



Association of Directors of  
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

## Monthly Environment Board Catch-Up

25<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 10:00-11:00

*MS Teams videoconference call*

### NOTES

		ACTION OWNER
1.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
2.	<b>Current service issues, pressures and risks</b>  Steve Read forwarded by e-mail just before today's meeting the results of a mini survey of Place Directors commissioned by ADEPT last month. This addresses issues such as supply chain; price of materials increasing; Russia; Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis. There's a growing problem of recruitment in blue collar positions but also increasingly in professional arena in terms of technical qualifications. The full force of this hasn't yet hit. The survey has also been circulated to the ADEPT LT and can be circulated to other Boards.  Steve Palfrey agrees with the above and states that Government is not helping with the skills issue due to statutory requirements they bring in and with short-term funding approaching it leads everyone to rush out for same resources at the same time and cause a bottleneck. Steve Read feels that this is a point we can make generally to get the message back to government.  Liz Small followed up regarding the short-term initiatives which are likely to mean advertising for fixed-term temporary jobs rather than permanent which doesn't really help and means using consultants in many cases. In North Yorkshire there is a massive shortage of planners and specialists. The Local Government reorganisation doesn't help.	

Ben Boswell reported issues in Herefordshire being 1) supply chain skills and money spent on fuel poverty 2) recruitment issues for ecologists and the fact that all are fighting for same small pool 3) refuse collection vehicles – scary lead times as PFIs are due to start. Steve Read agreed re. ongoing uncertainty for refuse collections.

Lyn Trigwell, Wiltshire, agreed that recruitment of Ecologists is a real problem and impacting work coming out of the Environment Act and BNG etc. Salaries are not competitive. There will be a huge draw on Ecologists from the industry... land and farm owners. What few exist could easily move on and so the ability to hang on to what we've got is a huge concern. Also, funding contributions are temporary, too small and everyone is going for it at the same time.

**ACTION:** Discuss how ADEPT can help as a collective with recruitment issues, and “growing your own” as a solution, at the next quarterly ADEPT Env Board meeting. Rosily Jones, to invite Defra’s Policy Lead to join this meeting.

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Liz Small added that North Yorkshire are already doing work on “grow your own” with Eols being submitted this month to hopefully get employment in October. Perhaps a paper can be drawn up or ADEPT to do something at scale to address this. Perhaps speak to the universities as their courses are not producing enough of what we need.

Rosily Jones, Defra, confirmed that they and BEIS have the issues with green jobs and skills and wider labour challenges being faced on their radar and will be reaching out to stakeholders to ensure their insight is being considered.

### **Working Groups**

#### Waste – Steve Palfrey

Highlights from the Waste Group:

- Prior to elections received one part of the picture in terms of what future looks like through waste and resource strategy.
- EPR consultation. Delayed money flow and implementation by a year so will start to flow from Apr 2024.
- The previously expected DRS for beverage containers won't include glass. Kerbside collection will need to collect all of the glass (about 15k tons kerbside).
- Consistency consultation response now expected in July.

This is the requirements on councils of what is provided and the New Burdens funding on weekly collection of food and any detail on statutory guidance.

- Environment Targets consultation including waste and resources - Looking to introduce a resource productivity target. It is missing carbon and so this will be included in the response.
- Emissions trading scheme looking to bring pricing into residual waste. Good idea but there are potential pitfalls.
- Government published a consultations on their plans to eradicate fly tipping; charging for DIY waste at HWRS; and call for evidence on booking systems (e.g. reducing flytipping; reducing queues). ADEPT to come to a consensus of opinion. WSCC confirmed they are retaining the HWRS booking systems, but other councils are choosing not to. Steve Read suggested that with a divergence of practice locally ADEPT should at least be able to agree the principle that local authorities should retain the ability to choose the right decision locally. Concerns around the publication timing were noted.

#### Energy & Clean Growth – Carolyn McKenzie

Apologies received. No update this month.

#### Flood and Water Management – Max Tant

- Main update is Schedule 3. Defra has had several workshops on this and the Flood and Water Management Act. Planning and sustainable drainage consent is now required in order to continue with any development. It wasn't possible to come up with a sustainable way of funding it and so Defra is considering it now and due to make decision by Autumn. Potentially, water companies or planning authorities will be taking it on.
- Water industry recently issued a white paper on reform to achieve broader environmental targets. The Flood and Water Management Group will be talking to Water UK at a future meeting.
- Recruitment issues discussed earlier are also being experienced in the water arena.

**ACTION:** Max Tant to provide input to David Dale by 17<sup>th</sup> June on the Environment Targets Consultation, which included some water related targets on quality, pollution, and demand. Defra have extended the deadline.

- Ordinary Water Course Consent Charges – There is an

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appetite to lobby on the statutory £50 per consent charge which is inadequate to cover costs. This comes from an Act in 1991 (land drainage). The Flood and Water Management Group discuss this regularly and routinely.

- Bathing water designation – anyone can apply
- The EA would like to invite a LA rep (via ADEPT) to sit on the Resilience Innovation Board. E-mail to follow this meeting. Inform Hannah Bartram if interested. (See EA agenda item below for more info)

#### Natural Capital & Heritage – Liz Small

- Meeting held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May
- Membership is increasing but further new members are always welcome to help get good geographical representation
- Environment Act – Focus for the group has been on LNRS and BNG and how it works with Natural Capital. This will be the focus at next meeting.
- Received an interesting presentation from Bruce Howard on Natural Capital assessment and place making and how it integrates with LNRS.
- Many National Parks have picked up Green finance and Natural Capital. Natural Capital won't be integral but can form part of the approach.
- Heritage priorities – covered policy legislation and levelling up bill and connection between natural and historic environment and want to get best out of Elms and the BNG strategy
- Best practice and what is required for 21<sup>st</sup> century archaeology.
- Tree agenda and how links through to LNRS and initiative. Looking for advice from Local Government sector on how they can get involved. Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund applications from councils to be invited in mid-June.
- Environment Targets and Consultations.
- Updates from Government on Environment Act. One update was that technical guidance and information on New Burdens funding will be received.

**ACTION:** Max to invite Lyn Trigwell (Wiltshire) to the next Flood and Water Management Group meeting.

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#### Defra – Rosily Jones

17<sup>th</sup> June - published latest Outcome Indicator Framework.

<p>Comes with an interactive dashboard. Also 5 new indicators added.</p> <p>Environment principles Policy statement published. It guides you through how Defra do things internally and laid in government for scrutiny.</p> <p>BEIS launched call for evidence on Green Finance Strategy.</p> <p>Updating FAQs document about Environment Act measures for LAs. Hope to have this ready next month.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Rosily to invite a Defra colleague to join the next ADEPT Env Board meeting to discuss the Environment Principles Policy Statement.</p> <p>ADEPT to help Defra engage with local authorities and other stakeholders to improve environmental policy development and local delivery and how we can better join up central and local, including aspects of Levelling Up and EIP.</p> <p>Green finance – Government published Strategy 3 years ago. Defra would like to respond to the consultation on 3 questions specifically on local delivery and capacity. Please contact Rosily if you have an interest in this.</p> <p>Q - OEP published first annual report on the Government report on delivery of the 25YEP. How does this progress report fit with Defra’s outcome indicator report? Rosily responded that they are 2 separate things. The OEP will use data that Defra have published but Defra will also publish their own progress report around July. The 2 reports are separate but feed off each other.</p> <p>Secondment opportunity for the Environment Partnerships Team, Defra. This opportunity for a 12-month secondment is just going through some internal checks before it’s cleared for advertisement. Should be available very soon.</p> <p>Green finance - BEIS and Defra will be doing workshops. ADEPT will be interested in being involved.</p> <p><u>Environment Agency – Jennie Donovan</u></p> <p>Apologies received. No specific update this month.</p> <p>As mentioned above at the end of the Flood and Water Management update, the EA would like to invite an LA rep (via ADEPT) to sit on the Resilience Innovation Board. E-mail to follow this meeting. Inform Hannah Bartram if interested. It’s non-remunerated and will be via Eols.</p> <p>The government Resilience Innovation fund supports 3</p>	<p>RJ</p>
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programmes with a total value of £200million, running until March 2027. The fund is looking at identifying, piloting, and evaluating new approaches to flood and coastal erosion management in response to the increased pressures of a changing climate.

#### Natural England – Adam Wallace

Apologies received. No update this month.

#### Other Issues, Risks and Questions

Simon Thompson, Natural England attended the ADEPT Planning Working Group on 24<sup>th</sup> May to give a presentation on Nutrient Neutrality. A copy of this has been e-mailed to ADEPT Env Board members on 25<sup>th</sup> May.

LGA have advised that they're launching a policy enquiry on water neutrality and are keen to engage with ADEPT in a short survey and some upcoming roundtable events LGA are planning with councils and national stakeholders over the summer

Council Climate Actions – case studies. Following Sandra Bell's visit to last month's quarterly ADEPT Environment meeting, these are now formally launched, and a full day event is being planned.

Climate Change ADEPT – we have re-written our Climate Change and Clean Growth positions and should be available on the website by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May.

Ongoing consultation on Air Quality and updating LAQ Management Plans. <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/air-quality-and-industrial-emissions/consultation-on-the-review-of-the-local-air-quality/> runs until 6<sup>th</sup> June. Defra is seeking views on how to increase engagement between local authorities and the communities that they serve, and to increase focus on the impact of air quality on people's health. The consultation is also looking at the stronger requirements introduced in the Environment Act 2021 for other organisations to collaborate with local authorities in delivering Air Quality Action Plans.

Designate National Highways as a relevant public authority - those who play a role in improving local air quality, in order to ensure more consistent collaboration with local authorities to reduce road pollution.

Workshop with ADEPT members to explain the purpose of the consultation, set out the main proposals, seek views from local authorities and give the opportunity to ask questions. Next

	<p>Tues 31<sup>st</sup> May, 10:00-11:30.</p> <p>Levelling Up Regeneration Bill and planning changes in that. To be picked up with the ADEPT LT and also at the Spring Conference on 26<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p><u>ADEPT</u></p> <p>Potential Climate Change Group – Steve Read recently took a paper to the ADEPT Leadership Team to consider whether ADEPT should convene a new standing Climate Change Group.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Steve Read to forward an invitation to Board members for a one-hour workshop for an informal discussion as to whether we take this forward and set up a specific group. Potential date for this discussion is 28<sup>th</sup> June p.m.</p> <p>BEIS Net Zero Forum – all 12 local government reps to sit on this forum have been recruited. The first meeting could be as early as next week. Date now confirmed as 20<sup>th</sup> June.</p>	SR
3.	<p><b>Any other urgent business</b></p> <p>None raised.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Dates of future meetings/calls</b></p> <p>Q3 meeting - 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022, 10:00-12:30</p>	