

Yorkshire & Humber Board
11 March 2026 @ 15:00, via Microsoft Teams

In attendance:

Kylie Russell (ADEPT) - Chair	Rashid Mahmood (Kirklees)	Martin Budd (Hull)
Rachel Balmer (NYC)	Gary Bartlett (Leeds)	Kathryn Locke (Climate Coalition)
Kirsty Patullo (Minutes)	Tim Gamon (National Highways)	

Apologies:

Hannah Bartram (ADEPT)
Karl Battersby – chair

Item	Agenda Item and Notes	Action
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions KR welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Members welcomed guest speaker:</p> <p>Tim Gamon (Project Director, National Highways - A66 Northern Transpennine Project) and Kathryn Locke (Communications Manager, Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission & Leeds Climate Commission)</p>	
2	<p>A66 Northern Transpennine Project</p> <p>Project Scope: The project aims to upgrade the A66 between the M6 in Penrith and the A1M in Scotch Corner, converting all single carriageway sections to dual carriageway. This involves upgrading approximately 18 miles of the 50-mile route to create a continuous 70 mph dual carriageway.</p> <p>Strategic Importance: The A66 is a critical local, regional, and national route, heavily utilised by freight (double the HGV average of motorways), tourism, and businesses. The upgrade aims to address congestion, frustration from alternating carriageway types, slow-moving agricultural vehicles, and a high incidence of serious accidents.</p> <p>Project Statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 miles of new dual carriageway. • 19 kilometres of existing network to be de-trunked. • 37 large structures and 4 million cubic metres of earthworks. • 54 kilometres of safer routes for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. • 4.8 kilometres of environmental fencing and 35 kilometres of dry stone wall. • Creation of 1092 football pitches worth of new habitats (reed beds, lowland mix). • Extensive hedgerow planting and river enhancement (e.g., introducing meandering). 	

Current Activities (Enabling Works):

Archaeology:

A team of 70 archaeologists is working along the route, which follows an old Roman road. Significant finds include an 1800-year-old Roman cemetery with 350 graves and rare artefacts, which attracted national interest. The archaeology work aims to clear the route and mitigate construction risks.

Utility Diversions:

167 utility diversions are required due to widening and re-alignment. High-priority diversions include a high-pressure gas main (requiring a 10m diameter, 10m deep shaft for a tunnel boring machine) and a Shell ethanol pipeline. Most current utility work is on the western side where design is more mature.

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Political and Operational Interfaces

The project has strong cross-party political support due to its strategic importance, with interest from MPs including Tim Farron, Marcus Campbell Savers, Sam Rushworth, and Rishi Sunak.

National Highways is engaging with its operational regions to ensure a smooth handover post-construction.

A "customer experience engine" is being used to tailor information and planning for various road users, including hauliers, tourists, and local residents.

Timeline and Funding:

The Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) for 2026-2031, to be published in March 2026, will confirm support for the A66 and the start of main construction in 2026-27.

Funding for enabling works is secured. Full project funding approval is expected from the DFT Investment Committee in July.

Public information events for the eastern side of the route are planned for Q3 2026-27, immediately before main construction begins in Q4 2026-27.

Enabling works on the eastern side (archaeology, utility diversions) are expected to commence in late 2026-27, with more significant activity in 2027-28.

A63 Castle Street (Hull) Project Update

Tim briefly mentioned that the A63 Castle Street project in Hull is nearing completion and will open to traffic before the end of March this year, significantly improving traffic flow.

Q&A following Tim's presentation:

Electric Vehicle (EV) Futureproofing:

	<p>The project focuses on simpler technology. National Highways encourages private sector provision of charging points through grants and facilitates by upgrading power infrastructure (e.g., transformers) for operators, rather than directly providing charging facilities.</p> <p>Archaeology Costs and Delays:</p> <p>Extensive experience in large projects (e.g., A63 Castle Street exhumation of 17,000 skeletons) allows for archaeology to be programmed well in advance, minimising delays. Unexpected Neolithic finds (arrowheads, flints from Doggerland) did cause pauses for scientific analysis, offering new insights into Ice Age retreat and early human habitation.</p> <p>Funding and Environmental Targets:</p> <p>The A66 project is valued at approximately £2 billion, part of National Highways' £25 billion RIS3 budget (2026-2031). The project aims for a 10% biodiversity net gain (hedgerows, watercourses, trees, shrubs) and a 30% carbon reduction from the baseline design (through design and construction methods). It also targets £150 million in social value, including skills development, employment, SME involvement, and work with ex-offenders.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Climate Commission</p> <p>Kate Locke introduced the "Talking Climate" guide, co-produced with ADEPT.</p> <p>Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission Overview:</p> <p>An independent advisory body supporting climate and nature action across the region. Established in March 2021, it is the largest and only regional climate commission in the UK, involving around 150 individuals and over 120 organisations signed up to its Climate Action Pledge.</p> <p>"Talking Climate" Guide:</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <p>A short, handy guide to climate communications, primarily aimed at the public sector and local authorities, but relevant for anyone involved in strategic public communications.</p> <p>Background:</p> <p>The guide originated from a collaboration within the Blueprint Coalition (of which ADEPT is a part) and responded to a clear demand for messaging and communications guidance from workshops held in December, attended by 70 participants.</p> <p>Content Basis:</p>	

	<p>It collates best practises from Climate Outreach's "Britain Talks Climate and Nature" toolkit, Roger Harrabin's presentations, and Potential Energy Coalition's "Talk Like a Human" resource.</p> <p>Key Features: The guide is structured around 10 practical tips for climate communicators and includes a quick reference guide for common terms and preferred ways of discussing climate action. It emphasises using solutions-focused imagery that shows people taking action and gives a human face to climate efforts, rather than just graphic climate impacts.</p> <p>Feedback: Initial feedback has been positive, with commendations from Andrew Wood (former colleague) and Oliver Harmer (CEO, Natural England), who described it as "one of the best simple guides I've seen".</p> <p>ADEPT's Perspective: Kylie highlighted that ADEPT's motivation for co-producing the guide was to help local authority leaders navigate political changes and challenges. The guide aims to reframe climate work (e.g., focusing on "warm homes" and energy efficiency) to ensure its continued value and prevent important work from being stalled due to language that might disengage audiences. The guide was developed with extensive consultation, including with the Climate Change Committee, to ensure accuracy while adapting language.</p> <p>Martin Budd noted that Hull City Council is set to approve a new internal Climate and Nature Strategy (focused on authority operations) on 23 March, which will include an action plan for internal communications. Over the next 12 months, a city-wide Climate and Nature Strategy will be developed as the delivery strategy for the community plan's ambition to respond to the climate and nature emergency. Martin noted that while "net zero" is still used, the strategy frames it with practical, understandable outcomes related to carbon reduction, adaptation, nature recovery, and fair transition.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>National ADEPT Update Kylie provided members with the following updates:</p> <p>Transport / Infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are working with Local Partnerships to develop a LGR highways toolkit. The purpose of the toolkit will be to provide a collection of resources (processes, templates, checklists etc) to support council officers navigating transport and highways aggregation / disaggregation of services due to LGR. The toolkit will be loosely based on the Local Partnerships waste LGR toolkit LGR Waste Toolkit - Local Partnerships. It will be launched at the ADEPT Spring Conference (13th May); we will also co-host an introductory webinar on 4th June. To register, see here. 	

- ADEPT responded to the recent publication of the 'pothole ratings map' ([here](#)). Angela Jones, President of ADEPT said: "We acknowledge the government's commitment to transparency and long-term investment in local roads, however the newly published ratings raise significant questions about the assessment methodology." Conversations are ongoing with the department.
- Live Labs 2: The second webinar for pledge signatories ([here](#)) took place on 28th January, focusing on the outputs and outcomes emerging from the East Riding Live Labs project and the Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads (Transport for West Midlands). Webinar No 3 will take place from 9-10am on 25th March - to attend, please email [Damon McVeigh](#). The latest blog is from Graham Martin, Head of Commissioning and Project Delivery for the Liverpool Live Labs 2 initiative, who shares an update on all the latest news and achievements from the team ([here](#)). We are delighted that DfT has recently confirmed an extension of the ADEPT Live Labs 2 programme for an additional year, with up to £300,000 in total ([here](#)). This extension will enable the programme to deliver a comprehensive Year 4 programme of communications and dissemination with a view to scaling and adoption by the sector; ensuring that the insights, evidence and innovations generated by the seven Live Labs 2 projects are shared widely across the sector. The LL2 projects finish 31st March 2026, with the exception of the Devon Live Lab which received a year's extension due to delays.

Devolution / Growth / Planning

- The ADEPT Digital Connectivity Working Group have responded to the current call for evidence on reforming planning rules for digital infrastructure ([here](#)).
- We responded to the publication in December of the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) ([here](#)). We submitted a response to the NPPF consultation; deadline is Tues 10th March.
- We hosted a joint webinar with Natural England on 15th January, focusing on one of the elements of the new Planning & Infrastructure Act: the new Nature Restoration Fund, Environmental Delivery Plans & conservation delivery in local planning. Over 100 people attended – if you missed out and would like to see the recording, please contact [Hannah Bartram](#).

Environment / Climate

- A new guide has been published by ADEPT, designed to help local authorities and public sector organisations communicate more effectively about climate and nature. [An Introduction to Talking Climate](#) is a practical, evidence-based guide produced in partnership with Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission. It responds to a clear communications challenge: while 74% of Britons say that climate change is important, recent research shows that many communicators struggle to frame their messages in ways that connect with people's everyday concerns, values and experiences. This new guide aims to

bridge that gap and assist local authorities and public sector communicators in finding the right words to get vital messaging across.

8. In the most recent climate change [blog](#), David Shepherd, Chair of the Transport & Connectivity Board, reflects on what the Department for Transport's Climate Adaptation Strategy for Transport means in practice for local authorities responsible for highways and transport networks, and what still needs to happen to turn strategy into delivery.

Events/Other

9. A draft of ADEPT's new Strategic Plan for 2026-29 has been released for consultation ([here](#)). The proposed plan, currently titled *Making Better Places*, sets out our strategic objectives for 2026-29, celebrates some of our key achievements over the period of the previous Strategic Plan and outlines the main changes and challenges that we must address. Please send comments / responses to Katherine at secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk by Friday 13th March.
10. We are celebrating ADEPT's 140th anniversary year by showcasing the voices of past, present and future Presidents, reflecting on the evolution of place leadership and exploring the challenges, innovations and aspirations shaping the future of the sector. We are publishing one essay a month over the anniversary year. Next in the series is Andrew Cook, 1st Vice President of ADEPT and Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director Growth, Highways and Infrastructure at Suffolk County Council, who explores the question "[what next for place?](#)"
11. Dates for your diary – for more detail please visit the Events page on the website ([here](#)):
 - Building on the momentum from our ADEPT Autumn Conference workshop, Stantec and ADEPT are hosting a focused roundtable to move from discussion to action. This session will bring together senior leaders from local and regional government and delivery-focused private sector organisations to explore the opportunities, pressures, and emerging solutions shaping collaboration today. Thursday, 19 March 2026, 11.30 – 13.00, MS Teams. Please email zoe.plenderleith@stantec.com to attend.
 - The next Lunch & Learn (Wednesday 25th March) is being led by Angus Spence, Principal Consultant at Systra, and will focus on supporting road safety strategies, showing the Collision Seek tool which uses AI and machine learning to pull in all STATS19 data and compare it with road layouts taken from, Open Street Map and aerial photography. This can then help with accident reduction on the general transport network and a useful tool for highway design engineers as a quick highways' safety audit indicator. Register [here](#).
 - The Spring Conference, AGM and Annual Awards Dinner will be held in London on Wednesday 13th May. Transport Minister Simon Lightwood is confirmed as the headline speaker – to see the full programme and to register, see [here](#).

ADEPT

Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

5	Roundtable and AOB No items raised.	
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