



Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Meeting Notes of the Planning Sub-Group

28 March 2023

Held on Microsoft Teams

Present

Paul Barnard (Chair), Hannah Bartram, Sarah McLaughlin, Stacey Wylie, Pam Neal, James Cutting, Laura McCulloch, Margaret Baddley, Matthew Jericho, Matthew Brown, Georgina Brightwell, Caroline Sutton, David Dale, Barry Wyatt, Martin Wells.

Apologies

Rob Murfin, Lucy Hargreaves, Jodie Yandall, Jan Feeney, Anna Rose, Rob Harbour, Helen Leach, Samantha Campbell, Jow Jenkinson, Adam Birchall, Tom Merchant, James Crosbie, Alison Ives, Louise Wood, Ian Achurch.

Item	Notes	Actions
1	Welcome and introductions Apologies are as stated above.	
2	Actions and minutes from the previous meeting The previous meeting was held on 28 March 2023. Actions: None	
3	New obligations for Biodiversity Net Gain Presentation given by Rafi Cohen and Matthew Brown into building data software to assist LPA ecologists, in response to high levels of workload that are being experienced across the country. Initially focusing on three specific areas: Providing a single, permanent home for all ecology-related documents and spatial data, making the BNG Metric easier to interpret and check, giving automated support for long-term monitoring requirements. Intention is to build something that has LPA ecologists front and centre. Performed six months of research to understand where we might be helpful in contributing to increased biodiversity and identified significant challenges around implementation of BNG for LPAs. Interviewed 38 LPAs and engaged with other key stakeholders to define pain points.	

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	<p>Have performed detailed assessments and analyses into Local Government Ecologists' challenges. Have formalised pilot group of seven LPAs with whom we are co-developing the tools.</p> <p>Have found that some LPA ecologists don't use Idox. Want to make sure there are live connections between existing software and new software.</p> <p>Already speaking to the Association of Local Government Ecologists and Natural England and Swindon and Wiltshire have volunteered to be pilots. Urban authorities have the potential to struggle to meet their BNG requirements.</p> <p>Also briefly introduced 'ForestFounder' which supports foresters and land managers to find and assess planting opportunities. It helps prioritise areas for on the ground surveys.</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>Recruitment and Retention</p>	<p>Sarah McLaughlin presented the results of her MBA that was undertaken during the Covid lockdowns. This focussed on recruitment and retention in the planning sector as a research project.</p> <p>Highlights are the numbers for public sector town planners are falling. in 2010 there were 70%, which had fallen to 55% in 2019.</p> <p>Three themes focused on: Emerging political reform, cut to LPA budgets and technological advantages in post covid world.</p> <p>78% were already from the public sector in Herts and Interviews were also done with HR teams. £5,000 fee for advertising in Planning Magazine. Limited active talent management in Herts due to resources. Whilst planners are happy with the skills already available, there are recognised capacity issues across all related disciplines. Satisfaction is quite low in Herts in relation to technical/specific learning and development which planners attempt to secure through the professional national offer via a number of outlets.</p> <p>More than half of line managers are between the ages of 35 to 44 and almost 80% would value importance of leadership training.</p> <p>A number of incentives were summarised, which included ability to working from home and salary came out on top. Professional fees are not paid by all Herts authorities.</p> <p>Only 21% of planners are happy in what they are currently doing. Salary and a better working environment is a motivation when considering a move. Recommendations include develop relatable career pathways, initiate active talent management, build a brand for Herts, build and accessible comprehensive L&D package, review the HR package for planners, offer flexibility and recognise the needs of each age group.</p>	

Item		Notes	Actions
		<p>Actions underway include shared services, developing shared CPD, working with the private sector, mapping career pathways, a Herts graduate scheme, career fairs and school engagement.</p> <p>Public Practice secondments are worthwhile, also have in-built training. Good experience for Luton BC.</p>	
5	AOB	<p><u>Infrastructure Levy consultation</u> has now come out. Incredibly technical paper will need someone who is conversant with Infrastructure and S.106 planning. Need a volunteer to help answer questions to assist with ADEPT response.</p> <p>Laura McCullough and Matthew Jericho have volunteered to assist with ADEPT'S response to the consultation. Consultation ends on 7 June.</p> <p>Short term holiday lets consultation is due for consultation in summer 2023. Planning fees consultation ends at the end of the month. PD consultation also out too. Environmental outcomes report another 12-week consultation ends on 9 June 2023.</p> <p>Workshop (Hannah Bartram). Planning this for the end of April.</p>	
7	Confirm date of next meeting	25 April 2023 at 11am (MS Teams)	