



Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Environment Board

Wednesday 19th October 2022, 10.00 – 12.30

MS Teams

NOTES

		ACTION OWNER
1.	Welcome and Introductions Steve Read welcomed our guest speaker, Sally Randall, from Defra.	
2.	Defra Ministerial team and policy priorities under the new government Sally Randall, Director of Environmental Quality, Defra <u>New Ministerial Team</u> Complete new experience team brought in during September: Secretary of State – The Rt Hon Ranil Jayawardena MP Food – Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP Environment - Trudy Harrison MP Growth and Rural Affairs - Scott Mann MP International Environment – Rt Hon Lord Benyon It has been a relatively slow start for the new set of ministers. They have been through a fundamental set of briefings to be brought up to speed. Two fiscal events have happened during this time. <u>Ministerial priorities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water quality and supply/scarcity is high priority• Food and food security – looking at impacts• Economic growth but not at the expense of the environment. <u>Recent Press coverage</u>	

- A lot of things were put out in public domain before summer and biggest being the Consultation on the set of targets on the Environment Act. Over 180k responses were received which are now being assessed, working through framework and ensuring Ministers understand and own the targets.
- Refresh of 25 Year Plan for the Environment – How targets are met and other interim targets.
- Retained EU law – Defra’s laws are 80% EU based, Ensuring rule book is suitable for UK without weakening environmental protections.
- Major reforms in Waste for 2022-2025
- Skidmore review of net zero is about the “how” not the “what”
- Environment land management – won’t be scrapped, new ministers looking at the package schemes, will link to environmental targets.
- Planning and investment zones – concern on what it means for protected sites. Clear that those protections won’t be downgraded.

Discussion/messages to take away:

Possible spending cuts – no news yet, there has been no specific request for departmental spending cuts.

LNRS – Guidance on its way. Expecting to publish regulation and statutory guidance soon.

Inheritance tax – Sam K noted that the way this tax operates with respect to environmental schemes is a big disincentive to small farmers to investing in nature. Sally to take this away and respond in due course.

Glover Review – slow pace of gearing up with new ministers is frustrating. Please give early indication of direction of travel.

Reviews of assessment is about “how” and not “what” – pushing back on commitment date equals weakening the commitment in the eye of sceptics. Going net zero is a big financial commitment and pushing back undermines the very thing we are trying to achieve.

Waste - Strategy in 2018, consultation 18 months ago. Sector is lined up to deliver but there’s a massive pause. It won’t help if timescales put forward are inflexible as resources will be impacted. Sally responded to acknowledge that Defra need to improve timings to ensure they are sensible.

Solar – Carolyn McKenzie, Surrey, commented on the fact that the shift to not being able to have solar on Grade 3 land and above doesn’t make sense. Setting up solar farms on Grade 3 agricultural land is beginning to enable decarbonisation for the farming community. Need guidance from government including on the ELMs side.

Levelling up Bill – Rachael Joy informed the biggest environment risk is around water quality. In Herefordshire, Welsh Water are not being captured by the Levelling up Bill, according to the EA. Are Welsh Water in scope in relation to Herefordshire activities? Sally put them in touch with the water team.

Business Planning, Net zero and carbon negative, climate change adaptation – Not enough coming out of government on how we pull all planning together and work on resilience. Need to link all 3 together.

Financial impacts – the response to severe weather, flooding incidents, have a really big budget impact which LAs are not equipped for. It is incredibly important to bring in long term resilience first. Defra are very conscious of the need to join up CC adaptation with mitigation. Will take back to Ministers.

BNG – Adam Wallace, NE, commented on that fact that inheritance tax is an issue known to Defra and in relation to BNG and has been lodged with Treasury. Sally to give a nudge.

Nutrient Neutrality – NE continue to work with partners on solutions and shall act as back stop for LAs and developers where there aren't home grown solutions available, and we will continue to work on that. Need for input in terms of clarity on change of direction.

Retained EU Law – extension mechanism – The Environment Bill proposes that ministers will have the ability to change through secondary rather than primary legislation. Defra are expecting to do a case by case within the legislation. Details are not clear but it's whether we feel it's acceptable. Most secondary legislation does take through parliamentary process.

All LAs are doing same thing around resilience, LNRS, food security, energy efficiency etc. We need a National Land Strategy that we identify those most appropriate and identify those areas for best managed for different purposes (nature, energy, etc.). Some steer from top on most effective use of land would be most helpful to work geographically and regionally.

Defra – summary of status on different legislation. Sally informed that work progressing on EIP is intended to be that gathering point. Hannah informed that Defra has previously done a mapping of legislation and timeline, it would be very helpful to have this updated. One route might be through the 25YEP team and Ola Ladapo confirmed that this is something they do and is in hand. Defra to keep us updated as much as possible.

	<p>ACTION: Defra to provide a central mapping of legislation and timeline to keep ADEPT Environment Board members as up to date as possible.</p> <p>ACTION: David Dale to pull together main points to send to Sally Randall, Defra, for response.</p>	<p>SR/OL</p> <p>DD</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Local Net Zero Forum update and Net Zero Review Hannah Bartram and David Dale</p> <p>The 2nd meeting took place 6 Oct. Nigel Riglar (S Glos) is the ADEPT rep. Other local government bodies represented include the LGA, London Councils, Core Cities, APSE, UK100, R9, M10, Solace, CCN and DCN. Central government departments attending included Defra, Treasury, DCMS, DLUHC, DfT, Cabinet Office with BEIS chairing.</p> <p>There was a discussion about communications – agreed that the organisational names represented on the Forum would be published along with the ToR. BEIS should also produce a short note following each meeting for organisations to use to cascade information about the work of the Forum.</p> <p>It was agreed the LGA will co-chair the Forum going forward.</p> <p>Two of the three task and finish groups reported back: Roles & Responsibilities and Data Metrics & Reporting. Finance to follow. Carolyn McKenzie (Surrey) attended the R&R group and Chitra Nadarajah (Hants). the R&R group, it was agreed it would be useful to model a place-based approach to net zero. A new group will be set up to deliver this action. Wrt the data group, there were two suggestions a) to support LAs to report on their estate emissions and b) to better use national datasets to support LAs reporting of their area emissions.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Forum is in early Dec.</p> <p>David Dale commented that the group will work with government to make the Net Zero Forum as successful as possible. However, it is secretive in the way it operates and so it won't be possible to share as much as would like.</p> <p>Net Zero Review was announced late sept, commissioned by BEIS Secretary of State. It's all about the "How" and not the "What", looking at the best way forward economically.</p> <p>ACTION: All to refer to the overarching questions on the Net Zero Review</p>	

	<p>and pass thoughts to David Dale to assist him with drafting a short, written response from ADEPT.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>County Deals – climate and environment asks David Dale</p> <p>Since the last quarterly ADEPT Environment Board meeting only 2 deals (York & North Yorks and Derby/Cerby/Nottingham/Notts) have been agreed from a total of 8 or 9. Other counties are in the pipeline.</p> <p>Council should be asking for long-term pool funding within their deals.</p> <p>Liz Small clarified that the York & North Yorks deal is yet to go to public consultation. The premise of its content is carbon negative and devolution asks are around decarbonisation and moving toward future economy. The issue around land use was discussed with Sally Randall. Natural Capital ask – all are publicised, but they are broad with a lot of detail behind. North Yorks are working with colleagues behind tactical positioning which covers Defra, DLUHC and BEIS. They have a positional paper. They are a combined authority and due to have mayoral elections in 2024 and so need to start gearing up in Nov next year. Negotiations in terms of what money is coming in early.</p> <p>Steve Palfrey informed that Suffolk is one of 9 areas identified for detailed discussion and they got close to signing/agreeing a deal prior to Boris Johnson’s departure. Experience so far is that the conversation started on what is important locally, then evolved through the process and now is light on detail.</p> <p>Peter Moore informed that Reading are not as far down the track as Suffolk and is looking at less ambitious model of integration.</p> <p>Carolyn McKenzie informed that Surrey started with a lead authority approach but still need to produce an evidence base, sort a plan and obtain funding and gather partners behind that plan. Focus would be around energy, natural capital and nature recovery.</p> <p>Claire Brailsford informed that Derbyshire’s experience reflects that of North Yorks and Suffolk. They have put forward good and strong proposals but then got caught up with short timelines to get them in. It is very light, but work is starting to develop and move forward but will have to go through consultation.</p> <p>ACTION: David Dale to organise a further bespoke session on County Deals</p>	<p>DD</p>

	with relevant parties	
5.	<p>Updates from partners and local authorities</p> <p>Natural England – Adam Wallace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of diversity in the environment sector – published beg Oct. Joint route map launched to boost ethnic diversity in the environment sector (wcl.org.uk) Air and water quality advice now available to all farmers in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). May be of general use or to focus advice to CC farm estates where they exist. The People and Nature Survey for England: Year 2 Annual Report – Data and publications (April 2021 - March 2022) (Official Statistics) main findings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) This is the new name for the Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment survey (MENE). It has evolved over time but this is the latest annual summary. Further details: https://people-and-nature-survey-defra.hub.arcgis.com/ Launch of a APPG 10-point plan for Climate and Nature – launched 12th Oct 2023. https://environment.inparliament.uk/sites/environment.inparliament.uk/files/2022-10/appg_report_10_points_vis_5.pdf Roundtable with CExecs and EA COO looking at nature recovery and placing it in Chief Execs and how it felt. Regional leave coherence and how we address it. Delivery, capacity, capability, resilience and skills. ACTION: Adam to share feedback from this roundtable with the Board. Investments in green finance – experience and knowledge around that and what more can NE do in that space. <p>Good NE news stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vast former industrial sites set to be one of UK’s largest urban nature reserves - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Penwith Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest; Cornwall’s western-most landscape receives further accolade of SSSI designation - Natural England (blog.gov.uk) District Level Licensing (DLL) for great crested newts launched in 2019, now has committed income approaching £30m and created the 2000th pond in August. 	AW

Sam Kennedy: Essex have put in an Investment Zone ask. Concerned about reverting to economic growth models from last century. Worried about BNG going in the bin. We are interested in these things but no specifics to it. Application covers four big areas, centred around corridors rather than specific sites.

From the roundtable discussion with the CExecs, LAs have a public health duty and it would be good to have more vocal input to fight for preserving green space.

Steve Palfrey: Suffolk have submitted an investment proposal with 12 sites in it. All areas already with planning permission or already in local plans so probably less contentious than some. Working around it from the Leader is that we are not looking to move away from environmental protection. We can have growth and environment in one. Two sites are earmarked for development in local plans. It's not about growth in expense of environment.

Liz Small: North Yorks have put in 11 sites, and all had outlined planning permission. They were scored on deliverability linked to planning. Tried to avoid sites with known environmental issues (i.e. protected sites). Went for commercial sites rather than housing sites.

<https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=2002>

Environment Agency - Rob Westcott (in Jennie's absence)

- In response to Government's Project Speed agenda the Environment Agency is bolstering its local capacity to engage with the expected increase in infrastructure projects requiring our involvement. Recruitment is ongoing, covering a range of skills. Consequently EA are reviewing how to support delivery of an uncertain pipeline of development, deploying resources more flexibly and responsively to address peaks and development 'hotspots'.
- Supporting Defra to identify risks and opportunities associated with delivering the government's Growth Plan, particularly around Investment Zones, aiming to ensure environmental protection and where possible achieving improved environmental outcomes.
- Local single points of contact for area teams have been established to support NE and Responsible Authorities in drawing together evidence to support production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- Area teams have been issued with climate change adaptation advice to use to inform their interactions with LPAs. This will help improve consistency of advice and offer greater certainty around advising on strategic policy. EA now exploring the extent to which this advice may be shared directly with interested authorities, the material was originally developed for an internal audience. This approach might be sense checked with a few members in due course.

	<p>Defra – Ola Ladapo Sally Randall had covered the key issues earlier</p>	
6.	<p>Board business and Working Group updates:</p> <p><u>Energy & Clean Growth</u> – Carolyn McKenzie Meeting cancelled due to Queen’s funeral. Next meeting scheduled for Monday 31st October.</p> <p>Key areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data for carbon reporting --- what is needed, agreed standards, how are we reporting • Delivery, funding and supply chain issues Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund • Delivery, funding and supply chain issues Sustainable Warmth Programme and other housing retrofit programmes • Developing area-based Energy Plans – linking with Energy Systems Catapult <p><u>Flood and Water Management</u> – Alys Bishop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment: continues to be a challenge for most Lead Local Flood Authorities, with most reporting <100% capacity and difficulties in recruitment (new appointments and staff turnover). • Gov position on Schedule 3: Proposed consultation in the autumn. However, creating difficulties for planning internally around budgets/financial plans now, and forecasts for pressures and burdens. Need to ensure lead-in time to any legislative and statutory changes are fully considered and planned to minimise disruption to current service delivery. Issues with current lack of resources must mean DEFRA/ministers fully consider the burdens and wider impacts on local authority services as part of this consultation. Availability of resources between authorities needs consideration, if in response to an announcement 152 local authorities look to fill gaps in current resource/skills at same time creating a bottle neck for staffing in the discipline. • Government’s request to local authorities to speed delivery up on capital programme. In response, F&WMG have submitted options for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reducing bureaucracy and need to evidence benefits for smaller schemes to speed up approval and spend more on the measures not the assessment. ○ Reduce threshold for repeat flooding communities, and ensure this 	

	<p>is proportionally available to rural as well as urban communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addressing current lack of capacity to deliver more, either within LAs to manage projects or consultants/contractors to deliver them. To improve pace of delivery, Government need to understand the difference in the makeup of Local Authority delivery teams (most LLFAs will not have a project manager for scheme delivery) compared to EA led schemes, and the complexities in delivery of non-main river projects, and audit the necessary skills needed. <p>The impact of a service change such as the implementation of schedule 3 (point 2 above) will also significantly impact the pipeline for schemes and resource availability. The two government objectives are likely to become in competition with one another, and programming around this needs planning for if both are priorities.</p> <p><u>Natural Capital & Heritage</u> - Liz Small/Liz Milne</p> <p>Liz Small missed the last meeting on 13th October. Draft minutes received from Liz Milne:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerow regulations discussed. <p>ACTION: Liz to circulate Hedgerow regulations survey to ADEPT and ALGE once received from Defra.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Act Biodiversity Duty • BNG update from Defra • BNG Events: Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature Recovery Autumn 2022 events Local Government Association. • Environment Act conference: The Environment Act 2021 one year on – the role of local authorities (ukela.org) <p>Next meeting 21st November 2022; agenda items (to be confirmed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAS NRN project (confirmed) • NE's All England Strategic Mapping Tool and how this links with LNRS • Nature Recovery Network from NE/Defra <p>ACTION: EA will be publishing a signposting tool for natural capital shortly. Liz to share link once it goes live.</p> <p><u>Waste</u> – Steve Palfrey</p> <p>The group last met on 15th September.</p> <p>Key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflation – waste contract/service inflation is very high and most LAs are expecting big budget gaps for 2023/24 	<p>LS</p> <p>LS</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paralysis through uncertainty - still waiting for DEFRA to publish responses to consultations on Consistency and Deposit Return Scheme (consultations closed in Jun and Jul 2021!). Will then require secondary legislation, guidance etc. squeezing time for implementation and adding cost and/or delay. Latest indication is that new Govt is still committed to these reforms and responses will be published by end of 2022. • Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in soft furnishing – EA intent is right, i.e. destroy POPs through incineration. Big concerns for LAs and contractors regarding timeframe and separation requirements. Many LAs don't currently send bulky waste to EfW and plant operators won't want more of this material (high CV and potential to cause blockages). Most HWRCs won't have space for an additional container for soft furnishings so LAs will have to limit acceptance to larger sites and/or displace a recycling stream. Cost and impracticality of separation for bulky collections, transfer stations etc. LA Waste Networks and ESA (Waste Cos) calling for more pragmatic approach. EA guidance requires compliance by 31/12/2022, but sector is calling for more time. • DIY Waste – DEFRA published proposals in April 2022 to prevent LAs from charging for acceptance of DIY waste at HWRCs. Decision/outcome expected to be announced in Autumn 2022. If implemented this could add c.£100m to LA costs, and consultation stated New Burdens doctrine would be waived! <p>ADEPT Resources and Waste Policy Position Statement – in process of updating in time for ADEPT autumn conference.</p> <p><u>Environment Board</u> – Steve Read/David Dale Nothing raised.</p>	
7.	<p>ADEPT business Hannah Bartram</p> <p><u>Live Labs 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have received 30 bids from local authority-led partnerships across the UK. Live Labs 2. Live Labs 2 is the DfT-funded, 3-year, £30 million programme focusing on the decarbonisation of local roads. • Bids have included proposals for innovations ranging from considering single materials within our local roads to the system as a whole, from individual locations and corridors through to whole service approaches. • There will now be a short period of evaluation before shortlisted applicants are invited to perform a Dragon's Den-style pitch to a panel of independent sector experts in early Nov. • Final recommendations will go to the Secretary of State for approval. 	

	<p>The intention is to use Jan-Mar 2023 to develop detailed business plans, and the formal programme to begin 1st April.</p> <p><u>Working with ADASS, ADCS, ADPH</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular catch-up meetings take place with presidents of the other associations and the LGA. • Recent focus has been on political change and policy. • The Levelling Up, People & Places Project is progressing well – intending to publish the co-branded report in early Dec. <p><u>Events / L&D</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ADEPT Autumn Conference takes place on 17th & 18th November, with the title <i>Place Leadership in a Perfect Storm</i>. Some great speakers lined up including the Climate Change Committee, BEIS, CBI, Solace and National Grid. The link to book is here. • Learning & Development courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leadership Development Programme – the 4th year is coming to an end, and more than 100 people have completed the programme. Dates for 2023 will be published shortly. ➤ Green finance training course on 24th November, London – to book see here. ➤ Navigating transition – aimed at senior leaders within local authorities looking at their next career move. 3rd February, Birmingham. 	
8.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Steve Read reminded the Board of his intention to step down as Chair after the January 2023 Meeting . Having consulted with the Chairs of the Working Groups, Steve was delighted to announce that Carolyn McKenzie has agreed to step into Chair role and Steve Palfrey will step into the Vice Chair role.</p> <p>Carolyn advised she is consequently looking for new Chair for the Energy and Clean Growth working group and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in the role.</p>	
9.	<p>Notes of last meeting</p> <p>All agreed.</p>	
10.	<p>Dates of future meetings, and close.</p>	

	November Monthly meeting – Thursday 1 st December at 10:00-11:00 January Quarterly meeting - Wednesday 25 th January at 10:00-12:30	
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