

Yorkshire & Humber Board

Wednesday 11 September 2024 @ 15:00, via Microsoft Teams

In attendance:

Karl Battersby – chair

David Shepherd

Paul Castle

Martin Hutchings (PAS)

Bill Manby

Gary Bartlett

Maureen Wilson (minutes)

Ola Ladapo (DEFRA)

David Dale

Martin Budd

Adam Stewart (DEFRA)

Item	Agenda Item and Notes	Action
1	Welcome and Introductions	
2	<p>Discussion Topic: Environment</p> <p><u>Local Nature Recovery Strategies - Adam Stewart, Team Leader- Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Defra</u></p> <p>Responsible authorities are making good progress, though it varies by location. Early consultations are happening, with more expected in autumn and winter. The process of getting drafts signed off and adopted by councils is lengthy.</p> <p>Close engagement with Natural England to support responsible authorities. Monthly webinars for Q&A, focusing on mapping measures. Briefing new ministers on LNRS and its delivery.</p> <p>Current focus on the spending review to secure ongoing funding for LNRS. The spending review is in two phases: one year for the next financial year and three years for the following years. Aim to provide more certainty around delivery funding by March next year.</p> <p>Q&A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are LNRS still on the same timetable under the new government? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, LNRS are proceeding on the same timetable. - Is there funding for the delivery phase of LNRS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, there is no funding in place for the delivery phase, but this is being addressed in the spending review. - How is the engagement with stakeholders and landowners being handled? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early engagement with landowners is crucial. Responsible authorities are not mandated to enforce measures but to suggest best practices. - What about the mapping and guidance issues? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These issues are being worked through with Natural England. The aim is to clarify that responsible authorities are not mandating actions but suggesting best practices. - How will the spending review impact LNRS funding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spending review will provide more clarity on funding needs and allocations for responsible authorities. - How are local authorities managing the balance between growth and natural habitat protection? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a key tension point, and strategic funding is needed to maintain natural habitats while supporting growth aspirations. <p><u>Biodiversity Net Gain - Martin Hutchings, Principal Adviser for Biodiversity Net Gain, Planning Advisory Service</u></p>	

Presentation provided to update on BNG progress and major issues. BNG is part of the Environment Act, with local planning authorities (LPAs) playing a crucial role. A vibrant network of over 1000 members shares ideas and feedback. Regular drop-in sessions help address applications and process-related issues.

Key Issues and Challenges

1. Teething Issues

- Validation of applications and process-related challenges are being resolved as LPAs gain experience.

2. Learning to Walk

- Decision-making and legal agreements are more complex but manageable.
- Creation of Section 106 legal agreements has been well-received.

3. Running with BNG

- Establishing an off-site market for biodiversity units is crucial.
- LPAs need support to act as facilitators and participants in this market.

Support Programme

- Continuous dialogue with Defra and MHCLG to ensure BNG policy is effectively implemented.
- Emphasis on keeping BNG issues on the government's agenda despite other pressing matters.

Major Challenges

1. Off-Site Market

- LPAs need support to facilitate and regulate the market for biodiversity units.
- Participation in the market involves risk and reward considerations.

2. Small Sites

- Reducing friction in delivering BNG on small sites.
- Issues around compensation, small sites metric, and viability.

3. Decision Making

- Different stages of decision-making present challenges.
- Ensuring adequate information and cooperation from developers.

4. Exemptions

- Clarifying the role and interpretation of exemptions.
- Addressing concerns about exemptions being used to avoid BNG requirements.

5. Large Phased Developments

- Need for more guidance on handling large, phased developments.
- Ensuring clarity and information for LPAs.

6. Monitoring and Enforcement

- Defining the roles and responsibilities of LPAs in monitoring and enforcing BNG.
- Understanding national expectations for reporting on BNG delivery.

7. Political Engagement

- Engaging political leaders to understand and support BNG and LNRS.
- Encouraging a holistic approach to planning, environment, and regeneration.

Martin Hutchings emphasised the importance of continuous support and engagement with LPAs.

Q&A:

David Dale commented:

- Resources and Capacity: Well-known issues that need clarity on enforcement and monitoring.
- Monitoring and Enforcement: Just starting to address these; more information expected in the future.

Karl Battersby's Question:

- De Minimis Exemption: Asked if it's the local planning authority's decision or if there's prescriptive guidance.
 - Guidance exists, but interpretation varies. Developers often misunderstand the rules, especially regarding site size and tree impact. Regular drop-in sessions help share learning and provide guidance.

Martin Budd's Comments:

- Climate Adaptation: Hull City Council is integrating BNG with flooding and heatwave adaptations, and carbon sequestration.
- Urban Challenges: Hull faces challenges in delivering BNG due to limited space and reliance on neighbouring authorities.
 - Interested in Hull's diversified BNG delivery approach. Emphasized the importance of establishing an off-site market to avoid reliance on national credits.

David Dale's Question:

- Off-Site Market: Highlighted its significance and asked about additional guidance and good practices.
 - Buckinghamshire is a pioneer but still faces challenges. Emphasised the need for senior political understanding and comfort around market regulation. An event in October will provide updates and share progress.

Review of the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 – Ola Ladapo, Senior Policy Adviser, Defra

Review Announcement:

- Secretary of State announced a statutory review of the EIP 2023.
- Review to be concluded by the end of the year or early next year.

Collaborative Approach:

- Emphasis on co-creation with stakeholders across various sectors.
- Engagement with environmental, farming, resource, waste, businesses, local authorities, and civil society.

Engagement Objectives:

- Co-creation with stakeholders.
- Gathering expert knowledge to strengthen the EIP.
- Establishing foundations for ongoing collaboration.

Guiding Principles:

- Innovative approaches for rapid review.
- Championing collaboration across sectors.
- Working through partners to broaden reach.
- Ensuring diverse voices are heard.
- Commitment to clear and timely communication.

Engagement Approach:

- Led by the Environmental Partnerships team.
- Engaging NGOs, local authorities, businesses, landowners, and farmers.
- Using existing and new channels for stakeholder engagement.
- Establishing a cross-sector Stakeholder Advisory Group.

	<p>Phases of Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Process: Gathering feedback and recommendations. ○ Reviewing Delivery Plans: Addressing criticisms and refreshing interim targets. ○ Refresh Phase: Drafting and publishing the revised EIP. <p>David Dale asked:</p> <p>Link with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Concern about the different review processes. – Question on how the EIP review aligns with the NPPF consultation. <p>Response: Timings are not synchronised; decision by ministers for a rapid review to ensure the EIP is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Timescale and Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Concern about the ambitious timescale. – Query on when the questions for engagement will be provided. <p>Response: Clearer directions from ministers received; questions and engagement activities expected to begin soon, with significant activity anticipated in the coming days.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>National ADEPT Update – David Dale</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have produced our ‘elevator pitch’ setting out our top transport asks (here). These are 1) Move to multi-year integrated transport funding settlements to allow local areas to plan for the medium term to allocate resources according to local priorities 2) Rapidly accelerate the decarbonisation of the transport sector and 3) Invest in a skilled workforce. We will use the briefing note in meetings with Ministers and MPs. 2. Adaptation and highways is a hot topic at the moment. Having consulted on the draft Transport Adaptation Strategy, DfT officials are waiting for a steer from the new ministerial team. Meanwhile the ADEPT Engineering Board has set up a working group to develop a highways adaptation guide. Others are also planning work. We are talking to DfT about how best to co-ordinate. 3. Highways UK takes place at Birmingham NEC on 16 & 17 October. ADEPT President Ann Carruthers is taking part in a panel discussion on 17th Oct on “Optimising local transport: Connectivity, investment, and public accessibility”; there are several sessions involving presentations from the Live Labs 2 programme leads over the two days too. HUK is free to attend – to register see here. <p><u>Devolution / Growth / Planning</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. We have refreshed the Housing Policy Position (here) and produced a summary briefing note (here). Our housing priorities are: 1) Building more new homes 2) A planning system that delivers great places 3) Improving the quality and safety of existing homes 4) Delivering homes for health and wellbeing 5) Working towards zero carbon and climate resilient homes and 6) Access, affordability and security. We have sent these to Matthew Pennycook, the Housing Minister and requested a meeting. Housing is also the focus for one of the Autumn Conference plenaries. 5. In the run up to summer recess, the government published its consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (here). The deadline for responses is 24 Sept. The planning working group is drafting the ADEPT response. 6. The final session of the ADEPT thought leadership programme (PACE) will take a masterclass approach, testing a draft ‘Stronger Places Assessment Tool’ in Nuneaton. The session will bring together all that’s been covered over the programme. The outcomes will be shared in a plenary at the Autumn Conference; in addition, we will be publishing 	

the assessment tool for all ADEPT members to use. The summary document from session two is available [here](#).

Environment

7. Also in the run up to summer recess, the government announced a rapid review of the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP - [here](#)) to be completed by the end of the year. Unlike the NPPF changes there is no formal consultation document or deadline for responses, but Defra will engage with LAs and other stakeholders in a series of conversations during September and October. Details will be reported via the Environment Board.
8. *What's next for local climate action* is a network of umbrella organisations set up by LGA in February 2024. Membership includes ADEPT, Local Partnerships, Solace, CCN, DCN, London Councils, Core Cities, UK100, APSE. It provides the opportunity to reflect on current challenges and opportunities in respect of local climate action, to share partners' current and future project plans, and to explore potential to collaborate around positions/asks on key strategic priorities. The LGA has commissioned Local Partnerships to work on developing the 'ask' of the new Government to allow local government to support them in the delivery of their manifesto. LP has been gathering the views the views of LAs over the summer via a number of workshops with CEOs and senior officers.
9. On 11th September the Blueprint Coalition (of which ADEPT is a member) hosted a webinar on *How can devolution deliver on environmental ambition?* Speakers were Peter Moore, Co-chair of the Blueprint Coalition and member of the ADEPT Climate Change Board; Cllr Tom Ross, Greater Manchester Combined Authority Green City Lead; Cllr Marissa Heath, Cabinet Member for Environment at Surrey County Council; Dr Matthew Lane, University of Edinburgh; and Victoria Marsom, Head of England team, Friends of the Earth. The Coalition has also published its refreshed priority asks. The recording of the webinar and the updated manifesto asks can be found [here](#).

Events/Other

10. We have published our resource & waste priority asks of the new government ([here](#)); the refreshed Resources & Waste Policy Position will be published in the next few days. A big thanks to Steve Palfrey, Wendy Barratt and the Waste Group for taking the lead on this.
11. We have launched a Leadership Pathway Programme ([here](#)). Developed in partnership with Solace, the programme has been designed to meet the needs of those who are earlier on in their career and looking to move into a more senior leadership role. It is the precursor to ADEPT's highly regarded Leadership Development Programme. For further information click [here](#) and to download an expression of interest form click [here](#). Please note the deadline for EoI is midnight, Friday 20 September.
12. Dates for your diary:
 - o Lunch & Learn this month (27 Sept) is led by WSP, called "Maturity assessment for highways asset management". See [here](#) to register.
 - o The 3rd ADEPT / Natural England webinar "Building healthier communities in our towns and cities: making the most of the benefits of nature" takes place 10:30-12:00 on Friday 20 Sept. If you would like to attend please email Hannah Bartram ([here](#)).
 - o The ADEPT / Environment Agency webinar "The coast is clear: an introduction to coastal risk, resilience and partnerships" takes place 10:00-11:00 on 10 October. If you would like to attend please email Kylie Russell ([here](#)).
 - o Booking for the 6th National Traffic Managers Conference is now open – taking place in Derby on 9th October. [Book your free place here](#) - open to members and non-members.

ADEPT

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Booking is now open for the Autumn Conference, being held in Bristol on 21st & 22nd November. We have managed to keep the cost the same as 2023 and introduced a multi-booking discount for local authorities. To book see here.	
4	Roundtable and AOB No items raised.	