



Association of Directors of  
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

## Monthly Environment Board Catch-Up

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022, 11:00-12:00

### Notes

**Attendees:** Carolyn McKenzie – Chair (CM), David Dale - ADEPT Policy Officer (DD), Nicola Rivers – Note Taker (NR), Ben Boswell (BB), Caroline George (CG), Chris Miller (CMi), Caroline George (CG), Claire Brailsford (CB), Doug Wilkinson (DW), Hannah Bartram (HB), Jennie Donovan (JD), Kate Langdown (KL), Kathryn Bell (KB), Louise Tennekoon (LT), Lynn Trigwell (LTr), Mark Clinton (MC), Martin Dickman (MD), Olawale Ladapo (OL), Owen McGivern (OM), Ralph Kemp (RK), Sam Kennedy (SK), Steve Read (SR), Wendy Barratt (WB)

		<b>ACTION OWNER</b>
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>CM welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>CM advised that she attended the House of Lords on 14<sup>th</sup> March for a Built Environment select committee on Environmental Regulation with discussions around planning issues, as well as having more strategic conversations with statutory bodies. A recording of the session is available on Parliament TV should any one wish to watch it.</p>	

2. **Current service issues, pressures and risks**

CM – Ash dieback issues and how to get a balance between felling and managing biodiversity.

CB – Derbyshire has a high population of ash, and they have an ash dieback action plan which is focused on surveying and felling. They have estimated the cost to be anything between £20M and £40M. A survey of A & B roads was done last year which has progressed to the felling of those trees and they have managed to secure extra resource but nowhere near the figures talked about. At present the work is focused on risk and safety. They are not really getting a lot of pressure in relation to unnecessary felling and loss of habitat but it's still early days.

MD – Buckinghamshire have a crematorium with a large memorial garden where a big proportion of ash have had to be cutback, but they have had virtually no issues with this.

CM – Surrey have had pushback from environmentalists around ash dieback with a lot of it in protected areas.

No other issues raised.

HB – There is a consultation out now on the Environmental Outcomes Reports and a joint response with the Environment Board is due to be discussed at the Planning Working Group on 28<sup>th</sup> March. A joint workshop will be arranged to inform the ADEPT response.

The consultation on the Infrastructure Levy has also come out.

JD – The EA have been asked to provide evidence for the planning reform consultation in early April with a possibility of giving oral evidence in May. The LNRS and BNG will be included in the response.

3. **Working Groups**

Waste

Steve Palfrey (SP) – *apologies received, written update provided. WB reported.*

1. POPS in furniture - we had the DD from DEFRA at our recent Waste Group mtg and stressed the point that LAs are currently managing to work within the temporary provisions within RPSs (regulatory position statements from the EA), but if/when these fall away there will be a major problem and cost;
2. Waste reforms - still waiting for DEFRA to publish their response on Consistency of Collections and consultation on statutory guidance on waste collection - due 'soon';
3. Lots of policy and consultations coming after local elections;

4. Waste Group to run a workshop (probably in May?) to think about longer term strategic position on waste for ADEPT (i.e., beyond the implementation of current reforms).

In addition to the above, an interesting presentation was given at the last working group by the National Infrastructure Commission and the group will feed back on the questions they raised around future infrastructure.

### Energy & Clean Growth

Sheryl French (SF) - *apologies received.*

#### **Local Area Energy Planning**

Government is keen for a consistent approach to local area energy planning. Ofgem have put out some guidance and there is also the Energy System Catapult methodology which government has paid for and piloted. The feedback from the first plans is they are static and will need updating. For those LAs not paid for by government ESC charges are high so the emerging thinking is to develop LAEPs that are more dynamic plans, based on digital platforms with supportive decision-making tools. There are a number of digital platforms emerging that could help LAs. Project LEO has a platform developed by AI, UK Power Networks are developing a tool called Project CLEO and are tendering for a developer. Project CLEO will be offered free of charge to Local Authorities and Project LEO could also be offered to LAs and we await the funding terms on this.

**Innovate UK Pathway Places** – thirty-one places have been included on the Net Zero Living, Pathway Places programme for phase 1. Initial funding is to scope a plan for a place-based initiative that tackles non-technical system barriers to implementation of net zero. Phase 2 will find 5 places for £5million each to deliver a two-year project to overcome non-technical barriers. The phase 2 applications will need to be submitted by 14<sup>th</sup> July and it is encouraged to partner and collaborate on these phase 2 projects.

**Mission Zero, Chris Skidmore.** The independent review makes 129 recommendations and sits alongside the Committee on Climate Change's latest progress report. [2022 Progress Report to Parliament - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/2022/02/22/2022-Progress-Report-to-Parliament-Climate-Change-Committee/)

The proposal for a statutory duty with a clear framework is one of the recommendations and this is broadly welcomed as long as it is fully funded. The review also includes planning and funding reforms and a place-based approach.

**Scaling up schools retrofits.** There are a number of challenges emerging:

- Getting business cases to stack up for low carbon heating projects for a number of reasons including the cost of electricity but also the wider measures such as insulation to manage bills.

- The advance planning required for installation of ASHPs, e.g., not as quick to instal as gas boilers often requiring electricity upgrades to the site supply which can be costly and take time.
- The academisation of schools, means that LAs will be less likely to invest in net zero measures as assets will move to a trust, some of which act very commercially. There is a perception in some but not all Trusts that should government legislate and ban gas and oil boilers that the schools will be given For LAs wanting to start school retrofits and not yet on the journey Cambridgeshire County Council have a framework agreement in place with two contractors on it who can deliver the works. please contact Chris Parkin, [christopher.parkin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:christopher.parkin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) if you'd like to know more.

<https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/climate-change-blog>

**Carbon offsetting/Insetting Strategies.** The key points include:

- To deliver the UK's balanced pathway for CO2emissions carbon removals were needed – especially when you think about waste and construction emissions.
- There are a number of nature-based greenhouse house gas removal options e.g., peat restoration, tree planting along with other technological solutions such as Direct Air capture and building materials.
- LAs can be involved through supplying land, feedstock, purchasing removal credits etc.
- A working group is being set up please contact [john.taylor@gsetzerohub.org.uk](mailto:john.taylor@gsetzerohub.org.uk) if you'd like to know more.
- Possible item for a future Board meeting.

#### Flood and Water Management

No rep in attendance.

DD, HB, along with Max Tant and Doug Hill, are due to meet next week with consultants appointed by Defra to look at green finance and natural flood risk management schemes.

JD - EA are attending the lab on 27<sup>th</sup> March to talk about the Flood & Coastal Innovation Programme looking at climate change adaption as part of flood risk management as well as nature-based solutions.

DD – Monthly ADEPT lunch and learn session at 12pm on 24<sup>th</sup> March will be covering the Flood & Coastal Innovation Programme. (Link to the session added to meeting chat.)

ADEPT

Hannah Bartram (HB)

- Entries for the ADEPT Annual Awards are open and these are focusing on clean growth, digital innovation, and people & place along with a new category for outstanding contribution.
- The Spring Conference which precedes the annual awards dinner is on 23<sup>rd</sup> May.
- Land Use Framework Workshop will be taking place on 28<sup>th</sup> March with an intro from Rachel Fisher (DEFRA), Baroness Barbara Young will talk about the House of Lords report into LUF and the FFCC will be speaking as well with a case study from Surrey.
- ADEPT currently recruiting for a Deputy CEO, closing date midnight Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March. This is advertised on the ADEPT website.
- Green Finance training session 25<sup>th</sup> April, session may be fully booked, however, there is a waiting list if anyone is interested.
- The leadership team agreed to setting up a climate change board and are hoping for the first meeting to take place towards the end of April.

Natural Capital & Heritage

Liz Small/Liz Milne (LS/EM) – *apologies received. DD reported.*

The group met recently and a presentation on the Natural England GIS Framework was given by Clare Warburton and included the standards in the new framework, these are voluntary rather than statutory. NE have a useful data mapping tool and it was suggested that the working group may wish to have a workshop session on this.

The other main item was around BNG and Becky Moberly (Planning Advisory Service) attended to talk through some of the main developments. One of the issues discussed was the way in which funding for energy grants is being given out and EM is in correspondence with Defra on this.

LT - Small sites metric doesn't come in at Nov 23 and is not coming in until end of financial year. It is not clear when claiming BNG money allocated whether this would be received in this financial year or next financial year based on when the claim is put in.

KB has advised she will look to get an answer on this.

LT – Wilts have a green and blue strategy, and this covers everything including networks for people, health and wellbeing and goes beyond what a LNRS would do.

## Partners

### Defra

Ola Ladapo (OL)

- A lot of movement expected this week/next week on outstanding responses including around the consistency consultation. LNRS guidance is also very imminent.
- Other related things on LNRS for example webinars planned for responsible authorities. Adam Stewart is the main contact at Defra for the webinars.
  
- CM and HB met with David Hill last week and there were discussions particularly around BNG funding and specific questions on issues around funding for Landuse which Rachel Fisher has been asked to address.  
**ACTION: OL to follow up with RF and feedback on this.**
- Planned session on the EIP with LGA on 18<sup>th</sup> April with CM, HB, DD & working group chairs included. Andrew Jackson in attendance along with a colleague from EIP, and colleagues from DELUHC. A wider discussion around this is planned for the Quarterly Environment Board Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April.
- David Hill attended the last R9 Chief Executives group meeting. There are also regional R9 meetings with one planned for the Southwest which Defra will be looking to attend.
- Individual workshops taking place with Bi-lateral councils.

### Natural England

Adam Wallace – *apologies received.*

### Environment Agency

Jennie Donovan

Philip Duffy has been appointed as new Chief Executive starting 1 July and a meeting with ADEPT will be arranged.

Next meeting – Quarterly meeting 27<sup>th</sup> April

### **Draft agenda**

Andrew Jackson (Defra) due to attend to talk about the EIP along with a rep from DELUHC.

Speaker from OEP to discuss their view of the EIP.

EU Law Bill and Environmental Regulations.

Strengthened Biodiversity Duty in Environment Act.