

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

Economy, Planning and Housing Board Inaugural Meeting

Wednesday, 17 September 2025, 9.30-11.00 via MS Teams

1. Welcome

Chris Henning (CH), Executive Director, Place, Derbyshire County Council and Chair, ADEPT Economy, Planning and Housing Board, welcomed everyone to its inaugural meeting, explaining that the term 'Sustainable Growth' causes confusion, and therefore the Board has been re-named to better describe its purpose.

Chris thanked Kate Martin, Executive Director – City Futures, Sheffield City Council, who wished to step down from her role as Co-Deputy Chair of the Board.

Paul Barnard (PB), Service Director, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure, Plymouth City Council, will be Deputy Chair.

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Hannah Bartram, Chief Executive Officer, ADEPT

3. Establishing the Board – Purpose, Governance and Terms of Reference (TOR)

CH asked for thoughts on the Board's Purpose, Governance and TOR

- Clear TOR required – engagement in planning influence; share with the marketplace; shape and influence government and other bodies, not only in terms of planning but also the way we engage with communities.
- PB commented that a purpose of the Board would be the integration of planning and wider place-making, moving towards co-design. He hoped it would be a useful and safe space for MHCLG to engage with the sector, roll out consultations and test ideas.
- CH – also to bring professionals together.
- Kylie Russell (ADEPT) – complex influences; previous meetings with the ADEPT Environment Board – bring out in TOR.
- CH – What are the issues we want to tackle? What is the demand? – let us know. Your group – if there are burning issues, step forward.
- Colin Haigh (Hertfordshire County Council) – devolution, LGR, suggest 5 to 10 things we want from the Government before we get going.
- CH – include consultation responses in the remit.
- Robin Rogers (Oxfordshire County Council) – where we want the next Planning Bill to go – unitary councils.
- CH – write ambition into the sector.
- David Dale (ADEPT) – include policy positions (Housing completed); 3-year strategic plan needs to be revived.
- CH – spend 20 minutes on it at the next meeting.
- Ian Achurch (North Northamptonshire Council) – AI growth, horizon scanning.
- CH – adjust draft TOR (already circulated) accordingly.

4. Overview of the Bill: origins, status and future trajectory – implications for development and local authorities

Will Karani (WK), Deputy Director, Planning Strategy, MHCLG (role covering planning and housing, section 106 etc.)

- Important to get ideas to MHCLG early.
- 'Build, Baby, Build' is new SoS mantra – 1.5m houses by the end of the parliament. Matthew Pennycook, Housing Minister, talked at the HBF planning conference. Upgrade to flood risk assessment.
- New NPPF in December 2024; OBR forecast high level of growth.
- New category of median sites.

- Review of statutory consultees – consultation and response – national planning fee surcharge for statutory consultees.
- Local plans – keen to drive forward progress.
- Five Bill objectives - Permission in Principle, nature recovery, improve certainty (planning committees, fees), cross-boundary strategic planning - Spatial Development Strategies (SDS), Development Corporations.
- House of Lords Committee stage of the Bill – two sittings to 1.30am and 3.40am. Further amendments on economy and nature; Report stage on 20, 22, 27 and 29 October. Royal Assent before the end of 2025, with implementation in 2026.
- Next Planning Bill – not yet decided or agreed.
- National Decision-Making Policies - consultation before the end of 2025.

Questions and Comments

- Colin Haigh (Hertfordshire County Council) – SDS – help required. Developer Board in Hertfordshire on 16 September 2025 at which a KC raised a Judicial Review (JR) issue – WK confirmed JR was an area of interest for Government.
- WK - The Bill makes provision for the removal of the paper permission stage for judicial reviews of NPSs and Development Consent Orders, and removes the right to appeal for cases deemed totally without merit at the oral permission hearing. There is some interest in exploring any further opportunities to limit the impact of judicial reviews on project delays (while still maintaining access to justice).
- PB – scheduled local plan regulations – when are they likely to come out?
- WK – SDS in coming weeks
- David Dale (ADEPT) – only Government amendments to the Bill accepted. Changes to NSIP and Part 3?
- WK - NSIP amendments summarised here [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#) (and a relevant consultation here [Consultation on streamlining infrastructure planning - GOV.UK](#))
- WK - summary of Part 3 amendments at the bottom of the webpage [The Planning and Infrastructure Bill - GOV.UK](#)
- [Summary: Planning and Infrastructure Bill, Government Amendments to Part 3 \(Lords Committee Stage\) - GOV.UK](#)
- Colin Haigh - agree there needs to be a balance between fair justice and someone rich/persistent being able to pursue a JR which has been judged to be totally without merit.

5. Reflections on the Bill's practical impact for planners and local authorities

Robbie Calvert (RC), Head of Policy and Public Affairs, RTPi

Positives

- Reintroduction of Spatial Development Strategies (SDS), but impact assessment suggests 32 additional SDSs will need an additional 175 planners
- Reinvestment of planning fee income – especially in planning policy teams, whose finance has been disproportionately cut
- Resourcing of statutory consultees

Practical implications for planners

- Uncertainty and transition to the new system will create delays
- Changes to NSIPs, DCs, CPO
- National scheme of delegation
- Environmental Delivery Plans

Purpose of Planning (should be stated at the start of the Bill)

- Define an ambitious purpose to positively shape the future
- Embed the needs of communities throughout the planning system
- Build a consistent planning system with a shared vision

Chef Planning Officers

- Place competency and accountability at the heart of decision-making
- Resilient planning services to deliver growth
- Build a world-leading planning system through vision and leadership

National Spatial Framework

- Simplify, expedite, strengthen and integrate plan-making through a National Spatial Framework
- Support communities through cross-Government working

Online availability of planning committees

- Usher in a new era of community engagement
- Empowering diverse community engagement in planning
- Make transparency and accountability the foundation of the planning system

Plenty more still to come ...

- English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill
- National Decision-Making Policies
- Revised NPPF
- Another Bill next year?

Three steps to better resourced planning system

- Understand the resourcing crisis
- Give planners the tools for success
- Build the planning workforce of the future
 - Soft skills – succession planning
 - Planning workforce – long-term skills and capacity
 - Concern about Level 7 apprenticeships (support from ADEPT)

Questions and Comments

- WK – need to ensure sufficient resource in the system; difficult to get grant funding, hence LPAs to raise their own fees; need people in place.
- CH (Derbyshire County Council) – new ‘Reform’ administration looks at things through a different lens, not via a SDS, but from a local anti-growth perspective.
- WK – what is the narrative? The need is for a plan-led system, with more streamlined communities – what should be built where? – the right homes, with the right level of quality and infrastructure. The Bill says there is a role for councillors on the most important schemes; Government is pro-growth and pro-development.
- RC – consider how communities feed into local development using the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill – link between government structures and a plan-led system – need for better promotion.
- CH – Derbyshire County Council part of East Midlands Combined County Authority – helpful to develop a strategic plan which brings in new resources, interplay between strategic authority and local authority with a patchwork quilt; clarity of expectations – co-creation at the beginning.
- AH - Anneliese Hutchinson (Planning Officers Society) – welcome SDS; could shadow boards be set up? Need to work with water and sewerage companies, minerals and waste bodies.

- Joe Battye (Derbyshire County Council) - shadow boards would be a good idea to bring us all into the new space and ways of working so we can hit the ground running.
- CH – currently funding going to larger authorities.
- RC – need SDS in place across the country.
- Laura McCulloch (Hampshire County Council) – need to retain planners – people moving to the private sector; difficult time, especially for minerals and waste planners.
- Kamal Panchal (LGA) – funding is going to mayors and not other areas. LGA is a force for growth and is doing a piece of work – LGA knowledge of place and a democratic mandate – core funding is not enough.
- RC – RTPI to work with the LGA on a budget submission (based on an increase in work)
- AH – POS is voice of public sector planning. Hannah Bartram CEO, ADEPT comes to meetings of the Planning Alliance, working together on skills, recruitment, retention, to maximise the benefits of sharing.

6. Update on Autumn Conference workshop

The Art of the Possible: Unlocking Impactful Public-Private Collaborations

20-21 November 2025 at the Lowry Hotel, Manchester, including workshops.

KR - Join us for an interactive workshop focused on building effective, long-term collaboration between the public and private sectors. We'll explore how trust, shared risk, and aligned priorities can lead to stronger relationships and better outcomes for places and people.

Bring your current challenges. We'll bring practical insights, case studies, and a space to have honest conversations about what it takes to establish partnerships that deliver.

7. ADEPT Update - Kylie Russell

Transport / Infrastructure

1. **Carbon Leadership Programme:** There's been significant interest in the [programme](#) since we launched it in June, and places are limited for the remainder of the 2025/26 programme. Created in partnership with Proving Services and supported by the Department for Transport, the programme is designed to support local highway authorities measure and identify ways to reduce their carbon emissions. Rather than each authority investing considerable time and resources into developing its own carbon baselining tool and working in isolation with limited visibility of comparative performance, the programme offers a coordinated approach. We are running a another training webinars on 17th September (1-3pm) – to register see [here](#).
2. **Live Labs 2:** As part of the programme we commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team to explore the behavioural changes needed to run alongside technological change (see the report [here](#)). We have 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](#). The latest Live Labs 2 blog focuses on the Devon A382 project ([here](#)).
3. The 7th **National Traffic Managers Conference** is now being held online on Weds 8th Oct (it was meant to be held in Birmingham). The programme, and registration link, can be seen [here](#).

Devolution Planning

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Growth

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4. **LGR & Devo webinars:** Our programme of support for members on Devo and LGR issues has now completed. We delivered 6 webinars: 1) becoming a unitary council 2) becoming a combined / statutory authority plus issue-specific webinars on Environment & Climate Change, Highways & Transport, Planning and Waste &

Recycling. If you would to see any of the recordings & slides, please get in touch with [Hannah Bartram](#).

5. **Workforce issues:** Our Gen Z 'Find Your Path' campaign has been shortlisted for an award in the CN Workforce Awards 2025. The campaign was designed to inspire the Gen Z generation to explore careers in local government, directly addressing our urgent skills shortage. We've just published the debrief report, that captures key learnings from the campaign – read the report [here](#).
6. We have published a policy position paper on the **Devolution Bill** ([here](#)). Whilst the association welcomed the introduction of the Bill, and the opportunity it presents for strengthening local leadership and place-based service delivery, we are very disappointed that the Bill does not propose to transfer or introduce new statutory environmental or climate-related functions to Strategic Authorities.

Environment / Climate

7. In the most recent **climate change blog**, ADEPT policy officer David Dale discusses recent developments in some local authority climate policies and the implications these changes may have (see [here](#)).
8. ADEPT has responded to the government's **Private Finance and Nature Call for Evidence**, which is seeking ideas on how to boost private sector investment in nature recovery, linking environmental health to long-term economic growth and resilience – our response is [here](#).
9. **PACE Programme 2025:** The outputs from session one are now available, including a [summary](#), [video](#) and [blog](#). The first session: '*Translating global trends into local place leadership: opportunities and challenges*', explored four critical megatrends reshaping place outcomes: climate volatility, spatial inequality, erosion of trust and demographic and digital shifts. The session summary brings together the key learnings and discussion points from the day. The video provides an overview of the session's key themes and insights from the expert speakers. We've also published a blog from Matt O'Neill, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.
10. Joint webinar with the Environment Agency on the Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP) webinar on Thursday 25th September 10:30-11:30.

Events/Other

11. **ADEPT Digital Academy:** this is 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 [here](#).
12. We will be running another series of joint webinars with the Environment Agency, and Natural England, over the autumn / winter. Dates to be announced shortly.
13. **Dates for your diary** – for more detail please visit the Events page on the website ([here](#)):
 - i. Lunch & Learn with WDM on 'PAS 2161: what to expect' takes place 24 Sept – see [here](#) to book
 - ii. National Traffic Managers Conference, 8th October, **now online** – booking site now live ([here](#))
 - iii. ADEPT will be at Highways UK (15&16 October) – Andrew Cook, 1st VP will be speaking and there are several Live Labs 2 presentations. To register for this free event, see [here](#).
 - iv. ADEPT Autumn Conference, 20 & 21 November, Manchester – booking site now live ([here](#)) - **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester is confirmed as keynote speaker.**