

# ADEPT

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

[www.adeptnet.org.uk](http://www.adeptnet.org.uk)

## Manifesto for stronger places

Autumn 2023

**Place Directors deliver solutions locally. They sit at the junction between national policy and local places, delivering universal services and leading partnerships to support their local environment, economy and communities.**

Local authorities need the right support to better deliver on the crucial issues we face. The rising cost of living, the broken housing market and increasing homelessness, slow progress towards net zero and climate resilience, the deteriorating natural environment, and worsening health inequalities are all urgent challenges.

Looking towards the next general election, we have set out what government must do differently to empower local councils. The UK's centralised and departmentalised system of government has failed to tackle these issues effectively. Local authorities must have the resources to lead locally and build successful partnerships to deliver green growth, sustainable and resilient places, and inclusive communities.

### **MAKING THE CASE FOR PLACE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE VITAL**

**The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) is the voice of Place Directors in county, combined and unitary councils.**

Place Directors are responsible for providing day-to-day services such as local highways, waste and recycling, and planning. We develop the longer-term strategies, investment and infrastructure needed to make our places resilient, sustainable, inclusive and prosperous. Place is where things get done.

**We call on all political parties to commit to these strategic objectives:**

- **Deliver ambitious devolution deals for local councils in every area.**
- **End short-term funding and single pot competitive bidding and move to a multi-year, streamlined and simplified funding landscape for councils.**
- **Tackle geographical inequalities to promote prosperity, inclusion, and better health and wellbeing for all.**
- **Sustainable growth that delivers green jobs and skills and protects the environment.**
- **Take a place-based approach to meeting the challenges of net zero, climate adaptation, nature protection and recovery.**

**Our immediate priorities include:**

## **HOUSING, PLANNING & GROWTH**

- Provide a financial regime that enables councils to build more, genuinely affordable and climate ready new homes for social rent to meet local needs and use their assets and income streams to finance further investment. Increase Local Housing Allowance rates to match market rents to enable homeless people to access private rented accommodation.
- Reform the planning system to enable local areas to drive sustainable growth at the level of functional economic geographies, with powers over industrial strategy, skills and labour market planning, strategic transport, and energy infrastructure.
- Align the planning system with carbon targets and budgets through legislation. Councils can then set ambitious policies to improve the energy and water efficiency standards and environmental impacts of new homes, and reject poor quality, high carbon development.

## **TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Double or more the current level of capital funding to address the deteriorating local highway network, including building resilience in the face of the changing climate.
- Implement new travel demand management measures to encourage modal shift to meet national decarbonisation targets, improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion.
- Unlock grid scale infrastructure investment through regulatory and other mechanisms to enable renewables to connect more quickly, and give local councils a clear remit to develop Local Area Energy Plans to manage the transition to net zero energy systems in their places.

## **ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE**

- Introduce new Local Climate Action Agreements, where local councils and central government are confident of being able to deliver agreements at pace and scale, that can evolve over time and likely differ from place to place, and will unlock private investment for net zero and resilience.
- Provide a statutory framework and associated funding to enable local councils to prepare evidence-based Local Environmental Improvement Plans that deliver local environmental leadership and support appropriate planning and development decisions. Plans must help meet national targets including climate change (see above), improving nature, environmental quality, flood and drought risk, accessibility and blue / green space. Overarching this is an expectation there will be no weakening of protections that originated in EU law including the Habitats Regulations.
- Commit to prompt implementation of the key reforms set out in the Resources & Waste Strategy, including extended producer responsibility and further steps towards a circular economy that supports the development of local place-based Resources and Waste Action Plans.

