



East of England Board

Minutes


Date: Tuesday 3 June 2025
Venue: Virtual Teams meeting
Duration: 16:00 to 17:00
Chair: Andrew Cook, Suffolk County Council
Vice-Chair: Grahame Bygrave, Norfolk County Council

Attendees: Alan Richards (AR), Andrew Cook (AC), Andrew Summers (AS), Frank Jordan (FJ), Grahame Bygrave (GB), Hannah Bartram (HB), Naomi Green (NG), Stephen Mooring (SM), Steve Palfrey (SP) and Tom Blackburne-Maze (TB-M)

Apologies: Gerard McCleave, Judith Barker, Kylie Russell, Mark Ash, Mark Doran, Paul Crick, Paul Thomas, Rob Hancock, Stuart Profitt, Tom Walker

Guests: Paul Hickey, Ofwat and Daniel Johns, Water Resources East

Notes: Emma Cook (EC)

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1.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence, Welcome & Introduction</u></p> <p>Andrew welcomed Paul Hickey from Ofwat and Daniel Johns from Water Resources East as guest speakers to the meeting.</p>
2.	<p><u>Presentation around water resources, water scarcity and national major water projects by Paul Hickey, Senior Director – RAPID and Environmental Planning, Ofwat and Daniel Johns, Water Resources East</u></p> <p>Paul Hickey from Ofwat and Daniel Johns from Water Resources East provided a presentation.</p> <p> 2025-06-03 ADEPT East of England brief</p> <p>Key Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduction and Context: AC introduced the meeting, highlighting the relevance of the topic on water resources, usage, and companies, especially in the context of the East of England's water shortage and flooding issues. Paul and Daniel were welcomed to present their insights.Long-Term Water Resource Needs: Paul Hickey from OFWAT discussed the long-term water resource needs, highlighting the pressures

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	<p>from climate change, societal needs, and environmental protection. Paul emphasised the need for significant interventions to mitigate severe impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current Constraints and Future Needs: Paul explained the current constraints in the South and East of England, where new abstraction licences cannot be granted. Paul projected a future need of 5000m litres by 2050, driven by environmental protection, climate change and economic growth. Twin Track Approach: Paul outlined the twin track approach to water resource management, which includes demand management (fixing leaks and encouraging water-efficient behaviour) and increasing supply through new projects like reservoirs, desalination plants and water recycling. Regional Water Resources Plan: Daniel Johns from Water Resources East introduced their regional water resources plan, explaining the unique set-up of WRE as a not-for-profit membership organisation. Daniel highlighted the plan's focus on addressing an 800m litres per day deficit by 2050 through demand management and new supply schemes. Impact of Growth on Water Demand: Daniel discussed the increasing water demand due to growth ambitions in various sectors, including research parks, data centres, and green hydrogen. Daniel noted the challenges in meeting these demands while maintaining environmental standards. Progress and Challenges: Daniel provided an update on the progress of various water supply schemes, including the Fens and Lincolnshire reservoirs and desalination plants. He also mentioned the challenges in managing non-household water consumption and the need for alternative water sources for industrial uses. Co-ordination with Strategic Authorities: AC and Daniel discussed the co-ordination between water resource planning and strategic authorities, particularly in Norfolk and Suffolk. Daniel mentioned ongoing work to develop an integrated water management plan for the new strategic authority area. Strategic Planning Processes: Paul highlighted the need for more holistic and ambitious strategic planning processes that consider both public water supply and other growth sectors. He emphasised the importance of building capacity to handle future uncertainties and growth opportunities. Local Resource Options: Grahame from Norfolk County Council raised concerns about the timing of large-scale projects. Daniel and Paul discussed the potential of local resource options and the use of technology to optimise existing water resources through smart abstraction and trading platforms. Engagement with National Infrastructure: Hannah enquired about the engagement with the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) and its successor, NISTA. Paul and Daniel confirmed their involvement and the importance of co-ordinated planning across different sectors to avoid silo thinking.

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5.	<p data-bbox="264 185 935 224"><u>National ADEPT Update by Hannah Bartram</u></p> <p data-bbox="264 239 416 277">Transport</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="264 302 1425 521">1. Carbon Leadership Programme: We launched the Carbon Leadership Programme at the Spring Conference. This exciting initiative has been created in partnership with Proving Services and is supported by DfT and will enable LHAs to measure and reduce their carbon emissions. It's a fully funded programme that will run for the next three years. Find out more by attending one of the introductory webinars – see here. <li data-bbox="264 548 1425 1025">2. Live Labs 2: The Live Labs 2 Expo took place in Liverpool on 25th March, with over 200 delegates attending. The materials and resources generated by this event are available on the website (here). As part of the Expo programme, we ran a popular Dragons Den for SMEs to pitch their innovative ideas for decarbonisation – to read more and see who won, look here. We published a report the same day that highlights the need for organisational behaviour change to run alongside technological change (see here). Finally – we hosted a LL2 parliamentary reception in the House of Commons on 23rd April, with Minister Lilian Greenwood attending. At that event we launched a pledge that invites stakeholders to drive meaningful decarbonisation across all aspects of the UK's road network and rethink how the highways infrastructure reduces carbon – for more information and to sign the pledge, see here. <p data-bbox="264 1050 735 1088">Devolution / Growth / Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="264 1115 1425 1406">3. LGR & Devo webinars: As part of our programme of support for members on Devo and LGR issues, we hosted a webinar on becoming a combined / statutory authority on 29th May. If you would to see the recording & slides, please get in touch with Hannah Bartram. We are also hosting issue-specific webinars on Environment & Climate Change (3rd June), Highways & Transport (12th June) Planning (26th June) and Waste & Recycling (27th June). More information including the link to register are on the ADEPT website (here). <li data-bbox="264 1433 1425 1765">4. Workforce issues: our Gen Z campaign pilot has now ended. The <i>Find Your Path</i> campaign focused on attracting young people aged between 18 and 27 to local authority roles, including those delivering the place services we all use such as local highways, waste and recycling, green space and access, as well as people-based roles. We reported on the findings at the Spring Conference on 22 May – the slides are here. We are now considering how we might expand the pilot into a national initiative. To find out more about the campaign see here and the website is available here: https://findyourpath.uk/. <li data-bbox="264 1792 1425 2083">5. The Planning & Infrastructure Bill was laid in Parliament on 11th March. It forms part of a continuum of planning reforms (previously NPPF, planning fees uplifts and recent announcement about statutory consultees) and forthcoming changes around Planning Committees, Brownfield Passports and National Development Management Policies. There are 4 overarching objectives: 1) Faster and more certain consenting for infrastructure 2) More strategic approach to nature recovery 3) Improving certainty in decision-making and 4) Unlocking land and development.

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	<p>Natural England attended the April meeting of the planning working group to talk through plans for the Nature Restoration Fund. Wildlife & Countryside Link will be attending the June meeting to talk about environmental NGOs' concerns over the Bill watering down environmental protection. The Bill is now in committee stage; with Royal Assent anticipated in the autumn.</p> <p>Environment / Climate</p> <p>6. Land Use Framework: We responded to the government consultation on a new strategic approach to managing land use in England (otherwise known as the land use framework). The LUF is intended to support the government's missions under the Plan for Change, including delivering new housebuilding, energy infrastructure and new towns. Our response is here.</p> <p>7. The Rapid Adaptation Pathways Assessment (RAPA) toolkit was launched on 13th May, with over 200 attendees. The toolkit focuses on flood and coastal erosion risks and is aimed at local authorities, allowing them to undertake a basic rapid adaptation pathways assessment approach in their places and partnerships. RAPAs are 'high-level' adaptation pathways, developed in workshop settings. They use the expert judgement of participating stakeholders to identify thresholds and actions, using maps and defined data. This webinar will introduce RAPAs and the new toolkit as well as include a case study from one of the pilot locations who trialled the toolkit and supported with its development. To find out more, see here.</p> <p>8. The Blueprint Coalition - an influential group of local government organisations, environmental groups, and research institutions – recently hosted a webinar that tackled a crucial question: is local authority action on climate too important to leave to chance? Eamon Lally, Principal Policy Adviser at the Local Government Association, reflects on the webinar (see here).</p> <p>Events/Other</p> <p>9. ADEPT Digital Academy: We are launching the ADEPT Digital Academy - a bespoke learning programme, powered by Multiverse and funded by the Apprenticeship Levy, that will equip place teams with digital and data skills to lead transformation and deliver better outcomes for people and places. This programme is fully funded and will run as a pilot programme, starting in the autumn. You can find out more, including registering to attend an introductory webinar, here.</p> <p>10. Leadership Pathway Programme: designed for people in the earlier stages of their career who would like to develop their skills as future leaders, ADEPT's Leadership Pathway Programme for aspiring directors is now open for applications. The deadline is midnight, Friday 27th June. Find out more and download an expression of interest form here.</p> <p>11. The ADEPT Spring Conference and President's Awards Dinner was a fantastic opportunity to recognise and celebrate the outstanding work of partners across the country. You can read about the award winners here.</p>

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	<p>Angela Jones is the new President of ADEPT – the theme for her presidential year is 'Make the Case for People and Place' and her priorities are here.</p> <p>12. Dates for your diary – for more detail please visit the Events page on the website (here):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Devo webinars – see above ii. Lunch & Learn – Our award winners! 25th June, virtual iii. Leadership Development Programme alumni seminar – 30th June, London iv. Corporate Partner seminar – 4th July, London v. National Traffic Managers Conference – 8th October, Leicester vi. ADEPT Autumn Conference – 20 & 21 November, Manchester
5.	<p><u>Roundtable updates from each authority</u></p> <p>ACTION: AC mentioned that the DfT will be asking questions of authorities that do not put forward a nominee to attend the regional flood resilience meeting scheduled to take place on 16 June. Norfolk County Council is currently hosting the session for the region and it is important to ensure representatives attend.</p> <p>Update by Andrew Summers, Transport East:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport East received increased funding for the year, which was positively noted. • The recent board meeting was held in Sizewell, where the business plan for the year ahead was agreed upon. • Significant work is being done on the spending review, with priorities such as Ely being highlighted. • Efforts are focused on rail reform and developing rail task forces, including the East West Rail Eastern Section Board and the Thameside task force. • Transport East is finalising a platform to provide local authorities with access to data and analysis for business cases. • The next board meeting is scheduled for 25 June, with the inclusion of business boards and Chambers of Commerce. <p>Update by Naomi Green (EEH):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEH is launching their capacity and capability website on 20 July, tested with Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Midlands Connect. • The Treasury is interested in capacity and capability for infrastructure delivery, with a meeting scheduled to discuss smoothing the infrastructure delivery process. • Oxford Cambridge Growth Corridor: EEH is involved in the legacy of East West Rail, ensuring lessons from the western part flow to the east. • EEH is addressing immediate access issues to the Universal site, focusing on bus provision during the construction phase.

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	<p>Update from Grahame Bygrave, Norfolk County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Winch Housing Access Road: Received outline business case approval for £91m in government funding towards a £109m scheme linked to 4,000 new houses. • Long Stratton Bypass is currently under construction with a year and a half construction program. • Norfolk is planning for the next financial year with a revenue savings target of around £40m, similar to last year. • Starting Wednesday closures in July of recycling centres, mirroring arrangements in Suffolk. <p>Update from Stephen Mooring, Central Bedford Shire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Bedfordshire is dealing with significant developments, including the Universal Studios project and the anticipated announcement of a new town at Tempsford. These developments are influencing their local plan and transport access strategies. • They are focusing on engaging and influencing these projects to meet pressing needs related to transport and access. • Stephen mentioned their involvement in the ADEPT wide change board, highlighting a response to a policy statement on climate change becoming a statutory duty for local authorities. • The board also discussed the importance of articulating wider co-benefits of climate change actions, such as health benefits. <p>Update from Steve Palfrey, Suffolk County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant work is ongoing in the areas of LGR and Devo. • Collaboration with Norfolk on a strategic approach to water issues, involving Water Resources East. • Public consultation of the LNRS is underway with good engagement. Expected to take through Cabinet in September. • Monitoring for commitments on support for separate food waste collections and potential long-term measures for emissions trading schemes or carbon pricing for energy from waste disposal. • Upcoming ADEPT Waste Group Workshop to discuss decarbonisation and ADEPT policy strands. • Delivering Devolution Workshop to take place with a focus on waste, with good speakers lined up. <p>Update from Tom Blackburne-Maze, Essex County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political landscape in Essex is currently unstable, with significant nervousness and mixed messages regarding Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution. • LGR Developments: Essex has officially separated into two business cases, with different parties aspiring for varying numbers of unitaries in the future. • Recent elections have caused nervousness and unusual behaviours among the administration, reflecting on the potential impact of elections in

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	<p>Essex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the budget planning for the next year begins, there is a strong emphasis on avoiding any savings that might negatively impact residents and their voting behaviour. • Likely to receive more money for short-term projects rather than strategic initiatives, reflecting the administration's current priorities.

Future Meeting Dates:

9 September 2025 (to be moved – proposing Wednesday 17 Sept)
2 December 2025