

ADEPT - Energy & Clean Growth Working Group Minutes

Date & Time:	Thursday 24th October 2024, 13:00 – 14:30
Venue:	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Chair:	Sheryl French – Assistant Director, Climate Change and Energy Services, Cambridgeshire County Council
Attendees:	Alison Dickinson – Project Manager, Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (ADI) Chitra Nadarajah - Head of Service, Climate Change & Environmental Strategy, Hampshire County Council (CNA) Jordan Clydesdale – Wiltshire Council (JCL) Katie Sargent – Greener Futures Group Manager, Surrey County Council (KSA) Kofi Adu-Gyamfi - Climate Change Service Lead, West Berkshire Council (KAD) Lynn Trigwell – Head of Climate and Environment, Wiltshire Council (LTR) Margaret Enstone – Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer, Darlington Borough Council (MEN) Marouane Azennoud – Energy Manager, West Northamptonshire Council (MAZ) Patrick Allcorn - Head of Local Energy, DESNZ (PAL)
Guests:	Andrew Alty – West Berkshire Council Andrew Oswald – West Suffolk Council Ben Fiske – West Suffolk Council
Note Taker:	Bayley Wooldridge – Energy Projects Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council (BWO)
Apologies:	Alex Beckett Daire Casey David Dale Doug Eltham Hannah Bartram Kylie Russell

Item No.	Item
1.	<p><u>Welcome, minutes and actions from the last meeting</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2024 were agreed as a correct record.</p>
2.	<p><u>Kerbo Charge Cross Trial – West Berkshire</u></p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Highways Act 1980 doesn't currently allow for on street charging. • The council considered various options such as Green Mole (EV charging channel), Oxford Direct Services (Gul-e system), Charge Arm (pole hanging over the footway). • The council chose to use Kerbo Charge Channel – a polymer channel with a self-closing lid, installed flush with the footway. It takes less than one hour to install and has minimal impact on utilities. <p><u>The Trial</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The trial cost less than £3,000, so direct award was allowed. • An S178 license is issued and incurs a one-off cost for the resident (£181). The license does not guarantee a parking space and ensures the Council cannot be indemnified. The resident is responsible for the upkeep of the channel. • The application process is online. If successful, the resident must apply for planning permission (required for the charge point, not the channel). • A grant is available to residents. <p><u>Key Notes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council are considering producing a Local Development Order to save planning team resource and resident money. • The council do not have a contractual agreement with Kerbo Charge and are open to using other suppliers. • The insurance team had many questions but were satisfied with the project team's responses. <p>In discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict of interest – by facilitating more on street charging, are residents less likely to use council-installed charge points using LEVI funding? Whilst LEVI does bring in revenue for the council, its primary goal is to allow more residents to charge. • The website and license wording makes clear to residents they do not have dedicated parking as a result of the channel installation. • Wiltshire Council has just completed a Local Development Order for septic tank installations and note that the process was straightforward.
3.	<p><u>UK Infrastructure Bank – West Suffolk Council</u></p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Community Energy Plan was produced in 2015. Creates renewable energy revenue and supports households and businesses. • The council has an ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030. • The council owns a 12.4MW solar farm (Toggam) which currently sells electricity to the grid. 45% of electricity used by the council is generated at Toggam Solar Farm, arranged via Urban Chain. • 8MW of solar installed on roofs in West Suffolk – the Council funds the installations and sells the electricity to the building user via a PPA (15p/kWh). £7 million investment and 100 customers so far. <p><u>UK Infrastructure Bank</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20-year £17m loan to cover buildings, solar, and EV projects. • Cheaper loan than PWLB (approx. £60,000 per year) but will require more reporting. • £5m to be drawn down each year. <p>In discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the upfront workload and reporting requirements require increased staff resource, the saving per year compared to PWLB is worthwhile.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The £17m figure was agreed as the projects were already earmarked. It is likely the council can now request increases to the loan without the same level of initial workload required. UKIB need to see the projects are deliverable.
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Update from DESNZ</u> PAL gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The budget is one week away. Finance gap suggests there won't be much money available. The National Wealth Fund has been created to act as both a fundraiser and a bank. GB Energy is being set up. The Local Power Plan is a part of this. Warm Homes programmes have launched. There is a move away from bidding to allocation. Heat Network Zoning team are doing lots of work on heat zoning and prioritising locations. Devolution trailblazers are still going ahead with money being given as single settlement. Any local authorities in those areas would need to approach their combined authority for building retrofit funding (PSDS, SHDF, WHLG), not central government. A devolution announcement is expected soon. The local net zero forum is being redesigned – ADEPT and local authority groups will be involved in this. <p><u>HUG2 Letter & Roundtable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 40 local authorities were represented at the meeting by officers and directors (no chief executives). The meeting began with the HUG2 team stating that local authorities were not performing well and HUG2 wasn't working. The local authorities pushed back on this statement. HUG2 team welcomed feedback and suggestions for increasing delivery over the next 6 months, and the meeting ended with a more positive outlook. Take home message was that this is the last opportunity for local authorities to deliver. If the next scheme does not show improvement, funding may no longer be available. Ministers need to be convinced that local authorities are the right organisations to deliver these schemes. <p>In discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the hubs are supporting local authorities with WHLG bids. If local authorities have the resource to bid for the WHLG themselves, they can do so without engagement with their hub. Intermittent funding opportunities has not allowed the supply chain to grow. PAL warns that funding won't be ringfenced for retrofit schemes post-devolution, so officers will have to bid for funding internally against other services. Concerns were raised over the clawback if local authorities exceed the 15% A&A limit.
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Update from ADEPT</u> HBA shared the below written update:</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> DfT recently ran a consultation on updates to the bus franchising guidance, seeking to remove more technical barriers to franchising and support safer and more accessible services. The ADEPT response is here. Also on buses - the Government has committed to undertaking an urgent review into the effectiveness of Enhanced Partnerships (EPs). This review will be an opportunity to provide an assessment of EP delivery performance against the aims and objectives of the Transport Act and will seek to identify where EPs can be improved and strengthened to deliver a better standard of bus services. DfT has set up a stakeholder group – firstly to focus on how well EPs are working, in terms of governance processes and content, to inform options for primary legislative changes. The wider review will take place over a few months and will be a more in-depth analysis of EPs. They envisage it will include collating and analysing existing EP project delivery data across all LTAs and assessing performance. It is intended to highlight good practice, as well as challenges, and inform a set of mainly non-legislative recommendations. The Government has said it will publish 'the first integrated national transport strategy the country has ever had' ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The formation of the strategy, which the reviews suggests should cover England but with a framework for cross-border links to Scotland and Wales, will be separate to the review of transport projects announced by the Government in late July, and this is expected ahead of the Government's

budget on 30 October. The INTS will be formally launched in November, with publication by Autumn 2025. Danny Williams, CEO of Active Travel England, is the lead officer.

Devolution / Growth / Planning

4. We have refreshed the Housing Policy Position ([here](#)) and produced a summary briefing note ([here](#)). Our housing priorities are: 1) Building more new homes 2) A planning system that delivers great places 3) Improving the quality and safety of existing homes 4) Delivering homes for health and wellbeing 5) Working towards zero carbon and climate resilient homes and 6) Access, affordability and security. We have sent these to Matthew Pennycook, the Housing Minister and requested a meeting. Housing is also the focus for one of the Autumn Conference plenaries.
5. ADEPT responded to the consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF – see [here](#)). The consultation sought views on the proposed approach to revising the NPPF in order to achieve sustainable growth in the planning system. It was also looking for feedback on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. In total there were 106 questions. We are supportive of a number of the proposals, such as the recognition of the value of strategic planning and made the point that we would like to see the early introduction of the new arrangements to establish some stability in the planning system. Our response also makes clear that we have significant concerns about the new standard method for assessing housing need. We would advocate for an appropriate and robust standard method informed by ONS population projections and demand driven by economic growth plans, rather than an arbitrary supply-side methodology. We also disagreed with the proposal that all local planning authorities should be required to continually demonstrate 5 years of specific, deliverable sites for decision making purposes, regardless of plan status. MHCLG confirmed it received over 10,000 responses and remains committed to announcing the changes before Christmas 2024.
6. The final session of the ADEPT thought leadership programme (PACE) was a masterclass in how best to ‘make the case for place’ using Nuneaton as its focus. The outcomes will be shared in a plenary at the Autumn Conference; in addition, we will be publishing an assessment tool for all ADEPT members to use, which will be launched at the Autumn Conference. The summary document from session two is available [here](#).

Environment / Climate

7. In July the new government outlined its five priorities for improving the environment: Clean up rivers, lakes and seas, Create a roadmap to move Britain to a zero-waste economy, Boost food security, Ensure nature’s recovery and Protect communities from the dangers of flooding. Just before the summer recess the Government announced a rapid review of the EIP with the emphasis on collaboration and delivery. In September there was a very brief first phase consultation with stakeholders, asking for a short response to the overarching question “What key priorities (across policy, process, delivery, engagement) would you recommend government focuses on in a revised EIP to significantly improve the natural environment?”. ADEPT’s response can be found [here](#). We outlined the following key priorities for a revised EIP: • Greater emphasis on a place-based approach • Support for the development of Local EIPs to clarify the role of the local authority • Sufficient and sustainable funding for local authorities to play this role • Statutory duties and targeted funding for local authorities where appropriate • The EIP should be a framework for policy alignment across government strategies, departments, and funding streams • Green finance – building capacity to mobilise private investment at scale • Health and wellbeing. ADEPT is represented at Defra’s cross-sector Stakeholder Advisory Group that will help steer further engagement as the review progresses through the autumn.
8. The LGA has established the *Local Climate Action Network* - a network of umbrella organisations including ADEPT, Local Partnerships, Solace, CCN, DCN, London Councils, Core Cities, UK100, APSE. It provides the opportunity to reflect on current challenges and opportunities in respect of local climate action, to share partners’ current and future project plans, and to explore potential to collaborate around positions/asks on key strategic priorities. In addition, the LGA has commissioned Local Partnerships to work on developing the ‘ask’ of the new Government to allow local government to support them in the delivery of their manifesto climate commitments. Jo Wall from LP presented initial findings to the Leadership Team recently. They have focused recommendations around 1) climate leadership 2) Clean Power 2030 & Great British Energy 3) energy systems reform 4) jobs and finance 5) warm homes and 6) protecting nature.

	<p>9. Along with the refreshed Housing policy position and priority asks, we have recently published other priority policy asks: transport (here), resource & waste (here), climate change and green growth (here). We have also revised the Resources & Waste policy position (here).</p> <p>Events/Other</p> <p>10. We received 60 expressions of interest for our new Leadership Pathway Programme – an amazing response! Given this, we are going to run with a larger cohort than originally planned and there will be two facilitators. We will be launching a call for expressions of interest for the Leadership Development Programme 2025 in early November.</p> <p>11. The month's Climate Change blog (here) is by Louise Marix Evans, and is focusing on how devolution can drive environmental ambition.</p> <p>12. Dates for your diary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ADEPT / Natural England webinar “Building healthier communities in our towns and cities: making the most of the benefits of nature” takes place 11:00-12:30 on Friday 8th November. If you would like to attend please email Hannah Bartram (here). <p>13. Booking is open for the Autumn Conference, being held in Bristol on 21st & 22nd November. We have managed to keep the cost the same as 2023 and introduced a multi-booking discount for local authorities. To book see here.</p>										
6.	<p><u>Local Area Energy Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridgeshire have procured a stakeholder engagement group and are currently procuring their technical specification. Aiming to have something in place by summer 2025 in time to influence the UKPN business plan. • PAL recommends engaging with other local authorities in your RESP area to ensure consistency. • Worcestershire – datasets have been in development since 2022 and will be publishing a map shortly. West Midlands combined authority are rolling out their LAEP+ tool which is a digital twin, and have acquired Ofgem funding to roll out the tool across the regional local authorities. This will go live on 01/11/2024. • Wiltshire – SWNZH are supporting a group of county councils in the region. The hub is leading on a tender process, Wiltshire are currently working on the technical specification. Also working with SSEN using their LENZA tool. • Concerns over ESC using LAEP as a brand. Some local authorities are not using ESC due to the costs. 										
7.	<p><u>Roundtable Feedback and Discussions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Growth Plans – concern over disconnect between DESNZ and MHCLG. 										
8.	<p><u>Forward agenda planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Chain – West Suffolk Council • LAEP+ Tool – Worcestershire County Council • SSEN LENZA tool and SWNZH work – Wiltshire Council • Local Growth Plans – Neil Whitney, DESNZ 										
9.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Berkshire Council are planning to tender for a 20MW solar farm. • SFR is leaving Cambridgeshire County Council at the end of December. The working group expressed their thanks to Sheryl for doing a great job chairing the group. Action: Anyone willing to volunteer as the new chair from January 2025 onwards to email SFR. 										
10.	<p><u>Upcoming Energy & Clean Growth Consultations/Calls for Evidence</u></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="252 1666 1385 1917"> <thead> <tr> <th>Consultation</th> <th>Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Innovation in the energy retail market</td> <td>27/11/2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capacity Market: proposals to maintain security of supply and enable flexible capacity to decarbonise</td> <td>10/12/2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capacity Market: call for evidence on proposals to maintain security of supply and enable flexible capacity to decarbonise</td> <td>10/12/2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consultation on the onshore electricity transmission Early Competition commercial framework</td> <td>02/12/2024</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Consultation	Deadline	Innovation in the energy retail market	27/11/2024	Capacity Market: proposals to maintain security of supply and enable flexible capacity to decarbonise	10/12/2024	Capacity Market: call for evidence on proposals to maintain security of supply and enable flexible capacity to decarbonise	10/12/2024	Consultation on the onshore electricity transmission Early Competition commercial framework	02/12/2024
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10.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 2nd December 2024 13:00 – 15:00 via Microsoft Teams.</p>										