

## Monthly Environment Board Catch-Up

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023,  
10:00-11:00**

### Notes

		<b>ACTION OWNER</b>
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>Carolyn McKenzie (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made to anyone new to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Current service issues, pressures, and risks</b></p> <p>Cost Savings – Pressures to reduce Environment budgets which includes closing smaller CRCs/HRCs.</p> <p>Essex reported they have a budget gap and are having to do service reviews across the board. They are working with members who really want savings but equally they are nervous about having to consider tough options such as possibly closing some CRCs/HRCs.</p> <p>Oxfordshire are looking at tough options including possibly closing some CRCs/HRCs they have, although complicated due to DIY charging changes, and difficult to put a figure on savings that are being made because of a lot of uncertainty.</p> <p>Cambs also looking at cost savings across the board in areas such as highways maintenance, waste, and capital programmes, hard to reconcile with quite heavy constraints around investing and decarbonization of buildings.</p> <p>Wilts are in a similar position where they are currently looking at a HRC Strategy Review and they were due to introduce charges for DIY waste, but these have been put on hold. This means they have a budget gap in their 3-year plan, and they are looking at the overview of the whole HRC strategy.</p> <p>Cheshire East reported they have a significant overspend for waste due to contract inflation and pay awards. They have already closed 2 CRCs/HRCs to date and are now having to consider more.</p> <p>Cumberland are a new council since 1<sup>st</sup> April in Cumbria and, although they are not under pressure to close any of the CRCs/HRCs, they are having to look at cost savings in all areas.</p>	

From a climate perspective, due to lack of resources they have found it difficult to apply for short term funds, such as LNRS meaning there is no consistency of funding which is needed for the long-term strategy for Environment.

### **Working Groups**

#### Waste

Steve Palfrey (SP) – *apologies received.*

Waiting to see detail behind consistency in waste and further announcement on Environmental Policy.

#### Energy & Clean Growth

Sheryl French (SF)

The group recently met and there were three main points of discussion-:

1. Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP)  
The ECG Group felt the development of LAEPs is the top priority for ADEPT to include in our Manifesto ask for all parties in the run up to the general election. In addition, other asks for inclusion include a review on grid connections as this is holding back delivery of Net Zero ambitions and carbon pricing.

**ACTION: DD to add as topic for future meeting.**

DD

2. UK Power Networks Grid connection  
Neil Madgwick, UKPN gave a presentation to the group as they are piloting a new process to accelerate some projects to connect to the distribution network, jumping the queue. For example, these could include accelerating battery storage projects which could allow more generating projects to connect by providing flexibility opportunities. This is a shift from existing processes, where projects join a list for connecting to the grid on a first come first served basis regardless of project readiness or type.

**ACTION: SF to share presentation.**

SF

3. Solar Together- ICHOOSR  
ICHOOSR support householders to access the bulk purchase and installation of solar PV and batteries for the able to pay market. This process works by engaging Local Authorities to promote the scheme and 'borrowing' the reputation of LAs to encourage householders to sign up. When suppliers are good and manage the installations professionally this scheme can work really well and build householder investment into renewable energy. However, when suppliers are not good and have ineffective customer care, this can damage LA reputation and the contracts in place between ICHOOSR and LAs provide insufficient leverage for LAs to do anything.

It was agreed for LAs to get together to identify the contractual improvement and to meet with ICHOOSR facilitated by ADEPT to share recommendations for contractual improvements.

Flood and Water Management

Max Tant (MT) / Alys Bishop (AB)

Group meeting is next week where they are hoping to talk to the EA about local changes to their emergency response.

Government change to Nutrient Neutrality rejected by the House of Lords causing lots of uncertainty and still waiting on a further statement around what is going to happen with this.

Government will announce consultation on Schedule 3 this year which is expected in November.

Specific item around water scheduled for future board meeting. Defra's Plan for Water presented at the July Environment Board and a joint workshop with the Environment Board and Sustainable Growth Board planned for Autumn.

ADEPT issued a statement on Nutrient Neutrality and the amendments which is available on the ADEPT website.

Essex have been looking at links around water strategy and the LNRS. When looking at data they have found that 1/3 of the pollution problem is from highways run off.

A joint meeting between the Flood and Water Management group and the Natural Capital and Heritage group around water in BNG and LNRS recently took place with another meeting planned for Feb 24.

The Engineering Board are looking at doing some research on water quality and pollution from road run off and South Gloucs is kicking off a piece of work.

**ACTION: HB to provide further update on this in due course.**

**HB**

Natural Capital & Heritage

Liz Milne (LS/EM) – *apologies received.*

Liz Small has stood down as Co-Chair and the group are looking for a replacement. If any members are interested, please contact Liz Milne at Kent. Email [elizabeth.milne@kent.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.milne@kent.gov.uk)

At the last meeting the Forestry Commission gave a presentation on the consultation requirements for forestry proposals. Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife and Countryside Link gave a presentation on the Nature 2030 Campaign they are running.

The group were also joined by representatives from the National Audit Office who are starting a piece of work on the implementation of BNG.

The next meeting will be in 2 months with Green Finance a key agenda item.

Still awaiting final details on guidance and regs for BNG.

**Partners**

Defra

Ola Ladapo/Kat Bell (OL/KB)

No specific updates with nothing further on when BNG is coming in and no real clarity around waste.

No update on Glover report or Land Use Framework.

Essex raised concerning feedback around hiring staff and spending public money on nature recovery with guidance promised which they and other LAs are still waiting for.

Defra are still focusing on the EIP with good engagement from LAs. Following the Environment Committee they have had a steer to widen their engagement and continue engagement with LAs. They would like to share feedback from this engagement at the Oct Environment Board.

In the next couple of months Defra will be rolling out a series of strategic engagement plans for engagement on the EIP particularly local delivery partners.

**ACTION: DD to add item on outcomes from local delivery engagement to Oct agenda.**

DD

Natural England

Adam Wallace – *apologies received.*

Environment Agency

Jennie Donovan

- **Planning reform** – we remain actively engaged in shaping planning reform and have responded to key DLUHC consultations including that relating to: additional flexibilities to support housing delivery, the agricultural sector, businesses, and high streets; and reforms to the NSIP consenting process. We are in the process of responding to ‘Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation’.
- **Joint ADEPT NC & FWM WG meeting 26/09** to discuss flood management in relation to BNG and LNRS delivery. Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Natural Flood Management (NFM) Schemes open to access funding. The linked article provides further info on the [£25m available for projects using nature to increase resilience to floods](#). **EOI are open to a range of stakeholders including businesses, RMAs and community groups. Successful projects will cover a large enough area to provide demonstrable FR benefits.**

	<p><b>EOI are open until 10th November 2023.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BNG</b> – we are continuing to support Defra in the development of national BNG systems and processes, including helping to shape draft guidance and agreeing an approach with Defra and NE for the biodiversity metric calculations and developments impacting intertidal habitats.</li> </ul> <p>No other issues, risks and questions raised.</p> <p><u>Environment Board Business</u> Carolyn McKenzie (CM)</p> <p>In person July Environment Board focused around the EIP and water and included an afternoon business planning session. Lots of interest in developing a Local EIP which requires a key piece of work around thinking about how all the different plans link together such as LNRS, Local Flood Authority Strategies, Energy Plans, Climate Change Plans, Air Quality Strategy. Further discussions needed.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NR to arrange catch up meeting for CM/KB ahead of the Q4 Board meeting.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: DD to work with CM to look at how to develop possible framework for Local EIP and bring back to the board for discussion.</b></p> <p><u>ADEPT Business</u></p> <p>Autumn Conference 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> November in Nottingham. Draft agenda on ADEPT website.</p> <p>Adaption pathways video currently being developed and hoping to share in November.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NR to share future Environment Board meeting dates for next year.</b></p> <p>To add DESNZ have widened the Local Net Zero Forum taskforce for looking at Retrofit to include other areas of devolution, the first meeting is in early October.</p> <p><b>ACTION: SF to update on anything after first meeting.</b></p>	<p>NR</p> <p>DD/CM</p> <p>NR</p> <p>SF</p>
--	---	--