2 days (2 Consultants for 1 day)</p>	<p>Attendance of operational managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant tools/discussions to explore key aspects of the service: • PESTLE – gauge understanding of external factors • SWOT – explore internal factors, verify opportunities and strengths against data analysis • Resources analysis including people, plant etc. • Kano, CTQ tree or similar to explore extent of customer focus • SIPOC – headline processes • Organisational culture analysis – key question re capacity to innovate, commercialise etc. • Impact of organisational objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of data analysis • Indication of strengths and weaknesses • Indication of improvement opportunities and capacity to pursue them. • Understanding of culture and how it impacts on appetite and capacity for improvement • Outline understanding of wider value of service, i.e. local economic, social and environmental well being
<p>Corporate Objectives and any follow up queries interviews.</p>	<p>Telephone/email availability might include clarification with senior</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Telephone interviews • Exceptionally on-site if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of relevant corporate objectives for consideration regarding structure

1 day	managers and/or elected members		and recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity over any anomalies between data and workshop learning • Feeling for leadership strengths and weaknesses.
Diagnostic report. 5 Days		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of cost and performance • Assessment of capacity and culture • Identification of opportunities • Options & risk matrix regarding operational structure and any potential delivery issues. • Recommendations as to what needs to be done to take opportunities i.e., further work on systems, processes, culture. Ongoing assistance – • interim manager, consultancy support re specific skills and knowledge. Development of future delivery options • Options appraisal • Business cases for commercialisation • Mentoring and coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority clear about current state performance • Authority aware of opportunities for improvement • Authority aware of areas of potential efficiency & ‘invest to save’ opportunities. • Authority aware of options regarding potential restructure. • Authority aware of next steps in relation to each opportunity • Authority aware of further support that can be provided
Stage 1 Total Days: 14			

The fee proposal

The diagnostic review will require 14 days of consultancy input (assuming PN Membership and data input) with an option of a phase 2 (5 days suggested). These will be charged at an APSE member authority rate of £630 per day, plus expenses at cost and VAT. Therefore, based on 14 days, the total fee would be £8,820 plus expenses, at cost and VAT.

Stage 2 : to be decided on completion of stage 1 (as yet, not commissioned)			
<p>Report presentation & Workshop with the Services Management / Senior Management to develop service future plan</p> <p>2 Days. (2 Consultants for 1 day)</p>	<p>Attendance of operational / senior managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant tools/discussions to explore key aspects of the service: • PESTLE – gauge understanding of external factors • SWOT – explore internal factors, verify opportunities and strengths against data analysis • Resources analysis including people, plant etc. • Kano, CTQ tree or similar to explore extent of customer focus • SIPOC – headline processes • Organisational culture analysis – key question re capacity to innovate, commercialise etc. • Impact of organisational objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of how the department(s) function, Management capacity, skills, remit. • Department / client relationships. • Recommended structure options.
<p>Corporate Objectives and any follow up queries interviews.</p> <p>1 day</p>	<p>Telephone/email availability might include clarification with senior managers and/or elected members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Telephone interviews • Exceptionally on-site if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of relevant corporate objects for consideration regarding structure and recommendations. • Clarity over any anomalies between data and workshop learning • Feeling for leadership strengths and weaknesses.

<p>Diagnostic report amendment to include an output service future recommendation.</p> <p>2 Days</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of cost and performance • Assessment of capacity and culture • Identification of opportunities • Options & risk matrix regarding operational structure and any potential delivery issues. • Recommendations as to what needs to be done to take opportunities i.e. further work on systems, processes, culture. Ongoing assistance – interim manager, consultancy support re specific skills and knowledge. • Development of future delivery options. • Identification of the most effective service delivery solutions / models going forward. • Business cases for commercialisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority clear about current state performance • Authority aware of opportunities for improvement • Authority aware of areas of potential efficiency & ‘invest to save’ opportunities. • Authority aware of options regarding potential restructure. • Authority aware of next steps in relation to each opportunity • Authority aware of further support that can be provided
<p>Stage 2 Total Days: 5.</p>			
<p>Additional Support as required.</p>	<p>Participation in initial follow –up call.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of any further additional support required.

Additional information

In the interest of keeping proposals manageable we do not automatically provide copies of the following but can do so if required:

- Insurance documents
- Corporate policy documents
- Details of previous experience
- Case studies
- References
- Information about services provided by APSE Solutions and other APSE services
- Any other information you might need

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Any data provided to APSE that is necessary to complete a consultancy project will be held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Where you have collected this data, you warrant that you have done so in compliance with the Regulations, including obtaining any necessary consents to its use by APSE in the course of the provision of consultancy support.

Head of Terms APSE Solutions

Please note that a full copy of the consultancy terms and conditions is available upon request. Below are highlighted some of the salient points.

Calculation and payment of fees and expenses

Fees will be charged on the basis set out in the written proposal or letter of engagement of the association.

Full payment must be received by APSE within 30 days of the date on which the invoice was raised.

If payment is not received within this agreed period, APSE shall be entitled to suspend all work for the client or to terminate the relevant contract and any other contracts with the client without prejudice to any other rights and without liability to the association.

Expenses and office services for consultancy

Unless otherwise agreed, the client shall reimburse the association in respect of all out-of-pocket expenses which may be incurred in connection with the assignment or engagement.

When work is carried out on the client's premises, the client will, at the client's expense, provide appropriate facilities.

Confidentiality

Confidential information concerning the client's business will not be disclosed by either the association or persons performing services on behalf of the association, to third parties, without the client's prior written consent.

Proprietary rights and protection

All intellectual property rights including copyright which are capable of existing in any documents, computer software or information or (without limit) other materials created or provided pursuant to this contract by the association shall be and remain the association's property. The client undertakes to keep all materials, documents and information provided to it by the association confidential to itself and its employees.

General liabilities

All reports, provided by the association to the client are provided for the sole use of the client.

Other than liability in respect of death or personal injury arising from negligence the association will accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to clients or their property however caused. The maximum liability of the association under these terms and conditions shall, save in respect of death or personal injury arising from the negligence of the association, be limited to the fee paid to the association. Under no circumstances shall the association be liable for any economic or consequential loss or loss of profits.

Status of consultant

Subject to any statute that may apply, the consultant shall be an independent contractor and not the employee of the client. In such capacity, the consultant shall bear exclusive responsibility for the payment of his or her national insurance contributions as a self-employed person and for the discharge of any income tax and vat liability arising out of remuneration for the work performed by him or her under this agreement. The consultant shall not be subject to directions from the client as to the manner in which he or she shall perform his or her work.