

**ADEPT Minutes**

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022      **Time:** 9:30 – 11:30      **Location:** Horizon House Bristol & MS teams

**Present:** Sophie Broadfield - Chair (Banes), Hannah Bantram (East Sussex), Samantha Howell (Swindon), Mickey Green – guest presenter (Somerset Waste), Kate Langdown (BCP), Meg Booth (Devon), Nigel Riglar (South Glos), Vinita Nawathe (Dorset LEP), Anthony Payne (Plymouth), Sally Royale (BEIS), Paula Hewitt (Somerset), David Hill – guest presenter (Defra), Fleur Greenaert (CBI), Lisa Nash - minutes (Banes)

Item No	
1	Apologies
<p><b>Apologies:</b> Paul Barnard (Plymouth), Corrina Osbourne (Bournemouth), David Ralph (HotSW LEP), Emily McGuinness (LGA), Sally Farley (Plymouth), Helen Dobby (Environment Agency), Jamie Hulland (Devon), Julia McLaughlin (BCP), Kevin Mowat (Torbay), Sophie Hosking (Cornwall), Mike O’Dowd-Jones (Somerset), Peter Marsh (Cornwall), Gemma Dando (Somerset)</p>	
2	Update from ADEPT – Hannah Bantram
<p>HB advised that a leadership team meeting last week and updated the group on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bids for Live Labs are now in. This is DFT £30 million, three-year programme, which will fund decarbonisation of roads.</li> <li>• An advance map was shared showing where applications have come from, bids are depicted in red, some universities were involved as well.</li> <li>• A Scottish authority was also involved their focus is on highways, so pretty good coverage.</li> <li>• Bids are currently being looked at.</li> <li>• Some of the proposals are for innovations such as single materials within the local road system, through to whole service approaches. DFT will do the initial sift and technical assessment. They will then do a ‘dragon den’ type day where a group of independent individuals from relevant organisations will sort through bids. The hope is that an announcement will be made before the end of the calendar year. The final project plan will go ‘live’ on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.</li> <li>• Regular catch-up meetings take place with presidents of the other associations i.e., Children’s Services, Public Health, and the LGA. Recent focus has been on political change and policy.</li> </ul>	

- Mark Lloyd asks, 'are there any potentials for flexibilities?' If the group have any asks, please send them to Hannah to pass on. Some of the asks so far are: removing the central setting of license fees, allowing for discretion to charge planning, changing the criteria for free home to school transport. The requests don't necessarily have to come from your local authority they can come from individuals.
- A review of strategic plan is taking place as the other one has come to an end – the leadership team have had a couple of sessions where they have brainstormed, key issues are:
  - Climate change
  - Finance
  - Policy
  - Workforce

It's the intention is to take these to the autumn conference in November.

- A couple of county deals have been made with North Yorkshire and the City of York, Derby and Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Reviews of deals have taken place. Definition of what 'good' looks like is being explored to use as a checklist. It's an area of work which could play into Investment Zones. Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October is the deadline for expressions of interest.
- The ADEPT conference will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> November and will focus on levelling up, climate change and finance. Speakers lined up are: Anthony - SRO for the leadership team, Lord Decan – chair for climate change and Lord Bob Kerslake – former head of service and head of NHLG along with a host of other speakers.
- A traffic management conference is taking place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October in Birmingham – Hannah asks for help encouraging attendance from traffic managers.
- Courses:
  - Shipment programme – still very popular at 4<sup>th</sup> year (Completed by 100)
  - Green finance training course on 4<sup>th</sup> November
  - Navigation changes – aimed at senior leaders within local authorities, so perhaps retiring from local authority and looking at what next
  - Expressions of interest – just about to be launched (allowance for 2 cohorts)
- NR added the other thing that may be of interest is the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Net Zero Forum taking place 6<sup>th</sup> October during the afternoon. Feedback will be provided to ADEPT members.
- Active Travel England spoke at the ADEPT leadership team, the Chief Executive pushed for evidence from LAs on evidence that investments in sustainable transport help to deliver local jobs, local growth and so on.

3	Roundtable: issues from SW ADEPT members (opportunity to share and discuss live issues of concern for relay back to ADEPT leadership and national government)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SB asked the group 'If red tape could be removed, what would we want?'</li> <li>• KH: Investment Zones - removal of time restraints and short turnarounds. Guidance isn't being provided until later this week, which does not allow much time, especially with other big projects going on. What does it mean in terms of development and planning? There are inflation pressures, retention recruitment remains challenging. Seeing shift politically, rhetoric lot more growth and a lot less environment, Encouragement required to keep both in tandem.</li> <li>• SB – WECA advise there's some flexibility - national planning can be removed but won't stop local planning.</li> <li>• AP – believes the issue is schemes just aren't deliverable, and it's not always down to the planning. Things can be sped up but one area that could be simplified is the CPO processes to get control of the land to enable investment zones to proceed. The biggest issue currently though is the budget. Believes it will be okay this year financial year but will be forced to do things that wouldn't normally be considered. There's a 6 million non-controllable increase in spend due to things like street lighting and loss of income from car parking because people still aren't parking Monday – Friday. Negative impacts from subsidised bus routes.</li> <li>• MB: Flexibility issue – Meg has spoken to the DfT recently on the Acceleration of Growth Fund Projects – issues around ecological seasons, restrictions are difficult to deliver on.</li> <li>• MB is currently trying to get as dormouse licence from Natural England, it's currently got to the stage that Meg is thinking about instructing staff to go in without them. A half million compensation event on one of the current schemes due to waiting 37 weeks for a license.</li> <li>• A road is due to be opened at the end of October, but it will probably have to close it in December for BT to go in and complete work. Lack of attention to design could be avoided.</li> <li>• Bus services are being cut, which essentially means if you want to get from Tiverton to Devon, you can't if you have no other transport.</li> <li>• Decisions on whether to put money into children in care or Heritage, naturally Heritage are going to lose.</li> <li>• Believes the above could be avoided and money saved – budget pressures are real and all consuming, the future feels bleak.</li> <li>• NR: echoed on the above and added that elections make for interesting politics to add to the mix as well. Flexibility over planning fees, road traffic acts would help.</li> <li>• More discretion at a local level about what needs to be done would also be good.</li> <li>• PH: Having to sort different sorts of waste to control pollutants. It's having a big cost impact.</li> </ul>	

4	David Hill, Director General, Defra – update on Defra key priorities and reflections on the new government administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David introduced himself and advised he leads on the delivery of the 25 environmental plan, implication of the Environmental Act measures, which has a big leadership role for local government and deals with issues ranging from air quality, waste and the natural environment, and fish.</li> <li>• Defra value ADEPT partnership and have worked together for a number of years.</li> <li>• It's a time for great political change – the new administration under Liz Truss. Growth is very much the defining mission, and at fast pace. The new secretary of state Rt Hon Ranil Jayawardena has given Defra three clear priorities:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic Growth – speed up planning where possible, turn decisions around faster, the Government are up for this but not in terms of the expense to environmental protection. There is more to do between Defra and DLUCH about what this looks like in practise. Calls for expressions of interest is in part to elicit further information about where sensitivities and challenges are.</li> <li>- Food Production – The Government is extremely mindful on some of the issues that are being touched on and wider economic issues. Think about how we deliver better environmental outcomes is hand in hand with sustaining food production.</li> <li>- Water – It was notable that on his first full day in the office as Secretary to State that he had all of the water companies Chief Executives to hand with chairs of Ofwat and the environmental agency – some clear expectations were set out on performance on what ministers don't consider acceptable, both in relation to pollution, excessive use of storm overflows. Statutory obligations need to be met, but this is also a big challenge around bringing forward infrastructure with both floods and water. Where we can accelerate infrastructure projects, look at the barriers and what can be done, whether that be contracting, regulating, or consenting. Another big challenge is regarding dividends and executive pay. The Secretary of State announced that the capsule and penalties that the EA can levy under the civil sanction regime will be raised to £250 million.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Dormouse Licence – as mentioned above. Meg believes it's from a backlog of applications, more dormice than any other authority. DH said there must be a solution – will talk to Marian Spain about it.</p> <p>AP said they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suffering due to lack of money from post Covid. No spare money to be creative with.</li> <li>- Non controllable costs are coming in (street lighting), having to look at what they can absolutely do to help.</li> <li>- Future of waste collections services</li> <li>- What can be done to make transport sustainable as they don't have the money to take forward?</li> <li>- Unpalatable decisions are being made</li> </ul>	

- Is there anything that can be done with the treasury, so that costs can be spread over a longer time?

NR said they are:

- Waste reforms, end of 25-year PFI new service has to be put into place, uncertainty in terms of policy isn't helping, what does the new service look like?
- Bi diversity net gain, gone early to appoint ecologist, but lack in ecologists, how can this be dealt with?
- Net Zero forum this pm – how does this feel from a Whitehall point of view, will the new Gov help?
- Making sure no disconnect between ministerial priorities.

Finance position response from David Hill:

- Freedom and flexibilities – will talk to DLUH and the treasury.
- Does open some options - Defra will fund genuine new issues.
- There's a mutual interest in some of the work that's Defra are trying to do around leveraging of green private finance, in terms of delivering environmental outcomes. Keen to work with ADEPT on this to get taxonomy right. Increasingly important with nature recovery. Making sure the green finance is complimentary to farm payments, and so on.
- Waste – Need for early certainty, will be bring forward formal consultation, actively involving local government colleague is vital. Will be using ADEPT officers, so detail is there. Shifting the costs of manging of packaging costs from the taxpayer onto producers does itself create a quite significant revenue stream.
- Climate Change potential opportunity to help finance pressures.
- Biodiversity and skills know there are skill gaps – active engagement with department of education, what can be done to build capacity, new thing done on forestry for example.
- Climate Change – Chris Skidmore - great advocate for net zero ToR for the review are essentially testing pro-growth, market etc. ADEOPT encouraged to engage with Chris Skidmore.
- Defra have advised climate change; adaptation import to work together. Defra has responsibility for natural resources.
- SB – Growth versa environment means choices are being made. Focus in Bath is working on both.
- DH said the gov would be frustrated over things such as licences, improvements can absolutely be made.
- Trudi Harrison will have domestic environment brief – lead on air quality at DFT will lead on waste, natural environment, 25-year plan and environment act agenda.
- Lord Benyon, change in brief but will continue to lead on issues around access to nature.
- Michael will lead on access to nature, national parks, and England costal path, will shift to environmental as well CBD, cop 15
- Scott Man – Cornwall – cross cutting brief overgrowth, trade, regulation, Northern Ireland protocol issues and international marine work as well as overseas territories  
Not published yet.

5	Mickey Green, Somerset Waste Partnership – presentation on LGC award winning approach to waste management
<p>Mickey shared the slides – giving backdrop to SWP</p> <p>Answers to questions:</p> <p>Trials – This took part in a small town with residents who were used to recycling already. Mickey said it was easy to set up for the first part of the journey, 15 others took part. He believes that with the correct setup it would be possible to delve further.</p> <p>Costs – Mickey to add to the slide deck – to be circulated with the notes. The key saving was that no more recycling trucks were needed.</p> <p>Rural versus urban – Kerbside collection is best, but this won't work for every area. Densely populated areas with lack of storage areas wouldn't be possible for example.</p> <p>Vehicles – Pod vehicles are collecting food waste and well as recycling materials. Some vehicles were refurbished/rebodied. Crew gave positive feedback about an electrical Dennis Equal 1 vehicle that was refurbished. The cost between a diesel and new electric wasn't so great, so the decision was made to basically ignore electric. Mickey believes that using hydrogen vehicles is years away.</p> <p>Depots - Procurement made assumption they would need a super depot. Investigated but it didn't stack up. It was the financial side that stacked up.</p> <p>School Services – This has been currently ring fenced as Mickey isn't confident that legislation has come through.</p> <p>Requests from public for extra bins/recycling boxes – Basically the public can make a request for a box/ blue bag, and they will receive it. Restrictions are on bins, but with the understanding that individual needs may need to be met. E.G a new baby so nappy disposal need, someone with a medical need re disposal of hygiene pads.</p> <p>Data – Nick to provide data to the slides – to be circulated with the notes.</p>	