

## Monthly Environment Board Catch-Up

**Tuesday 21 May 2024**

**11:00-12:00**

### Notes

		<b>ACTION OWNER</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>CM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made to anyone new to the meeting.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Current service issues, pressures and risks</b></p> <p>Ash dieback is still ongoing within Surrey. Essex are auditing all their highways trees.</p> <p>SK still has an issue with where is Waste Guidance, information for collection authorities, still real lack of thinking around disposal authorities and no guidance on recycling credits and how this is going to work. Hard to plan with the budget without the information needed.</p> <p>Still waiting for consultation on emissions trading also local nature recovery strategy implementation in future years, there is no budget for this.</p> <p>CM agreed that the emissions trading will have a four to five million impact on Surrey, and this was something that as a group felt will need addressing further in a future meeting. Sustainable drainage approval body (SAB) consultation is due in July.</p> <p>BB food waste and the two-stage implementation of business and residential. Economically how can business be rolled out without domestic this will prove difficult.</p> <p>CM out for consultation is a DfT transport adaptation strategy and being circulated.</p> <p>DD confirmed the Department for Transport draft strategy on adaptation in transport system. This is something the government promised when they published the third national adaptation program last summer.</p> <p>The ADEPT draft response was discussed at the Climate Change Board and has subsequently been circulated for comment. The response has collated by Ed Shortridge who works for WSP, ADEPT transport and Connectivity Board policy officer. Comments are to be returned to Ed by 31 May 2024.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b>  <b>DD to circulate to the Environment Board.</b></p>	DD

DD commented LNRS, the understanding was the Defra have just been holding one to one catch up meetings with all the 48 responsible authorities and possibly where the funding conversations have been taken place for implementation of strategies once they have been developed.

Although responsible authorities have been funded for last year and in terms of developing the strategies, there is still nothing in terms of delivering it on the ground in future. The case for future funding will continue.

DD asked have there been any significant changes locally in terms of the political complexions of the authorities in your areas and neighbouring areas following last month's local elections?

SK confirmed this was the case (some Districts changing from Con to NOC) and the main concern was the waste strategy which has been one to two years in the making is going to cabinets in the next month, some of whom are new and the hope is that this is not now derailed.

CM confirmed that there had been changes in Surrey and there was no overall control by any party currently and no Conservative council left.

DD enquired if Conservative councillors were putting themselves forward for environmental agendas?

CM confirmed this was the case but with narrow environmental agendas inclusive of Biodiversity, and public rights of way is of high interest at a local level in Surrey.

### **Working groups**

#### **Energy and clean growth**

KR attended the energy and clean growth meeting – Julie Greaves presented on climate change risk assessment and how this is being looked at in Local authorities and recorded. How this information is recorded and used and used to demonstrate where there is a need for investment.

Energy doctor by Alexander Beckett from Buckinghamshire County Council followed by Nicola Stringer from West Sussex County Council on solar PV and battery storage program. Followed by an update from DESNEZ a submission was put in on the home upgrade grant and the issues. The hope is that Patrick will bring colleagues back to talk about HUG2 (then home upgrade grant 2) and what changes this will be bring as local authorities are having issues. This can be seen on the ADEPT website.

KR shared the link in the meeting chat. [here](#)

Attendees confirmed they were having issues with HUG2 also.

#### **Natural Capital**

DD – The group met on 20 May 2024 chaired by Tim De Keyser from Suffolk County Council who is co-chair along with Liz Milne. Natural England, Dave Bell and Claire Warburton presented on health and nature and the positive outcomes of access to nature and the positive outcomes for physical and mental health.

DD suggested this is picked up in a future meeting and discussed further.

Local authority training on natural capital was raised by colleagues from Cambridgeshire and North Yorkshire, if anyone is aware of training that is available to let DD know for collation to investigate, if there is a gap in the market and if this needs picking up by ADEPT.

Regular updates on LNRS on BNG. It was noted that the national audit office has just

published their report on the implementiaon of BNG.  
Link circulated by DD.

The main thing that RA's and LPA are still waiting for local planning authorities is the planning guidance on how to take LNRS into account in making local plans and development decisions.

There was no one in attendance from the planning advisory service, Becky Mobberley, who was the BNG lead at PAS, has now changed her role to wider DLUHC planning work. The BNG lead is now Martin Hutchings. Krista Patrick has also returned to his ssubstantive role at Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Water quality was also mentioned, DD is putting together an agenda for the second water quality event and would welcome suggestions on what aspects to focus on from along the lines of practicalities of where local authorities get involved in catchment planning and how to improve river quality as part of the LNRS.

There is not currently a date for this webinar.

**ACTION:**

***Members to send suggestions to DD for webinar.***

CM suggested looking at what is underneath governments environmental improvement plan on water and water quality, we could potentially use that as a framework for teasing out some of the issues in terms of the next Environment Board in July.

Training on national capital accounting and how it links to ecosystem services is a good subject matter.

**Flooding**

KR updated, IDB levies was presented on. There was an update from Syria Jim Davies from the Environment Agency talked about flood and water management in BNG and LNRS. Will Harrington and Tatiana Cholesky from Defra talked about the government response to the NIC Surface Water report.

There is also some work going on with that group between Stephen Tupper from the Environment Agency and a number of people who volunteered to talk to him about surface water delivery and how we can improve that.

**Defra update**

**BNG**

- The Defra BNG team are keen to continue engaging at all levels of LPAs and welcomes ADEPT's help in linking to senior colleagues.
- The LGA wrote to Defra in March about the off-site markets and new burden funding issues. Minister Pow replied to the letter on 24 April

**LNRS**

- Defra has recently concluded a series of "1 to 1" meetings with each responsible authority (RA) to check in on progress and encourage LNRS preparation to continue at pace so that LNRSs can come online by early 2025.
- RAs will be receiving their year 2 funding from June.
- The commitment remains to fund all new burdens, but any future funding beyond March 2025 needs to be agreed through the SR process.

**Waste reforms**

**DRS**

- A Written Ministerial Statement - [WMS](#) and two [policy statements](#) were published 25<sup>th</sup> April on the **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)**.

All

### **pEPR**

- The Government consulted on the draft regulations that will introduce pEPR in summer 2023 and on 1st May 2024 notified the draft regulations to the World Trade Organisation and to the European Union. Amendments were made to the draft regulations to improve their clarity and operability.
- Following agreed notification periods at the WTO and the EU, pEPR legislation will be brought before the UK Parliament later this year, with the aim of it coming into force across the UK by the 1 January 2025.
- Local authorities will start to receive pEPR payments from financial year 2025/26. It is expected that local authorities will receive these payments in late 2025/early 2026. It is also expected that they will be provided with an initial indication of these amounts by the end of 2024.
- We encourage LAs to speak to DLUHC if wanting further information regarding the wider local government funding position, in light of pEPR.

### **UK ETS**

- The consultation on proposals to include waste in the UK ETS launched on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-emissions-trading-scheme-scope-expansion-waste>

SK enquired regarding the funding formula, it is not transparent and would be helpful to see those for a better understanding. There has also been a lot of information about collections but not enough around disposals and this is needed.

Feedback on simpler recycling and the ability to mix food and garden waste, is not welcome this will create a significant cost burden for disposal authorities in the tune of millions of pounds. It is cheaper to drop a collection but to introduce this has large cost implications.

CM agreed this is an issue across the board with the separation or garden and food.

BB enquired who he needs to engage with at Defra .

### **ACTION**

***OL to send information of contact to BB.***

DD – confirmed they were pleased to see colleagues Vince Kiddell and Lucy Holland from Defra attend the Environment Board quarterly meeting. A big practical issue at the moment is off site BNG for a lot of local authorities where those improvements cannot be delivered within the site of the development application. There is a struggle with the practicality of developing and implementing BNG on land that they own themselves. Government guidance has three routes for this, but Councils are trying to find their own way individually and some are seeking their own Legal advice, Surrey and Buckinghamshire being two of these.

Is there a need for Defra to put on a practical workshop for ecologists and planners for the most practical ways to achieve off site BNG.

SK asked that this also included legal services for training.

CM is happy to share Surrey's legal advice around collective 106's and where authorities are asking for more than 10% and there is a push back, how we can link that into the local nature recovery strategy and strengthening the link between the local nature recovery strategy and BNG.

DD – off site BNG's there are only currently six designated responsible bodies currently, with other applications in the pipeline. This is a lengthy process and bureaucratic to

OL

become accredited and DD asked why every local authority simply be designated as a responsible body, rather than having to go through a whole series of individual application and evaluation processes? This would help with the simplification of the process.

**ACTION**

***OL to ask the team if this is something that is possible and get back to the group.***

**Natural England**

There were no attendees to this meeting.

**Environment Agency**

Sylvie Allan from The Environment agency deputising on behalf Rob Westcott.

2024/2025 business plan was launched 20<sup>th</sup> May, this is what they will be delivering across our diverse range of roles as a regulator, advisor, operator and responder.

Key areas:

Improving water quality, significant focus for our organisation delivering our six-year flood defence program and maintaining our assets that's supporting governments ambitions for waste reduction and delivery of the waste strategy.

Maintaining our performance on regulatory activities and delivering our role as the government's advisor on pollution and environmental risk. Setting goals and business plans for the year ahead.

Local investment in natural capital (LINC), that link projects and colleagues in the environment agencies, future funding team have developed a new community of practice sites designed to host link learning resources. Inclusive of updates on the differing approaches of local authorities in order to secure green finance access is available to ADEPT members by request.

(SA added link in meeting chat to Clarie Tunningley email for further materials)

Considering future opportunities to share learning from that LINC program with the ADEPT membership through input to the natural capital working group, also potentially through a bespoke webinar around legacy learning from the link program.

Colleagues have been teamed up with the Town and Country Planning Association to develop a suite of online resources aimed at planners and flood risk professionals working in the in the public sector. Courses are designed to help build knowledge and understanding of the key principles underpinning planning for example flood risk courses on applying the sequential and exception tests and flood risk assessments for planning applications.

These courses are interactive and free of charge on eLearning hub hosted by TCPA. (link added to chat of meeting)

Ahead of the July adapting Environment Board, the environment agency are happy to bring to the meeting environmental equity and evolving Environment Agency works.

SY confirmed they would be happy to input into a water quality workshop as previously discussed and welcomed any leads to ensure the correct people are in attendance.

OL

	<p>CM confirmed they would like an Equity item at the board in July. OL confirmed he would flag the recommendation for training around natural capital.</p> <p>DD confirmed green finance training had largely focused on decarbonisation of buildings and transport and infrastructure rather than nature and green infrastructure and keen to extend this. LINC projects and community of practice have been followed very carefully and will be included in design further green finance training.</p> <p>DD asked SY if it would be possible for a representative from the agency to attend each of the regional boards to understand the regional implications of the national business plan?</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> <i>SY, DD and KR to meet up offline to discuss dates and particularities further.</i></p> <p><b>ADEPT Business</b> KR - Gen Z recruitment campaign going well, 5 local authorities are involved Gloucestershire, Plymouth, Oxfordshire, Barnsley and Hounslow. Launching a leadership pathways program for managers complementing the leadership development program. The rapid adaptation pathway assessment work has kicked off, we are looking for three pilot locations to do a workshop to then develop a toolkit. Working with the Environment Agency focusing on flood and coastal risk. The Woodland Creation Accelerator Forum is now open to all, this is not just those people who are in receipt of the fund it is open to everyone. KR confirmed she is now on the environment agencies £25 million natural flood Management program board presenting ADEPT and local authorities.</p> <p>DD added the ADEPT spring conference was very successful with the Installation of the new president and the President's Awards dinner in the evening.</p>	SY/DD/KR
3.	<p><b>AOB</b> CM enquired if the attendees still found the meetings useful as numbers of attendees was small and if people still found these meetings useful and would canvas the group on opinion.</p>	