



Key messages for Minister Riddell-Carpenter – ADEPT

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) is the voice of local authority place directors and their teams. Our members manage vital local services - from highways, waste, recycling and planning - while also preparing for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Nature recovery to support local growth is one of ADEPT's strategic priorities as set out in our [Strategic Plan 2026-2029](#). Local authorities can lead decarbonisation and nature recovery in their places to ensure investing in nature and the environment is an enabler for growth, not a blocker and that local growth and prosperity are built on green, sustainable foundations, improving the environment and making life better for people. We will model local environmental leadership and work to influence government to provide the right statutory framework and adequate resources to enable this.

Nature, and natural capital more widely (including clean water and clean air), should be seen as infrastructure alongside buildings, transport and utilities. Too often nature/natural capital is seen as something that is impacted and needs mitigation – not as infrastructure in and of itself. Nature/natural capital/environment should be the first infrastructure for place on which the foundations of growth, prosperity and sustainability are set. A poor environment (lack of green space, water and air pollution, lack of trees), that is not resilient to the impacts of climate change (water shortage, nutrient neutrality, flooding, heat, heat islands) will block or restrict growth. It will be vital that the new Spatial Development Strategies are built on this principle and ADEPT is working with its partners to incorporate environmental outcomes into SDSs.

Nature as infrastructure is increasingly important as the climate changes and impacts increase – not just because of shortages – but due to their importance to resilience to extreme events. They are a resilience infrastructure. The heatwaves this summer has shown this.

We need to understand all infrastructure as integrated and multifunctional – so a road is not just a road but also an ecological corridor, a flood defence, a fire break, and so on. Green infrastructure reduces pollution, mitigates extreme temperatures, and promotes public health which links directly to a healthy workforce and attracts skilled workers. Multifunctionality a key theme in the Land Use Framework. The Land Use Framework is a key building block for Spatial Development Strategies.

ADEPT is a member of the Steering Group for [Rebuilding Nature](#), an alliance of cross-sector organisations who want to invest in nature now because it is critical national infrastructure – critical for growth, health and resilience. To invest with confidence the alliance wants to create a Strategic Nature Network, develop Nature Investment Zones, and restart natural processes across the SNN to make it resilient.

Carolyn McKenzie

Chair ADEPT Environment Board, Member of the Leadership Team

ADEPT – Association of the Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport

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