

### ADEPT Minutes

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Time:** 9:30 – 11:30

**Location:** MS Teams

**Present:** Sophie Broadfield - Chair (Banes), Hannah Bartram (ADEPT), Samantha Howell (Swindon), Meg Booth (Devon), Nigel Riglar (South Glos), Sally Royale (BEIS), Anna Eastgate (Dorset), Miranda Housden (Ice.org), Sarah Valdus (Wiltshire), Paula Hewitt (Somerset County Council), Julian McLaughlin (BCP Council), Sally Farley (Plymouth), Lucy Shomali (North Somerset Council), Alan Denby (Torbay Council), Philip Heseltine (Plymouth), Mickey Green (Somerset Council), David Carter (Somerset), Lisa Nash - minutes (Banes)

Paula Hewitt (Deputy Chief Executive, Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure & Director of Commissioning) – Guest speaker

Brian Deegan (Director of Inspections, Active Travel England) – Guest speaker

Colin Wood (Programme Manager) – Guest speaker

Item No		
1	Apologies and minutes	
<p><b>Apologies:</b> Peter Marsh (Cornwall), Anthony Payne (Plymouth), John Sellgren (Dorset), Philip Williams (Gloucestershire), Jess Gibbons (BCP), Paul Hickson (Somerset), Phil Mason (Cornwall), Sophie Hoskin (Cornwall)</p>		
2	Update from ADEPT (Hannah Bartram)	
<p>The verbal update Hannah gave will be sent around with the minutes</p>		
3	Presentation – Vision and podcasts Paula Hewitt, Deputy Chief Executive, Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure & Director of Commissioning	
<p>Paula presented some slides – see slides shared with minutes</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>SB – After discussions were any particular types on infrastructure challenging?</p> <p>Energy infrastructure is challenging in terms of solar farms re connecting up and then back out. There are some big future projects such as Atlantic array, and floating offshore wind.</p> <p>Many changes have taken place with more to come in terms of decarbonising larger areas of infrastructure.</p> <p>DC – There are tensions in local regions and barriers not least with the government, is this an overall problem?</p> <p>PH agreed this has been a problem and has asked whether this should be private or public. In the past there hasn't been a single regional view. There has been a huge interest in the</p>		

past from RDA. Plymouth won this a decade ago, but it's not just about ambition it's about implementation and the delivery required.

SB – How the report has landed earlier in the year?

It's not just sending it around it's getting it out internationally – they are seeking help with out to work on it. (Sir John Armit referenced).

HB expressed that Margaret Reed – Ex Central Government is very approachable.

MK – Has growth been divided in the South West? There's a need to work out how it's being coherently worked on. Could it be focused on in the forum? Possibly a future agenda item.

SS – The Energy Hub (Part of Ice Hub) is the key, they have identified lack of grid issues.

Whole grid was set up as one way street but now required for both ways. Likely to be changes afoot.

**Actions:**

- Invite someone from National Grid to speak at a future meeting.
- Linda from Energy Hub would be prepared to come and speak at a future meeting

4	Active Travel England (ATE) – discussion about improving active travel (Brian Deegan, Director of Inspections, Active Travel England)
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Active Travel England are the Executive Agency of the Department of Transport who also have to respond to Government Ministers. Effectively set up to help and empower local authorities, this is the main thing that's done. Brian runs the inspection side, checks bids, schemes design and they control their own funding. Also do the MRN, CRSTS, levelling up fund. Look at spotting issues and helping the local authority resolve them. Will basically do anything that will get people, walking, wheeling, cycling comfortably.

Brian said there is a maximum headcount of 98 people in the team – lots of people but they do cover the whole of the country. The team try to be as helpful as possible and will do anything to help the people move more. Brian opened the floor to questions.

SB – how is funding allocated? SB noticed in the last allocation of funding report that West Yorkshire got loads.

It comes down to three things, 1) a look at the project delivery record, people explaining where they are at and the overall capability, 2) economic assessment, how many beneficiaries and is this a good use of taxpayer's money 3) what the quality of the 'thing' like.

I.e., West Yorkshire - work quality is very good and political will in the area is high and the delivery record very good. Politicians on board as well.

LS – North Somerset – local agenda difficult item, local PM is using it as a political tool, which may influence the local election. Benefits of new scheme good, delivery of scheme difficult with Nay Sayer's. In this situation how can this be taken forward, what support from local government is there?

BD expressed that they are there to support and can take the case forward – get them involved so they can assist. They can help engagement process, Chris Whitty and so forth. Managing Director from shell onboard. Can seem a lot of voice but can be reversed.

There have always been movements against active travel, but recent surveys suggest that change is wanted.

Brian reiterated that they are there to help.

HB – noted that BD attended South East meeting and asked along with political support in Westminster, is there any scope for wider engagement regionally or nationally?

BD explained that they put out advice on how to consult on such things. Ministers look at same conspiracies they must be looked at in detail. They look at traffic management, and make sure things are done in the right way.

Methodology is used for quantifying, managing, and mitigating. They are looking at how to engage in the future and looking at how to put out advice. The argument has not been won at Government level yet.

JM – understands funding tight, is funding in place for the future? Asks because at a sub national level they are doing some strategic cycle networks. Can they plan for the future?

BD explained that funding is controlled, the money is the same, at the moment they are working with the secretary of state. There are a huge amount of funds that they can influence, it can be a specific pot or something else.

DC – said they are always 10-15 years behind with funding so historically, so they are hugely behind budget for roads that runs into billions, historic legacy. Can a bigger share of the active travel pie be shared, cursory view that it can help active travel, but the bulk of the funding does go to roads. It was always excluded from LRN because the Government said they usually fund one offs for large public transport requirements. Maybe this is a job for SDB and for national involvement going forward.

What can DC (somerset) do to help ATE? BD said yes absolutely can help going forward.

The big game is over the next nine months with regards to the national cycling and walking network, there are parts missing in lots of places. Future working together is key. The current issue is getting people to spend on active travel, then ATE can start making a case to the Government. The Government does pay attention if it can be delivered upon. The National Plan will be a big eye opener.

MB – How do we get to the details of the strategic network? Ambitions have 150 million stacked up. MB’s issue is that after consultation with LC whip, they are going to require security guards going forward and staff will need personal safety training. If they are unable to consult face to face going forward because of the risk of harm, they are going to be penalised.

BD advised he can help with regards to this and explained at an earlier version Manchester did this online and got people to comment. There are different ways that can be explored so violent encounters can be avoided. Low traffic management schemes can be developed online and shown to neighbourhoods.

BD will send MB what was sent to the Chiswick group – happy to help.

NR – next month department draft guidance for transport plans and carbon guidance being issued – start of process – re active travel how can it be used to build collective picture to get the networks they aspire to achieve. Can this be harnessed re: funding and political commitment?

BD Happy to advise and help.

NB – next month the Department for Transport are due to issue their draft guidance on local transport plans for local authorities and along with that carbon reduction. It’s the start of the process for the LTP to be updated. The issues re active travel, how can it be used to help to build that collective on what everyone is aspiring to achieve?

BD – Said it will be good to see how bold everyone goes on it, could have influenced more but coming to capacity. Will be monitoring going forward.

NB asks if they can help. Do we need to encourage local authorities? Don’t want to miss out there is an opportunity to have a conversation with seven STB’s. Get local authorities in the area to push this. One conversation with the seven gets you to the local 57 local authorities.

BD to take away and work on making it happen.

**Action:**

Brian Deegan to be invited back in a year.

5	5G Rural Dorset – local authority best practice (Colin Wood, Programme Manager)
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Colin presented some slides – see slides shared with minutes

Questions:

SB – advised there is funding out there if the right mix of expertise, passion and partnerships are formed.

NB – An opportunity was spotted in Dorset and the right consultant was found who wanted to make a difference in the South West, this drove the project forward. There was no looking back it was a ten-million-pound investment. They were convinced they did not want to rely on local authority funding. It could never make itself pay for itself using one sector. Connections were made with the local school, farm and so on.

Future questions need to be asked re the mobile sector doing this in the future.

NB – likes the multi sector approach work being done with network rail can take some encouragement to what can be done.

It's about wider benefits as well, in case of any local opposition? Limited amount of opposition (one letter). A community centred approach was taken re onboarding. There were stakeholders to approach in the right way. People do still have reservations naturally. A collaboration lead worked full time to push the project forward and nip any problems in the bud re 5G myths.

HB – In the past work has been done with Public Health England (PHE) with regards to conspiracy theories, have other picked up on the work you've done? Can it be used in the future?

Yes, the process has been disseminated out wider and can hopefully be used as guidance for future projects. The project ended in October, but CW is still giving presentations on this now, there is a future piece of work. The Government are going to launch 5G Innovation Regions, there is a want to do this collaborative the money is to be announced at the end of May. So, if anyone is wanting to be involved keep an eye out.

MG – expressed and interest in collaborating as in the future fears market failure will happen. A live and interesting piece of work. Work investing in and putting fibre in the ground to see a long-term return.

DC – Where do we sit and what is the role?

Role is one of we are the place, we deserve the best, a commercial decision is made, we can continue in the same vein from 20-30 years ago or we can do/think things differently. With private networks there is service delivery, mobile networks can do what we do, maybe there is a future role for public bodies to do what they need.