

ADEPT Minutes

Date: 17th October 2024

Time: 11:00 – 12:00

Location: MS Teams

Present:	
Emma Blackham – South Gloucester Council - Deputy Chair	Kylie Russell – Deputy CEO East Sussex - ADEPT
Samana Howell – Wiltshire Council	Sarah Valdus – Wiltshire Council
Jamie Hulland – Devon County Council	Wendy Lane – BCP Council
Matt Ward – Plymouth City Council	Lisa Nash – Banes (Minutes)

Guest Speaker	Andrew Mead – Wiltshire Council
Guest Speaker	David Bowater – Wiltshire Council

Item No	
1	Welcome – Emma Blackham - Chair
Apologies: Ann C, Ben K, Ben R, Hannah B, Matthew P, Miranda H, Nicky W, Paula H, Sally F, Vicky F	
2	Update ADEPT – Kylie Russell
<p>Transport</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> DfT recently ran a consultation on updates to the bus franchising guidance, seeking to remove more technical barriers to franchising and support safer and more accessible services. The ADEPT response is here. Also on buses - the Government has committed to undertaking an urgent review into the effectiveness of Enhanced Partnerships (EPs). This review will be an opportunity to provide an assessment of EP delivery performance against the aims and objectives of the Transport Act and will seek to identify where EPs can be improved and strengthened to deliver a better standard of bus services. DfT has set up a stakeholder group – firstly to focus on how well EPs are working, in terms of governance processes and content, to inform options for primary legislative changes. The wider review will take place over a few months and will be a more in-depth analysis of EPs. They envisage it will include collating and analysing existing EP project delivery data across all LTAs and assessing performance. It is intended to highlight good practice, as well as challenges, and inform a set of mainly non-legislative recommendations. The Government has said it will publish ‘the first integrated national transport strategy the country has ever had’ ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The formation of the strategy, which the reviews suggests should cover England but with a framework for cross-border links to Scotland and Wales, will be separate to the review of transport projects announced by the Government in late July, and this is expected ahead of the Government’s budget on 30 October. The INTS will be formally launched in November, with publication by Autumn 2025. Danny Williams, CEO of Active Travel England, is the lead officer. 	

Devolution / Growth / Planning

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. ADEPT responded to the consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF – see [here](#)). The consultation sought views on the proposed approach to revising the NPPF in order to achieve sustainable growth in the planning system. It was also looking for feedback on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. In total there were 106 questions. We are supportive of a number of the proposals, such as the recognition of the value of strategic planning and made the point that we would like to see the early introduction of the new arrangements to establish some stability in the planning system. Our response also makes clear that we have significant concerns about the new standard method for assessing housing need. We would advocate for an appropriate and robust standard method informed by ONS population projections and demand driven by economic growth plans, rather than an arbitrary supply-side methodology. We also disagreed with the proposal that all local planning authorities should be required to continually demonstrate 5 years of specific, deliverable sites for decision making purposes, regardless of plan status. MHCLG confirmed it received over 10,000 responses and remains committed to announcing the changes before Christmas 2024.
6. The final session of the ADEPT thought leadership programme (PACE) was a masterclass in how best to ‘make the case for place’ using Nuneaton as its focus. The outcomes will be shared in a plenary at the Autumn Conference; in addition, we will be publishing an assessment tool for all ADEPT members to use, which will be launched at the Autumn Conference. The summary document from session two is available [here](#).

Environment / Climate

7. In July the new government outlined its five priorities for improving the environment: Clean up rivers, lakes and seas, Create a roadmap to move Britain to a zero-waste economy, Boost food security, Ensure nature’s recovery and Protect communities from the dangers of flooding. Just before the summer recess the Government announced a rapid review of the EIP with the emphasis on collaboration and delivery. In September there was a very brief first phase consultation with stakeholders, asking for a short response to the overarching question “What key priorities (across policy, process, delivery, engagement) would you recommend government focuses on in a revised EIP to significantly improve the natural environment?”. ADEPT’s response can be found [here](#). We outlined the following key priorities for a revised EIP: • Greater emphasis on a place-based approach • Support for the development of Local EIPs to clarify the role of the local authority • Sufficient and sustainable funding for local authorities to play this role • Statutory duties and targeted funding for local authorities where appropriate • The EIP should be a framework for policy alignment across government strategies, departments, and funding streams • Green finance – building capacity to mobilise private investment at scale • Health and wellbeing. ADEPT is represented at Defra’s cross-sector Stakeholder Advisory Group that will help steer further engagement as the review progresses through the autumn.

8. The LGA has established the *Local Climate Action Network* - a network of umbrella organisations including 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. In addition, 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 climate commitments. Jo Wall from LP presented initial findings to the Leadership Team recently. They have focused recommendations around 1) climate leadership 2) Clean Power 2030 & Great British Energy 3) energy systems reform 4) jobs and finance 5) warm homes and 6) protecting nature.
9. Along with the refreshed Housing policy position and priority asks, we have recently published other priority policy asks: transport ([here](#)), resource & waste ([here](#)), climate change and green growth ([here](#)). We have also revised the Resources & Waste policy position ([here](#)).

Events/Other

10. We received 60 expressions of interest for our new Leadership Pathway Programme – an amazing response! Given this, we are going to run with a larger cohort than originally planned and there will be two facilitators. We will be launching a call for expressions of interest for the Leadership Development Programme 2025 in early November.
11. The month's Climate Change blog ([here](#)) is by Louise Marix Evans, and is focusing on how devolution can drive environmental ambition.
12. Dates for your diary:
 - The ADEPT / Natural England webinar "Building healthier communities in our towns and cities: making the most of the benefits of nature" takes place 11:00-12:30 on Friday 8th November. If you would like to attend please email Hannah Bartram ([here](#)).
 - Booking is 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](#).

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Wiltshire Council – Delivering Success on the Home Front

Focus: Council's work in 2023-2024, particularly housing acquisitions.

Housing Market Context

- **Earnings to House Price Ratios:** Comparable to London levels due to high house prices and lower earnings.
- **Private Rental Sector:** Limited provision at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. Wiltshire Citizens Advice found only one three-bedroom house available at LHA rates.

Stone Circle Housing Company

- **Established:** 2020
- **Purpose:** Provide stable housing at LHA rates for vulnerable tenants.
- **Housing Revenue Account:** Inherited from Salisbury District Council, allowing for county-wide council house building.

Background Events

- **Fall of Kabul (August 2021):** 15,000-20,000 Afghans settled in the UK.
- **Ukraine Invasion (February 2022):** Wiltshire took in 1,800 Ukrainians under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Sustainable Housing Solutions

- **Funding:** Mix of 40% grant funding and 60% debt. **Announcement:** November 2022.
- **Local Authority Housing Fund:** Launched March 2023, similar funding mix.
- **Achievements:** £4 million grant, 24 homes for Ukraine, 6 for Afghan scheme.

Budget and Housing Acquisitions

- **Budget 2023-2024:** £10 million set aside, leveraged to £40 million.
- **Purpose:** Address homelessness, reduce temporary accommodation costs, support learning disability placements, and social care.

MOD Homes

- **Lobbying:** Extensive efforts to bring 1,300 empty MOD homes back into use.
- **Investment:** MOD committed to improving conditions and bringing homes back into use.
- **Transitional Housing:** 87 homes for Afghan families, 62 permanent resettlement homes.
- **Council House Build Programme**
- **Goal:** Deliver 1,000 additional council homes over 10 years.
- **Methods:**
 1. Building on council-owned land and land purchased from MOD and NHS.
 2. Section 106 agreements.
 3. New build acquisitions.
 4. Sheltered regeneration of existing housing stock.
 5. Purchasing off the open market and buying back ex-local authority homes sold under the right to buy.

LAHF (Local Authority Housing Fund)

- **Delivery:** 30 homes for Ukrainian and Afghan families.
- **Cost:** £7.4 million total, with £3.9 million from HRA and £3.5 million grant.
- **Locations:** Focus on market towns like Trowbridge, Melksham, Chippenham, and Salisbury.
- **Process:** Homes sourced, brought to lettable standard, and occupied.

Homes for Ukraine Programme

- **Delivery:** 29 homes across the county.
- **Funding:** Higher grant allowing delivery at social rent.
- **Process:** Similar to LAHF, with focus on new builds and ex-local authority homes.
- **SHAP (Single Homeless Accommodation Programme)**
- **Delivery:** 9 homes for single homeless individuals.
- **Locations:** Salisbury and Chippenham.
- **Focus:** One-bed units and family homes for HMO use.
- **Support:** Homes England funding.

- **Summary of £50 Million Expenditure (2023-2024)**
- **Purpose:** Preventative measure to avoid service pressures, not for financial return.
- **Sources:** Private landlords, new builds, and old council houses.
- **Ukrainian Households:** 1,800 individuals (900 households), with 150 still hosted in Wiltshire.
- **Afghan Households:** 500 in transitional accommodation, with additional in MOD and private sector housing.
- **Achievements:** 141 property completions in 2023-2024.
- **Challenges:** Required additional conveyancers in the legal team due to high volume.

Questions / Discussion Points:

- **Award Recognition:** Acknowledgment of the project's success and award-winning status.
- **Challenges in Property Sourcing:** Speed and preparedness in sourcing properties for funding rounds.
- **Temporary Accommodation:** Efforts to reduce spending on temporary accommodation and the success of these measures.
- **Funding Models:** Use of retained right to buy receipts and commuted sums for housing delivery.
- **Prevention and Cost Savings:** Emphasis on prevention and managing future costs through strategic housing investments.

Link from David Bowater:

[Household type of households in temporary accommodation - Total number of households in Temporary Accommodation in Wiltshire | LG Inform \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

4 - AOB – No items

Next meeting: **Thursday 28th November 14:30 – 15:30**