

ADEPT South West Board Minutes

Date: 5th October 2023

Time: 9:30 – 11:30

Location: MS Teams

Present:	
Sophie Broadfield - Chair Banes	David Dale - ADEPT
Martin Litherland - Wiltshire	Miranda Housden - Ice.org
Emma Blackham - South Glo Council	Sally Royle - BEIS
Alan Denby - Torbay Council	David Carter - Somerset
Emma Cockburn - SW Highway Alliance	Ben Rhodes – South West CBI
Steve Marks – Environment Agency	Lisa Nash – minutes Banes

Guest Speaker	Jon Rattenbury – Programme Manager – South-West Net Zero Hub
Guest Speaker	Mark Holmes - Head of Environmental Partnerships and Climate Change
Guest Speaker	Nick Hayden - Carbon Neutral Cornwall Manager
Guest Speaker	Neil Turley - Director Strategy, Research, Analysis and Sponsorship – Homes England

Item No	
1	Apologies and minutes
Apologies: Hannah Bartram, Paul Barnard, Mickey Green, Anthony Payne	
2	Update ADEPT – David Dale
<p>https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/news/manifeto-stronger-places-%E2%80%93-adept-issues-call-future-government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ADEPT monthly newsletter is the best place to keep up to date with news across the organisation – please contact the secretary if you aren't on the mailing list secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk 	

- News from the local Government recently is for policies to be introduced to help motorists. This is now on the DfT website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport>
- The National Audit Office has approached us to say that they're kicking off some work on local Rd maintenance. The condition of roads alignment between government funding and what councils are doing – hoping to publish next Spring.
- Adept has been doing a piece of work with the Association of Directors of Children's Services on homes to school, SEND transport. It will be presented to the Atco Conference on the 9th of November.
- Transport live labs to the £30 million programme, with DfT on decarbonising local roads that's now up and running in that outline, business cases have all been published and they're on the adept website for everybody who wants to see those.
- Highways UK conference in Birmingham on the 18th of October
- Planning contributions Section 106 and cell and one to the public accounts' committees call for evidence on the government's proposed resources and waste reforms
- The Adept Sustainable Growth Board has got two new Co chairs. Ian Thompson, from Buckinghamshire, has now stepped down from that as he's due to retire shortly. The new Co chairs of the SG Board are Chris Henning, Place director from Derbyshire County Council and Kate Martin, Place director from Sheffield City Council.

3 | South West Net Zero Hub – Jon Rattenbury, Programme Manager

Jon leads on the SW Net Zero Hub; they are one of five Net Zero Hubs across the country. Please see the slides shared with the minutes.

Questions:

DD What policy guidelines are out there for Councils?

JR The policy incentive is around supporting local authorities who have got a climate emergency. It needs to be thought of as a whole place, taking into account different energy issues, constraints, requirements etc. New developments have to be considered in terms of the impact on the grid, informing as a two-way process between authorities and the grid operators. Historically whilst good dialogue between the two they have operated separately. So, the aim is to bring the two together to make sure that kind of grid development is part of the local planning authority planning process.

SM wonders if ADEPT can help in terms of leadership around water efficiency, as some parts of the region have come very close to running out of water. There is a carbon cost which impacts the environment. Each person uses about 160 litres of water per day. The government efficiency is to try and get that down to 110 litres per day. The offer is there if JR would like SM to discuss and be involved in the future.

BR how do major energy units, users or manufacturers feed into the local area energy planning structure?

JR It goes into the local authority playing a pivotal role in bringing those safe orders together. The key challenge in local authorities is they don't really have lots of resources. This is the reason why I said it's not statutory. It means there's no funding directly to them to do this, but there is a call to government to help fund this, whether that gets taken forward, we'll have to see, but certainly what we're trying to do is provide them with some templates, tools, a process and a method for bringing those multiple stakeholders together to understand all those different impacts and opportunities across the energy system.

BR CBI invites people to contact him about having a broader conversation around the planning reform please do so. For info: The Business Manifesto launch is mid-November.

4	Cornwall Renewable Energy Case Study - Mark Holmes, Head of Environmental Partnerships and Climate Change, and Nick Hayden, Carbon Neutral Cornwall Manager
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Mark presented some slides – Please see slides shared with the minutes.

Questions:

SB What is the most challenging thing within the Council for you and officers that you've had to overcome? What do you need from your director?

MH A positive precedent was set early within some projects, but ongoing maintenance, subsidy regimes early in renewables and return rates were often double digit. Now if they are managed in the right way, they still provide a positive return, which was why the criteria was developed; but it was less than some of the original ones. In terms of support from directors, it was them being aware of the opportunity and supporting it. What is needed is support from across the corporate director team. It was also about the property director being aware of the environmental aspect and wider opportunities it meant for supporting the decarbonisation of the estate and it's returns. It was also about the finance director being willing and able to see the wider opportunities with that. The business is currently expanding and has attracted a significant amount of external investment into Cornwall.

BH Do you see the role of the local authority as trying to support carbon reduction?

MH Is looking at where viability can be demonstrated, where they can work with the local supply chain to understand opportunities. MH is also working closely with the Chamber of Commerce, who are involved the local energy plan through the local enterprise partnership.

The wider challenge of enabling and supporting businesses to decarbonize, which sort of links into that second point on the viability, it is really, really challenging and some of it comes down to a planning requirement that would go through our DPD we've been able to go a bit further, but we're still limited within national planning policy in terms of an expectation to have renewables on new builds and things, but also some of it is around how we how I think again goes back to that.

Longer term thinking and longer term opportunities of putting in solar at the same time you may be doing roof maintenance and making that as a standard course of action, but the roof liability is a challenge on some of the more industrial type units because they won't build whilst taking solar into account.

It's not an easy fix, but they are moving forward with the technology, the solar panels are getting lighter, but sometimes it's not just the panels, it's the weight of people on the roof doing that the work. So, I'm afraid there isn't a simple answer to that one.

There is a huge problem in Cornwall where some of the new connection offers for wind and solar are 80% curtailment, so that means the generator should be turned off 80% of the time, so if there isn't the ability to have storage on site it's an issue. Going forward it's not a simple thing, it will be a challenge to balance.

DD would crowdfunding be an option?

MH There are three types of funding that could be used:

- Equality and regulated area – an abundance type model overseen by the Financial Conduct Authority
- British Gas or Virgin
- Community Shares – run by community organisations, with the community benefit

CN currently uses the reward or donation-based crowdfunding where it is just a simple gift, and you get a small return or it's just a gift.

The council community chest is there as well, it allows councillors to donate directly to projects in their area and CN find up to 50% of that.

A pilot is currently going on for people who visit Cornwall, money will be added back into climate in nature.

5	Homes England Update - Neil Turley, Director Strategy, Research, Analysis and Sponsorship
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My name is Neil Turley - I sit in the markets, partners, and places directorate of Homes England. It's basically the front door to the agency.

We are the business development and partnering function, so we work with our partners, both private and public sector to identify what the problems and the issues are and then we take that away.

We try and work out the best course of action with our other teams and directorates and try and come up with the right sort of solution.

My day-to-day role, I cover the West of England region and Gloucestershire there are many others of me that cover the cover the country.

Background and a bit of update as to where homes England is at the moment.

We are the government's housing and regeneration agency, we are sponsored by the Department for levelling up Homes and Communities Dealer and our role is to support the delivery of new homes and place making.

We're quite a large agency employing over 1300 people and we're quite a broad church with a diverse range of skills and expertise.

Many of us have private sector backgrounds, including property developers, lawyers, bankers, property specialists, house builders, but there are many others, architects and so forth.

It's about our new strategic plan, this was launched back in May this year and it sets out our direction of travel for the next five years up to 2028.

The plans, developed in collaboration with Delac and it outlines our vision to create high quality homes and thriving places across England. We're here to support the housing

sector and to tackle the challenges and barriers to housing delivery across the country. Now the plan sets out how our five new strategic objectives that will contribute to achieving our mission to drive regeneration and housing delivery. These relate to our aspirations for sustainable homes and communities and for delivering high quality design.

H.E. help to overcome any barriers to the housing delivery process that can be planning land assembly, infrastructure remediation and regeneration. There are many more. We work with over 5000 companies to increase the supply of quality homes and to create thriving places for people to live and call home. To deliver what we do, we have strategically placed offices across the country to support our markets, partners and places.

Some of the things that we do and that we can influence:

- Accelerating the pace of house building
- Bringing investment communities confronting housing challenges
- Promoting MMC
- Promoting building safety

So how can we help?

Well, we've got a range of statutory powers. We've got over 9000 hectares of land. And approximately £18 billion to deploy by 2027.

We administer this through a wide range of teams that can support with acquisitions, with development release of land. Funding that includes loans, grants, joint ventures and equities. We help with planning bottlenecks and planning process problems and also expert and technical advice and guidance. This includes we've got CPO, health and safety surveying and risk management.

Who do we help?

Well, pretty much anyone in the housing sector who needs us be it affordable housing providers, local authorities, private developers. And SMEs, you know, the list is not exhaustive.

Since we formed some of the stats for you:

- We've helped deliver over 152,000 new homes and unlocked land for a further 380,000
- We've helped nearly 230,000 households into home ownership
- We've generated £2 billion of income for reinvestment
- We've also managed 3 building remediation funds for works to more than 500 high rise buildings

Recent success:

- In 2021/22 we've supported nearly 38,000 completions. We've unlocked land for almost 59,000 new homes
- We've committed 5.2 billion in affordable grant to deliver nearly 90,000 affordable homes and we've enabled just over 38 1/2 thousand starts on site in essence over 25,000 new homes have been built that wouldn't have without our help.

Temple Quarter

Homes England are partnering with Bristol City Council Network Rail and WECA in a joint delivery team to create a world class gateway. Repurposing and regenerating the area

around Temple Meads and Saint Philip's Marsh. Back in 2022, Homes England approved a £94.7 million funding package which supports phase one, and that's the area immediately around the station and that will contribute towards 3 new station entrances.

New public realm highways improvements and realignments. A new transport hub, lease extinguishments and some contingency. The ambition is to deliver 10,000 new homes and 22,000 jobs and to generate a 1.6 billion GVA for Bristol, that includes the widest and Philips Marsh area, which will probably extend well on in to 15/20 years at least, it's a huge development.

Development framework setting out the long-term vision to regenerate the area was endorsed by BCC. In May earlier this year and we homes England, we are currently working up the Joint delivery vehicle to take this forward and to embark on the partner procurement exercise to bring this forward as you could probably imagine, I don't think there's any private sector partners that would want to get into bed with four public entities. We are trying to establish an appropriate joint delivery vehicle so that essentially, it's one public entity.

Questions:

SB Homes England, investing in new entrances to the station is not directly, of course, delivering housing but I appreciate it's part of a wider package working locally with our main housing association. They're also very interested in accessing funding for regeneration. You implied just now in the Brownfield Land Fund, but will that be more of a theme than the bids for regeneration linked with housing are or are we going to be able to do that as local authorities or housing associations?

NT We will be judging on a case-by-case basis, we are still going through the assessment tools and triage process of bids. It's fair to say that with we'll have a pivot towards regeneration. I think the parameters for the bill fund have been relaxed, so it's not just about housing numbers. It's about the place making and high-quality design sustainability. We will make more bids successful. What we know of it so far, and it is evolving very fast, it is a very complex contractual process and probably not suited to smaller developments. It's a bit of an unwieldy beast I understand, and this isn't my field of expertise. This will be administered by Grant's team. We are the front end to the agency and will be fielding these applications and inquiries and liaising with the ground teams. It will depend on many factors, but quantum of housing will be important you know, as the name suggests, there are a number of parameters that that have to be fulfilled, it has to be brownfield, but not in its entirety there has to be an infrastructure ask. It's more flexible in its approach. You know it can be used for acquisitions.

We've only got one scheme at the moment that has gone through the process and been approved. So, we're still kind of learning of what kind of projects will tick the boxes, but you may well know that we are talking to Banes about a specific project. One of the other key parameters is the timing for this project needs to be in contract by March 2026.

Please see the information on the application process on the Government Website.

Update from Emma Blackham

Hopefully most people have seen the emails that I sent around over the last sort of week or so. I'm going through and making a good a good attempt at updating the contact lists and based on your feedback.

So, thanks very much if you haven't had the chance to look at it. If I can just give a small plug to come back to me on that one that would be really helpful. Just trying to make sure we're getting the right people to the right meetings. I've also been asking through that

process for ideas for future agenda items, so I have had a few back. There was a suggestion about covering some of the planning issues.

There's been suggestions around covering some of the infrastructure issues and ongoing revenue costs of new infrastructure and how councils are dealing with those. I'm still plugging for more of those, which I'll be pulling together and using to sort of circulate a potential forward plan.

So, I think we originally said we would try and do something a bit planning based at the next meeting and perhaps pick up the planning suggest planning suggestions that have come in so far.

But also perhaps a reflection back on some of the affordable housing stuff that we talked about last time. So, but I'm really happy to take any suggestions and ideas and bring those forward. Please do look at my e-mail if you haven't had the chance, I'd really appreciate it.

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