

MINUTES, ACTIONS & DECISION NOTES

Meeting title	ADEPT Midlands Regional Board
Location/Platform	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Date and time	Friday 21 st June 2024, 9am-12pm
Apologies	Angie Astley, Maria Machancoses, Chris Henning, Victoria Lazenby, Phil Edwards, Darryl Eyers, Joe Battye, John Roseblade, George Candler

Attendees	Organisation
Andy Gutherson (AG) - <i>Chair</i>	Lincolnshire County Council
Claire Brailsford (CB)	Derbyshire County Council
Hannah Bartram (HB)	ADEPT
Derek Higton (DH)	Nottinghamshire County Council
Dean Ward (DW)	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Adrian Hill (AH)	Active Travel England
Mary Morrissey (MM)	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Lynne Stinson (LS)	Leicestershire County Council
Jon Vining (JV)	Staffordshire County Council
Alexandra Dodds (AD)	Midlands Connect
Mark Ryder (MR)	Warwickshire County Council
Rebecca Hawthorne (RH)	Birmingham City Council
Louise Clare (LC)	Department for Transport
Kylie Russell (KR)	ADEPT
Penny Sharp (PS)	Rutland County Council
Abigail Wells (AW) - <i>Notes</i>	Lincolnshire County Council
Guest speakers	Organisation
Josh Hawkins (JH)	Midlands Engine
Helen Boyle (HBo)	SSE
Chris Yorston (CY)	Lincolnshire County Council

Agenda Item

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

AG welcomed attendees to the meeting, and encouraged the group to introduce themselves when engaging with presenters. AG briefly highlighted the proposed agenda items for the session, and welcomed recommendations for future items.

2 Review of Previous Meeting Minutes and Actions

The group were invited to review the minutes and actions recorded in the Board Meeting on 8th March 2024:

- Relating to Actions 1 to 3, AG confirmed that that these are now completed, and would be reflected upon under agenda item 3.
- Relating to Action 4, AG confirmed that a future item would be scheduled on National Highways Decarbonisation.

- Relating to Action 5, HB confirmed that an appointment has been diarised.
- Relating to Action 7, HB confirmed that engagement has been ongoing with Devolution Level 2 authorities, and all attendees would be welcome to join the discussion.
- Relating to Action 8, AG confirmed that a Leicester location will be confirmed for the September Board meeting.

3 Reflections on UKREiiF 2024

AG welcomed JH to the meeting and highlighted the opportunity to reflect upon UKREiiF 2024. JH reported that the 100 sqm Midlands Engine pavilion was a successful smaller bespoke space. UKREiiF has grown exponentially, and approx. 13,000 people attended the conference; 25% were consultants, 15% were public sector, 10% were investor/funder, 10% were developers, 8% were architects, and 5% were lawyers. A pavilion is to be secured for 2025, with 14 purchasable slots being made available for sessions. Similarly, private meeting room space will be procured to support roundtables and private conversations. A large presence is expected from cities such as London at UKREiiF 2025, following securing a 200 sqm floating pontoon, which will be rented out for speaking slots. JH noted that local authorities may want to consider how this could impact the way in which they approach the conference. Following the conference, the below areas for exploration were noted:

- To ensure greater value in 2025, Midlands Engine are lobbying Built Environment Networking to streamline the programme to avoid conflicting conversations/events.
- Midlands Engine are exploring local authority led ‘Meet the Investor’ sessions at UKREiiF 2025 to make for a more directed and impactful event than previous iterations. AG and MR proposed that a sector or theme approach may enable more targeted and streamlined conversations.
- Midlands Engine are looking to support an agent familiarisation tool around UKREiiF.
- Deutsche Bank have engaged with Midlands Engine around building retrofit, and are seeking contacts with housing entities. Attendees were encouraged to engage with JH if interested in an introduction.
- TIAA (USA) have indicated interest in affordable housing and are looking to connect with Local Authorities. JH highlighted that DBT are leading on this.

The group were invited to share any reflections on UKREiiF from an organisational perspective, and agreed that the Midlands Engine pavilion was a useful tool to conduct presentation activities during the conference. Further reflections included:

- Greater Lincolnshire – AG highlighted the benefits of securing a Greater Lincolnshire pavilion and noted successes in engaging with attendees and developing networks.
- Coventry and Warwickshire – MR reflected that the pavilion approach was useful, though the format and location for West Midlands was challenging. UKREiiF has been noted as a more preferable approach to Members than MIPIN, and due to the positive networking opportunities this year, there will be a similar presence in 2025.
- Staffordshire – JV advised that a strong Staffordshire delegation attended the conference, and a paper has been developed for their Leaders meeting to explore attendance in 2025.
- ADEPT – HB noted that the ADEPT and Tile Hill Fringe Dinner was impacted by location and weather. Whilst ADEPT would not look to secure their own stand, colleagues are exploring opportunities for a greater presence at the conference in 2025 (i.e. bespoke roundtables).

JH advised that a costings proposal will be developed and circulated to authorities for 2025, and it was agreed that the Board would revisit plans for UKREiIF 2025 later in the year.

ACTION:

1. AW to schedule a future UKREiIF 2025 board update.

4 Investment Opportunities

HBo joined the meeting to share details on investment opportunities with SSE. HBo advised that SSE are looking to develop and deliver local regeneration renewable energy projects between private and public sector organisations in their local areas. These projects are designed to support organisations in meeting their net zero goals, whilst delivering social value to communities and bypassing additional pressure on the grid. Through the NZAP Plus (Net Zero Acceleration Programme), SSE has £20 billion of funding to spend on local regeneration renewable energy projects.

HBo highlighted the importance of social value for SSE and referenced the commitment to working with local areas to understand individual needs. Local Hubs are being developed across UK to support local employment and delivery of social value projects in collaboration with the public sector. SSE have developed a Regionalisation Strategy to achieve net zero and social value. The strategy focusses on:

- Embedding in regions – utilising internal skillsets/expertise to support delivery
- Supporting realisation of regions’ net zero ambitions
- Enabling connection with energy stakeholders/attract investment

The group were invited to engage with HBo directly to discuss opportunities to deliver local regeneration renewable energy projects within their local areas.

MM advised that Solihull Council have decided to build a heat energy network in the town centre, and offered to engage with any attendees interested in navigating similar projects.

ACTIONS:

2. HBo to share contact details with the group.
3. MM to arrange a future item on the Solihull Heat Energy Network.

5 Emissions Trading Scheme

CY joined the meeting to share a presentation on the Emissions Trading Scheme. CY highlighted that the scheme was designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by capping emissions each year and taxing each tonne of carbon produced. The government is intending to widen the scope of the Emissions Trading Scheme to include waste incineration by 2028, to encourage the industry to move towards greener technologies. Exemptions will be in place for smaller installations, producing less than 25,000 tonnes. Once included in the Emissions Trading Scheme, operators of waste facilities and incineration facilities will be liable for carbon tax payments; a cost pass through mechanism will allow operators to pass through charges to the customer (i.e. the local authority). The current carbon price projection for 2028 is £98 per tonne, and this is expected to rise to £111 in 2034 and £142 in 2050. CY advised that, to mitigate financial liabilities, carbon capture (though noted to be of significant cost, and with uncertain viability in the waste industry) and waste minimisation could be explored.

The group discussed engagement with the consultation to highlight the significant financial implications of the amendment to the Emissions Trading Scheme for Local Authorities. HB highlighted that the ADEPT Waste Group are drafting a response to the consultation due to the potential impact of the waste industry.

ACTIONS:

- 4. HB to share the ADEPT Waste Group response to the Emissions Trading scheme with CY.
- 5. AW to schedule a future Emissions Trading Scheme board item.

6 Flood Alleviation Works

DW shared a presentation with the group, highlighting property flood resilience schemes undertaken in Solihull. DW highlighted that 200 properties were impacted by internal flooding, following an isolated weekend storm in 2018. Following initial assessments between the flooding team and the Environment Agency, it was noted that there were no traditional engineering projects which could provide impactful protection from future events. Resultantly, the decision was taken to explore property flood resilience measures and sign up residents for home enhancements. Whilst pursuing these works, 400 properties were impacted by internal flooding, following a further weekend storm in June 2021. Utilising knowledge gathered from the 2018 storm, the flooding team were able to reach out to those affected to support with property flood resilience. DW noted the importance of support and engagement for residents to highlight the benefits of property flood resilience and to reassure them of the low visual impact of works.

DW noted that 295 residents signed up to the property flood resilience scheme, and all works have now been delivered. Solihull Council have also enhanced social media infrastructure to provide 24/7 flood alerts to residents. Similarly, the property flood resilience contractor paid for 300 trees to be planted (one for each property supported within the project) as a social value project.

The group discussed risk mapping and challenges relating to implementing property flood resilience before an event. DW highlighted that a new property flood resilience framework is in development, which would enable funding to transition from a reactive measure to a proactive measure. AG and CB reflected on similar storm events within their local authority areas, highlighting the significant resource and capacity impacts for flood teams, and accessibility of accredited contractors to carry out property flood resilience works.

7 Devolution

AG shared an overview of the GL Devolution Deal with the group, and highlighted the impact of the general election announcement on progress. AG advised that the consultation and engagement process with residents was completed, and a deal proposal was submitted to the Secretary of State for review. Detailed negotiations were underway relating to the statutory instruments; the statutory instruments did not make it into the parliamentary wrap up process. GL Leaders and colleagues are preparing to engage with the incoming government and civil servants regarding moving the deal forward. AG advised that £28 million of capital investment had been agreed in addition to the deal to highlight the positive community benefit from Devolution. However, the supporting capital business cases had not been fully signed off before the election was announced, and the funding has not been released (with uncertainty over if/when it will be released). A risk which may exist for GL, is that an incoming government

may reopen the debate on whether the boundaries for the devolution deal are right. Despite these concerns, there is hope that the incoming government will enable GL to readjust current timetables which will enable the election of a Mayor as planned in May 2025.

DH advised that Labour Mayor, Clare Ward, has now been elected for the EMCCA, which is now providing clarity on the proposed route forward for the organisation and is allowing for the development of a Mayoral Voice. As a result of the general election announcement, funding and policy workstreams have been paused. DH noted Mayor Ward's interest in areas of social policy, such as homelessness, which had not originally been considered under the EM Devolution Deal. DH highlighted that the main challenge for EMCCA following the general election announcement is funding uncertainty. Approx. £4 billion worth of funding streams had been lined up for the CA over a period of 10-15 years; future allocations are now uncertain and this is therefore impacting ability to effectively plan for the future. DH advised that the EMCCA is in the early stages of rapid expansion, with the LEP team now having transferred across to the authority, and 30 staff currently working for the organisation. It is predicted that by 2025, there will be 100 staff working for the CA, and this will therefore bring with it the challenges faced when developing a new organisation.

MM reported that Labour Mayor, Richard Parker, has recently been elected for the WMCA, and is currently restructuring and reviewing all member boards, working groups and sub groups. MM highlighted that Mayor Parker is also rebranding WMCA strategies. It is anticipated that the deeper devolution deal for WMCA will stand, but with a change in emphasis to jobs and skills. Through deeper devolution, a longer term funding deal will be secured, which will result in each constituent local authority developing place based strategies, to enable bidding for funding. MM, MR and RH considered political alignments between the CA, Solihull, Birmingham City and Warwickshire local governments, and the need to re-establish working relationships where the ruling political party has changed. MR highlighted that a level two devolution deal has been secured for the Warwickshire county area, which will devolve control of UKSPF and the Adult Education budget.

The group reflected on uncertainty related to devolution following the general election announcement, and agreed to continue to discuss devolution at a regional level.

ACTION:

- 6. AW to schedule a future Board item on Devolution.

8	BSIP, Network North and LTF
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Due to the impact of the General Election announcement, the group agreed to defer this item to the September Board agenda.

9	ADEPT Updates
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HB shared ADEPT updates with the group; these updates are available within Appendix 1.

10	Information Sharing
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JV informed attendees that, on the journey to net zero, Staffordshire would need to sequester an additional 7000-1000 tonnes of carbon per annum. A proposed method for this is tree planting, and the authority have been considering appropriate projects and schemes to deliver

this. JV asked the group whether they are facing similar decisions regarding tree planting strategies:

- MM agreed to connect JV and the Solihull Council Head of Parks. MM noted that an internal target of planting 250,000 trees over a 10 year period had been set, though no budget has been allocated. Therefore, planting activity is being facilitated via funding bids and developer contributions.
- MR agreed to connect JV with Warwickshire colleagues, who are establishing a tree nursery within the authority area.
- RH agreed to connect JV with Birmingham City Council's Tree Officer.

JV highlighted concerns regarding ability to spend Levelling Up Funding provided through the November 2023 tranche, as a result of the general election. JV asked the group whether they are experiencing similar challenges. It was confirmed that no colleagues in the meeting were experiencing this challenge.

ACTIONS:

7. MM, MR and RH to make connections between Tree Officers and JV.
8. MR to facilitate a future agenda item on the Warwickshire Tree Nursery.

11 AOB

AG reflected on the agreement to hold an in-person Board meeting in September and encouraged attendees to carve out space to attend in their diaries, or to identify suitable deputies to join the session. AG advised that the meeting would be taking place in Leicester, with further details to be confirmed shortly, and highlighted that a networking lunch would take place following the session. The group were also encouraged to share any further items for the September agenda.

Next meeting:

Monday 30th September 2024, 10:30am-1:30pm

Location TBC