

## **ADEPT Engineering Board meeting notes – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

The Engineering Board was, once again, well attended for its meeting on 6th October. The primary topic that day was hearing how Infrastructure Northern Ireland is tackling tree maintenance and management, sequentially working through the issue so that it fully addresses its soft estate. Whilst the country is renowned for its greenery, looking after highway trees has arguably not been a priority in recent years. With a worldwide increasing focus on environmental matters, Infrastructure NI is now giving its vast tree stock some much-needed consideration, attention and planning.

The second topic of the day was an update on how the North Yorkshire Highways Teckal model is working in practice – in reality, pretty darn well, based upon what the Board heard! There are few Teckal models round the country (such as in Cornwall and Nottinghamshire) on which North Yorkshire Council could draw experience from so, for those involved, it's been a steep learning curve in some respects. However, as many of North Yorkshire Council's services work to a similar approach, this is far from being a first venture for the authority in running this form of arm's length operation. It's off to a good start and the Engineering Board looked forward to future updates on its progress.

Along with various updates from its working groups, the Engineering Board also briefly touched upon the subject of sustainable drainage systems or 'SuDS'. The management of SuDS varies across different authorities but, with Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 due to be enacted in 2024 - including the creation of local SuDS Approval Bodies - there will be increased focus on (and, arguably, consistency across) SuDS in the future. The Flood and Water Management Group and the Engineering Board therefore need to come together to ensure this issue is being more widely considered within ADEPT.