

Monthly Environment Board Catch-Up

**Tuesday 19th March 2024,
 11:00-12:00**

Notes

		ACTION OWNER
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>SP welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made to anyone new to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Current service issues, pressures, and risks</p> <p>Current issue in Essex is landfill tax although this doesn't seem to be an issue for all LAs.</p> <p>There appears to be a slower lane on climate action from Government with Essex reflecting a pendulum swing away from climate as a priority.</p> <p>National context for local climate action appears to have changed considerably over the last 9 to 12 months since the Skidmore report came out and it is now more difficult to deliver on climate and other projects due to additional financial pressures on LAs.</p> <p>There is still no permanent chair for the Climate Change Committee since Lord Deben stepped down and the Chief Executive, Chris Stark, is due to leave this role in April meaning there doesn't appear to be the same independent scrutiny and holding to account of Government.</p> <p>The LGA have recently done a survey on local climate action plans and hopefully the report will be available soon. However, there does not appear to be a lot of confidence in the ability to deliver on these plans within the required timescales.</p> <p>Nottinghamshire: D2N2 devolution deal has net zero and environment at the top of the agenda, currently going through approvals for a net zero strategy framework and have agreed to administer the delivery of the heat network zoning function. They are also doing a test case on aligning waste collection and disposal services.</p>	

Devolution - Three level 2 county deals announced in March Budget - Surrey, Bucks and Warwickshire. Four other counties so far unsuccessful.

ADEPT working with Defra and The County Councils Network have managed to get some standard environment text into these deals. Further details in meeting chat.

Herefordshire are still waiting for an update from Defra around nutrient/neutrality work for the river Wye plan.

Working Groups

Waste

Steve Palfrey (SP)

- No new information from Defra on EPR and new burdens money with nothing expected until November.
- Deposit Returns Scheme reportedly delayed until 2028 although Defra have responded to say this not the case but there is nothing visible happening.
- Responses to consultations due soon from Defra with two on simpler recycling and another from DESNZ on the introduction of the Emissions Trading Scheme.
- Highways waste – EA's position on hazardous chemicals in highways waste will have cost implications for LAs.

ACTION: SP following this up with the EA and will inform Mark Stevens (Engineering Board)

SP

Energy & Clean Growth

Sheryl French (SF) – *apologies received.*

Flood and Water Management

Max Tant (MT) / Alys Bishop (AB)

The group last met in January and a planned joint follow up meeting with the Natural Capital group around BNG/LNRS was postponed. The next meeting of the working group is due to take place in mid-April and they are looking to schedule another joint meeting with the Natural Capital group in Autumn.

The government finally released a response to the NIC report into surface water flooding which was published in 2022. ADEPT wrote a response to the government and supported a lot of it including supporting a different funding mechanism, however, the government response did not support this which is disappointing.

There is slightly more detail on the implementation of schedule 3 and government are still looking to do a consultation this year and will consult on an implementation timetable, although this is looking quite difficult now due to timescales.

A joint meeting of the Environment Board and Sustainable Growth Board took place at the end of February on water quality with input from the Defra Water Policy team, Water UK and the LGA. The notes and slides of this will be circulated in due course.

The 2nd round of the local nutrient management funding is now open, and the closing date is 26th April.

Natural Capital & Heritage

Liz Milne (LM) / Tim De Meyer (TDM) – *apologies received*.

David Sutherland provided a short update.

The group were due to meet recently, however, the meeting was postponed due to a PAS workshop on small sites BNG. Recent meetings have been focusing primarily on the implementation of BNG and LNRS.

BNG - There has been some feedback to the National Audit Office on the implementation of BNG and new burdens funding has been confirmed for the next financial year but nothing beyond. The LGA are potentially drafting a response in relation to ongoing concerns regarding implementation.

LNRS – There have been ongoing meetings between Defra and responsible authorities.

Earlier this month DD attended a meeting of Defra’s LNRS stakeholder engagement group (notes and slides circulated) and the update received from NE on timescales was that of the 48 authorities, 2 were aiming to publish their strategies by this October with a further 26 still aiming for March 2025 but there are 20 who aren’t likely to achieve this.

A LNRS webinar has been arranged for 26th April and ADEPT are working with colleagues at NE to put together an agenda.

Partners

Defra

Ola Ladapo (OL) / Kat Bell (KB)

Waste – meeting yesterday, SP attended - progress not moving as fast as wanted.

LNRS - Conversations with responsible authorities are still taking place but not further update.

Schedule 3 - No further update.

Any specific queries for relevant teams then please let OL or KB know.

Defra have confirmed that adaptation reporting is still voluntary for local authorities. See attached guidance and template for information.



Local Authority
Fourth Round Adapta



ANNEX G - ARP4 risk
assessment & action p

Also to note, the deadline date for LNRS of March 2025 is not a statutory deadline.

Additionally, The Climate Change Committee published a report on its independent assessment of the National Adaptation Program, and through the climate change board ADEPT will be discussing how to respond to this with partners such as the LGA and others.

The Nature markets framework update was published last week and the link can be found [here](#). Any thoughts/comments on this please feedback to KB.

Feedback requested on the Species Survival Fund and wider plans around the LNRS. The link to this can be found [here](#).

Defra are currently doing a piece of work around local government finance and there are plans to engage again with some of the bilaterals which they have been discussing different issues with.

Defra offering to support ADEPT work on Local EIP once a proposal can be articulated.

Natural England

Claire Warburton (CW)

- Still waiting to see the Sam Richards report on statutory consultees in the planning system in order to provide an update.
- NE are looking to have statutory chargeable services for nationally significant infrastructure projects in place starting 1st April.
- Defra select committee on Urban green space – useful recommendations around importance of green space. The link to this can be found [here](#).
- NE have been working with the PAS on the local nature recovery toolkit and 60 local authorities have engaged in testing this.
- Webinars – LNRS 26th April and BNG 17th June and another couple in development around green jobs and building healthier communities.
- Lloyd's bank has picked up a £250k investment in projects for nature platform.

Environment Agency

Rob Westcott (RW) - *apologies received*.

Environment Board Business

Carolyn McKenzie - *apologies received*.

ADEPT Business

Spring Conference 16th May followed by Annual President's Awards.

AOB

Future meetings-:

16th April – Environment Board Q2

21st May – May Environment Board