

ADEPT Environment Board – April 2019 update

The Board held a Skype meeting on 4th April with 13 people taking part including representatives from 7 councils, plus colleagues from Defra, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

Updates from working groups included the first from Julia Beeden (Cambridgeshire CC) as the new Chair of the Flood & Water Group. The group's forthcoming meeting on 23rd April will look at water resources and integrated management. Further meetings are planned for July and October. The FCERM national strategy is due to be launched by the EA in May.

Rachael Bice (Cornwall) is the new Chair of the Natural Capital & Heritage Working Group. It is proposed that the group will work with Defra to develop local authority knowledge of and capacity to deliver the 25 Year Environment Plan and its associated initiatives, as well as maintaining a watching brief on Brexit developments, and looking at climate change impacts on and role for natural capital and heritage. The group has since submitted a short response to Historic England's consultation on archaeological investigations at minerals sites.

The Chair of the Waste Working Group, Ian Fielding (North Yorkshire CC) updated the Board on work to respond to four linked Government consultations – extended producer responsibility, deposit return scheme, consistency, and plastics tax. Taken together, the actions proposed will make fundamental changes to the way that councils manage resources and waste. ADEPT's responses will reflect the recently published policy position, and highlight some of the wider place implications for streetscene, planning, etc. We also hope to respond to the MHCLG Select Committee's call for evidence on the impact of the Government's policies on council operations and finances. The Board noted that these are important consultations that will need to be signed off quickly before submission, and that the Leadership Team has asked to see the draft responses for information.

The Chair of the Energy Working Group, Carolyn McKenzie (Kent CC), reported on a fast-moving agenda shaped by the development of energy strategies in LEP areas, and the work of the five new Energy Hubs. The group is to refine its action plan. The Board was keen to look further at Local Industrial Strategies and links to clean growth and wider environmental issues, and to involve other Boards and the LEP Network – possibly at a workshop in July.

Other updates were provided by:

- Adam Stewart (Defra) on the forthcoming 25 Year Environment Plan Annual Report, data requirements, and Local Natural Capital Plans
- David Sutherland (Buckinghamshire CC) on biodiversity net gain consultation, and green infrastructure standards
- Gill Kerr (Natural England) on nature recovery networks and how best to seek ADEPT's input to this work
- David Dale (ADEPT) on the draft climate change policy position, and the work of the Clean Air Legislation Contact Group Set up by Defra as a sounding board for local authority views during the drafting and passage of the forthcoming Environment Bill.