

## **ADEPT Engineering Board notes July 2022**

The ADEPT Engineering Board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 opened with an informative presentation from the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation on the revision to the Manual for Streets. The presentation focused more on the process that had been followed in updating the document, rather than actual content (which ADEPT members have been engaged in revising and updating). Although Manual for Streets is an important source of design guidance to supplement the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, it was recognised that local highway authorities will still have their own bespoke design guides with which to guide their own works and that of developers.

The Board also received an update on the Leicestershire County Council led 'Treeconomics' project. The 'Value of Trees' report is now at a draft stage with the document "exploring and providing a framework for the selection of tree species through a decision-making matrix regarding the characteristics of individual tree species, their natural tolerances, aesthetic attributes, and longevity in the landscape. This is coupled with an assessment of the ecosystem services, carbon storage, carbon sequestration, pollution absorption and avoided stormwater runoff, which can be expected to be delivered by those species during their lifetimes. These ecosystem services are expressed in both quantitative and monetary terms for all the species and cultivars considered. When coupled together these two strands of information and data allow for detailed and evidence-based tree species selection."

With an increasing focus on climate change and the importance of green canopies (particularly in urban areas), the report is considered timely, especially in view of the announcement on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 of the £9m Levelling Up Parks Fund (whose purpose is to create new or significantly refurbished green spaces in urban areas that need it most). Given that the Levelling Up Parks Fund can be used to create parklets (converting on road parking space to small green spaces) and pocket parks (adapting hard landscaping in the highway to green space potentially maintained by the local community), the Value for Trees report has the potential to have an early positive impact, even in its draft form.

With the rules changing to allow the enforcement by local highway authorities of moving traffic offences outside of London, following the long-awaited enactment of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Board discussed which authorities were looking to make use of these new powers. It was an opportunity to review some of the constraints considered to be in place and, thereby, better understand how they might be overcome and whether there was benefit in seeking these powers formally.

As well as receiving updates from the Bridges Working Group, the Street Lighting Group and the Soils and Materials Design and Specification Working Group, the Board also received an update from the Department for Transport (including clarification that there is no more funding available in-year, despite rising materials and energy costs) and confirmation of the DfT support (and funding) for decarbonisation through Live Labs 2.