

ADEPT - Energy & Clean Growth Working Group

Minutes

Date & Time:	Thursday 16th October 13:30 - 15:00
Venue:	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Chair:	Daire Casey, Energy Services Manager, West Sussex County Council Deputy Chair: Katie Sargent, Greener Futures Group Manager, Surrey County Council
Attendees:	<p>Aoife Dudley - Climate policy specialist, Oxfordshire County Council (ADU) Chris Bennett - West of England Combined Authority (CBE) Daire Casey - Energy Services Manager, West Sussex County Council (DCA) David Dale - Policy Officer, ADEPT (DDA) Ellen Rodger - Energy Programme Manager, Devon County Council (ERO) Hayley Ash - West of England Combined Authority (HAS) Katie Sargent - Greener Futures Group Manager, Surrey County Council (KSA) Kofi Adu-Gyamfi – Climate Change Service Lead, West Berkshire Council (KGY) Kylie Russell - Deputy CEO, ADEPT (KRU) Lynn Trigwell - Head of Climate and Environment, Wiltshire Council (LTR) Margaret Enstone - Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer, Darlington Borough Council (MEN) Millie Macdonald - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (MMA) Olivia Mortimer - West Sussex County Council (OMO) Patrick Allcorn - Head of Local Energy, Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (PAL) Sarah Bazen (Digital Infrastructure Programme Manager), West Sussex County Council (SBA) Steve Baggs - Net Zero Programme Lead for the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (SBA) Thomas Day – Head of Energy and Low Carbon Programme, Essex County Council (TDA)</p>
Apologies:	Wayne Lewis Sarah Gilbert
Guests:	<p>Matt Nixon, (Project Manager - Carbon Reduction), Adur & Worthing Councils; Sarah Bazen (Digital Infrastructure Programme Manager), West Sussex County Council; Steve Baggs (Net Zero Programme Lead – South), Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p>
Note Taker:	Olivia Mortimer, West Sussex County Council

Item No.	Item	Lead	Time
1.	<p><u>Welcome & minutes</u></p> <p>Welcome to,</p> <p>Sarah Bazen (Digital Infrastructure Programme Manager), West Sussex County Council;</p> <p>Steve Baggs (Net Zero Programme Lead – South), Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2025 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	Daire Casey	13:30
2.	<p><u>Accommodating Data Centre growth locally</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex County Council looking at 5 separate planning applications for data centres. DCA comments on the concerns which have been raised around impact this will have on the local energy system. SBA introduces role as Digital Infrastructure Programme Manager at West Sussex County Council. SBA states that the drivers for data centres are mainly AI. SBA comments that there are certain sectors that are more data driven. WSCC currently examining what sectors they are already engaged in which are data heavy – which will drive the need potentially for certain types of data centres. SBA also comments that through conversations had within this industry, it seems that there is more capacity in existing data centres than is currently required. However, as data requirement increases, this will be a problem in the future. SBA states that some estimates put running out of capacity/ space at roughly 2040. This includes the UK potentially running out of data centre space. SBA comments that possible solutions to this involve data being offshored – however there are some sectors that are more high risk such as the public sector, defence and financial institutions where this would create a security risk. TDA states that Essex County Council have started to do sensitivity analysis on the impact this will have on energy demand on the county as whole. TDA comments on the willingness to engage with this amongst ECC planning officers & Essex Planning Officers Association. 	Thomas Day, Essex CC; Sarah Bazen, West Sussex CC	14:05

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TDA comments it would be beneficial to compare notes with colleagues across ADEPT & build consensus across coming weeks as applications are coming in quickly. <p><u>In discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDA asks what is the role of government in this process, where individual local planning authorities are dealing with large infrastructure applications- which are actually part of a national strategy to develop AI centres. PAL comments that this is being discussed across government departments. PAL states that as part of the UKRI programme, DESNZ are commissioning some work from Regen to look at new planning guidance, planning guidance which had previously come from MHCLG & how this impacts local authority planners + developing training. PAL comments that he can get in touch with Regen and see what guidance other devolved authorities have been given & if this can be made available to everyone. <p>Action: PAL to get in touch with Regen and see what guidance other devolved authorities have been given & if this can be made available to everyone.</p>		
3.	<p><u>CDEL funding opportunity (Update)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBA states that there will potentially be a capital grant scheme coming up. Applications will be open in November. It will be for local authorities & community energy groups. Still awaiting high level ministerial sign off. PAL confirms that as stated previously, capital money would have to be spent in the current financial year. 	Steve Baggs, GSENGH	14:35
4.	<p><u>ADEPT update</u></p> <p>Transport / Infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. If your local authority is interested in finding out more, email Hannah Bartram. 	Kylie Russell	14:40

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](#). For the latest blogs and updates, see [here](#).
3. The Department for Transport has recently published its **Quantified Carbon Guidance**. For information, see [here](#).

Devolution / Growth / Planning

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 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**, Ann Carruthers, Director of Environment and Transport for Leicestershire County Council and ADEPT President 2024-2025 reflects on her presentation to the Climate Change Committee's Citizens' Panel on Climate Adaptation o 'Building resilience: climate adaptation for our roads. See [here](#).
8. **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.

9. We held a joint webinar with the Environment Agency on the **Living with Change: Coastal Communities and Climate Resilience with over 45 attendees**. To receive the slides and recording please email kylie.russell@eastsussex.gov.uk.

Events/Other

10. In the 2nd of our ADEPT/Environment Agency webinar series we will be focusing on lowland resilience. This webinar will focus on the unique Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) challenges faced by lowland catchments through innovative and sustainable approaches. The webinar takes place on Wednesday 12th November 16:00-17:00. For an invite, please contact kylie.russell@eastsussex.gov.uk.
11. We are running a webinar with Government Business on '**Exploring the role of local authorities in the future of affordable housing**' which will be chaired by Katie Stewart (2nd VP and Joint Chair, ADEPT South East Board / Executive Director for Environment City of London Corporation) Register [here](#).
12. **Dates for your diary** – for more detail please visit the Events page on the website ([here](#)):
- i. Our Lunch & Learn with Ringway is on Wednesday 22nd October, 12pm-12.45pm. James Stokes from Ringway presents this session on AI Management in Action. Register [here](#).
 - ii. Our first ADEPT/Natural England webinar No 1: Strategic planning for nature and growth - unlocking new opportunities is on Tuesday 11th November, 15:30-17:00. Join us to explore how Spatial Development Strategies could create new opportunities for nature and growth. This webinar will feature expert insights and a panel discussion on how to embed environmental priorities into planning at the strategic scale, while maximising benefits for the economy, people and places. Register [here](#).
 - iii. Webinar on highways run off and water quality - Friday 14th November 14:00-15:30. To register interest and receive an appointment please email kylie.russell@eastsussex.gov.uk
 - iv. ADEPT Autumn Conference, 20 & 21 November, Manchester – the deadline for booking is 7th Nov – book now to avoid disappointment! (see [here](#)) - **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester is confirmed as keynote speaker**.

Training opportunities: (from MS Teams chat)

<https://es.catapult.org.uk/project/ready-for-resp-2025/>

<https://www.cibse.org/training/search-courses/low-carbon>

	https://www.linkedin.com/posts/energy-systems-catapult_we-recently-brought-all-five-net-zero-hubs-activity-7372177164554682368-GRSx/ https://apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/news/articles/2024/apse-is-pleased-to-announce-our-annual-service-awards-2025/		
5.	<p><u>DESNZ update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Outcomes Framework Consultation: PAL thanks for responses & will continue work on this. PAL comments on large scale of policy development currently happening. Still expecting the Local Power Plan, Public Participation Strategy, Warm Homes Plan etc over coming weeks. PAL comments that due to scale of new frameworks/outputs being put forward it may be worth having a longer meeting in future (sometime in the new year) to allow for discussion of these. MMA comments that whilst everything may not be published by February - in time for the February ADEPT meeting – there will be a clear direction of travel which is indicated by what will have been published. MMA states that as and when things are published, they will be communicated with ADEPT + would be beneficial to have a more extended session in future to discuss what at that stage will be in the public domain. DCA comments that there is a planning session in between meetings for which this can be arranged /discussed. 	Patrick Allcorn	14:50
6.	<u>A.O.B.</u>	ALL	14:55
7.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u> Thursday 27th November 2025 at 1:30 – 3:00 PM</p>		