

ADEPT AI Notes

Date: 28th November 2024

Time: 14:30 – 15:30

Location: MS Teams

Present:	
Sophie Broadfield – Chair BANES Council	Kylie Russell – Deputy CEO East Sussex - ADEPT
Sally Farley – Plymouth Council	Josie Gough – DBT
Meg Booth – Devon Council	Wendy Lane – BCP Council
Hannah Shrimpton – Peninsula Transport	David Carter – Torbay Council
Ann Carruthers – Leicester Council	

Guest Speaker	Claire Wood – South Glos Council
Guest Speaker	Ben Kempner – DfT

Item No	
1	Welcome – Sophie Broadfield - Chair
<p>Sophie Broadfield, the Executive Director for Sustainable Communities at Bath and Northeast Somerset Council, introduced herself and other participants, including Ann Carruthers, Kylie Russell, Claire Wood, Sally Farley, Hannah Shrimpton, Ben Kempner, Meg Booth, Wendy Lane, and Josie Gough.</p>	
<p>Apologies: Carol Maclellan, Nigel Blackler, Philip Robinson, Philip Williams, Alan Denby, Paul Hewitt, Sophie Hosking, Kathryn Haworth, Samantha Howell, Nicky Williams.</p>	
2	Update ADEPT – Kylie Russell
<p>Transport</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Secretary of State for Transport Louise Haigh will launch her vision for the Integrated National Transport Strategy on Thursday 28th November. She will set out her plan for the strategy and her vision for a future transport system where people and their needs are put at the heart of how we design, build and operate transport. 2. The Chancellor announced an extra £500m for local roads maintenance in the recent Autumn Budget (here). ADEPT’s response to the budget is here. 3. The Autumn has been very productive and exciting for ADEPT Live Labs 2. Here’s our round up of key activity. <p>Devolution / Growth / Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. In advance of the Autumn Budget, ADEPT joined forces with ADCS, ADPH and ADASS to publish a co-signed letter and briefing on local government finances (here). Our key asks were: 1) A fundamental review of local government funding 2) Introduction of multi-year funding settlements 3) Removal of siloed and short-term funding streams and 4) Clarity on the future of a wide range of fixed term funding pots. 	

5. ADEPT has responded to the government consultation on its 'Invest 2035: Modern Industrial Strategy' Green Paper. Welcomed the government's long-term commitment to a Modern Industrial Strategy, emphasising that sustainable economic growth requires consistent, pro-growth policies, investment in infrastructure, and support for businesses, people, and places. Our response highlights the critical role of local authorities in addressing infrastructure gaps, supporting diverse economies, and ensuring the strategy benefits all communities, not just growth sectors or city regions. The response can be seen [here](#).

Environment / Climate

7. We held the 3rd in the series of joint webinars with Natural England (NE) on 8th November, a successful session on nature and health with almost 60 participants and a panel of speakers from NE, South Gloucestershire Council, ADPH, UK Health Alliance on Climate Change and Intelligent Health. If you would like a copy of the recording, please ask [Hannah](#).
8. We held the second in the series of ADEPT/Environment Agency webinar on 19th November – 'Local authority staff webinar: What does the new flood and coastal erosion risk mapping mean for you?'. A great event with over 750 participants. Hannah introduced the event with the Environment Agency and Doug Hill, Chair of the ADEPT Flood and Water Management Group presented. 754 attended. The webinar score a usefulness rating 4.45/5 and 90% rated the slides as excellent/good. Our next joint webinar is on 12th Dec (see below).
9. ADEPT is represented on the EIP review Cross-Sector Advisory Group which meets fortnightly and has been considering the draft EIP report chapter which summarises the feedback from stakeholders - this chapter pulls out the key themes from this feedback and sits within the broader report which will go to Ministers.
10. ADEPT & Environment Agency Rapid Adaptation Pathways Workshops - During October, ADEPT in collaboration with the Environment Agency, delivered three Rapid Adaptation Pathway Assessment (RAPA) workshops aimed at helping communities and stakeholders better prepare for the impacts of climate change. These pilot workshops were hosted in Marlborough by Wiltshire Council, Chichester by West Sussex County Council and Bristol by South Gloucestershire Council & West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. The workshops brought together local councils, experts, and community representatives to explore adaptation pathways for managing increasing flood risk due to climate change. The findings from these pilots will inform a toolkit designed to guide local authorities in making informed decisions under climate uncertainty, ensuring they are equipped to handle both current and future challenges.

Events/Other

10. The ADEPT Autumn Conference concluded on Friday 22nd of November, with the theme of 'Creating places fit for the future: our past, our present, our future'. The event, attended by over 200 people, took place in Bristol and provided place directors with an opportunity to reflect on the past and the present and consider how future spaces are created. More info [here](#).
11. We have recently published some priority policy asks: transport ([here](#)), resource & waste ([here](#)), climate change and green growth ([here](#)). We have also revised the Resources & Waste policy position ([here](#)).
12. We are looking for Expressions of Interest for the 2025 Leadership Development Programme – for more information, see [here](#). The deadline is 17th January.
13. Dates for your diary:
 1. The next Lunch & Learn will take place on 18th December. Stantec follow up their workshop at the ADEPT Autumn Conference with a session on funding regeneration. To register see [here](#).

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. A joint webinar with the Environment Agency is on 12th December, 11.00-12.00, sharing learning from the Local Investment In Natural Capital pilot local authorities. To book see https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/events/adeptenvironment-agency-local-investment-natural-capital-linc-webinar. 3. The next ADEPT / Natural England webinar will focus on 'Planning for nature & climate resilience' and will take place 1330-1500 on Weds 22 January. If you would like to attend, please email Hannah Bartram. 4. We are organising a 'Navigating Transition' training workshop, for people who are considering a new stage in their careers. It will be facilitated by Roger Paine and is being held in Birmingham on Friday 17th January. More information here. 5. The Live Labs 2 Expo will be held in the Hilton Hotel, Liverpool on 25th March. More information will be on the ADEPT website soon. 6. The Spring Conference and Annual Awards Dinner will take place in London on Thursday 22nd May. Save the date!
3	<p>Introduction: New DfT Local Lead – Ben Kempner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Ben Kempner: Ben Kempner introduced himself as the Southwest Area Engagement Lead from the Department for Transport. He shared his background in the buses team and his commitment to supporting local authorities and addressing their challenges.
4	<p>Best Practice: Affordable Housing - South Gloucestershire Council – Claire Wood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing Delivery in South Gloucestershire: Claire Wood presented the affordable housing delivery strategy in South Gloucestershire. She highlighted their success in delivering social rented homes, the importance of strong member support, collaboration across departments, and the role of the Homes West Partnership. • Social Rent Priority: Claire emphasized that social rent is the priority for South Gloucestershire, with around 75% of their affordable housing delivery being social rented homes. She noted that they have been the top local authority for social rent delivery in England for six years. • Section 106 Agreements: Claire discussed the reliance on Section 106 agreements for affordable housing delivery, with around 80% of their delivery coming from these agreements. She highlighted the importance of ensuring that Section 106 agreements are deliverable and reduce barriers for housing associations. • Homes West Partnership: Claire highlighted the role of the Homes West Partnership, which includes 22 registered providers and operates across the West of England. The partnership has been instrumental in delivering affordable housing in South Gloucestershire. • Funding and Resources: Claire mentioned that the majority of their affordable housing delivery is funded through Section 106 agreements, with a relatively small amount of grant funding. She also noted that the housing enabling team is well-resourced, with around 8 FTEs, and that they charge enabling fees to housing associations to fund the service. • Viability and Planning Contributions: Claire Wood discussed the viability of planning contributions, including biodiversity net gain, transport contributions, and renewable energy requirements. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that section 106 agreements are deliverable and reduce barriers for housing associations.
5	<p>Introduction to new ADEPT president Ann Carruthers</p>

- **Challenges in Local Authorities:** Ann Carruthers discussed the financial challenges faced by local authorities, including balancing budgets and the impact on universal services. She highlighted the growth in service areas, public and member expectations, environmental agendas, waste management, planning systems, and resource challenges.
- **Financial Challenges:** Ann Carruthers noted that around 80% of local authority spending goes on adults and children's services, leaving limited funds for other services.
- **Service Area Growth:** Ann mentioned the growth in various service areas, including highway maintenance and SEN transport, and the increasing public and member expectations despite decreasing resources.
- **Environmental Agendas:** Ann discussed the environmental agendas, and the challenges posed by the new government, including the need to meet national 2050 targets and the significant changes in waste management.
- **Planning Systems:** Ann highlighted the challenges in the planning system, including the need for sustainable development and the gap in funding for infrastructure and services required for new developments.
- **Resource Challenges:** Ann emphasized the challenges in resourcing, particularly in recruiting skilled professionals like flood engineers and arboriculturists, and the need for young people to enter the sector.
- **Community Understanding of Housing Needs:** Wendy Lane and Sophie Broadfield discussed the challenges in community understanding of housing needs, particularly affordable housing. They emphasized the difficulty in delivering social housing, and the difficulty in delivering social housing due to lack of funding and community acceptance, also the need for sustainable and healthy places.
- **Housing Targets:** Sophie Broadfield mentioned that Bath and NE Somerset had their housing target doubled by changes in the local planning and national planning framework, emphasizing the need for more houses due to the area's unaffordability and the impact on the local economy.
- **Sustainable Places:** Sophie discussed the importance of planning sustainable and healthy places, which requires upfront work and resources that are currently lacking. She noted the challenges in making different parts of the system work together to enable housing growth.
- **Polarisation and Public Engagement:** Meg highlighted the polarisation in society and the challenges in public engagement, particularly in active travel and bus service improvement. She mentioned the impact on frontline staff and the litigious environment affecting engagement. This polarisation affects public engagement, particularly in areas like active travel and bus service improvement.
- **Impact on Staff:** Meg highlighted the negative impact on frontline staff, including instances of violence and abuse from the public. She mentioned that some staff members have been hospitalized due to injuries sustained while performing their duties.
- **Litigious Environment:** Meg noted the litigious environment that local authorities operate in, with an increasing number of pre-action protocol letters and legal challenges to decisions. This environment makes it difficult to engage with the public and conduct consultations effectively.
- **Strategic Transport and Housing Growth:** Hannah Shrimpton discussed the challenge of aligning strategic transport infrastructure with increased housing growth targets. She emphasized the need for long-term funding and continuity in transport planning.

Next meeting: **Thursday 28th January 14:30 – 15:30**