

ADEPT Natural Capital & Heritage Group

Meeting 17th November 2025 - Notes

Attendees

Tim De-Keyzer (Chair)	Suffolk
Timothy Johns	North Yorkshire
Simon Cridland	Bracknell Forest
Quinton Carroll	Cambridgeshire
DaCosta, Olivia	Cumbria
David Sutherland	Buckinghamshire
Siri Frost	Environment Agency
Ann Stewart	North Yorkshire
Allison Jean	Environment Agency
Sadie Hobson	Natural England
Mark Minkley	Bath
Rebecca Moberly	Planning Advisory Service
Tim Simpson	Essex
Cramp, Simon	Hampshire
Julie Gil	Bracknell Forest
Hilary Tanner	Local Government Association
Anna Lucas	Planning Advisory Service
Justin Wilson	West Yorkshire
Adam Stewart	Defra
Wendy Brooks	Norfolk
Heather Stokes	Nottinghamshire
Timotheus Jn Baptiste	Defra
Zain Muhammad	Planning Advisory Service

Biodiversity Net Gain

Updates provided by Rebecca Moberly (PAS) and Allison Jean/ Siri Frost (Environment Agency). Slides circulated with this note.

Discussion – concerns raised about impact of system on smaller urban/rural districts, loss of biodiversity from these areas through reliance on offsite BNG outside of them, and potential wider changes exacerbating this. Noted the government response to their consultation on BNG is awaited (probably early 2026) which could have consequences for smaller sites in particular.

RM requested any good practice members would like to share (and that includes learning from when things went less well) on the following areas of BNG implementation, to get in touch rebecca.moberly@local.gov.uk

1. Local Plans, local policy and advice notes
2. Monitoring and enforcement
3. Making the most of scarce ecological expertise

4. LPAs and planning applicants working together (in collaboration with the Future Homes Hub)
5. Faster decision-making

DS asked if it might be possible to add a template for Conservation Covenants for those local authorities who are now a Responsible Body and are starting to or about to use to Con Cov to secure standalone habitat banks.

RM No current plans but will take it away

Other points raised:

- Concerns that the offsite BNG market is over saturated in some parts of the country, which is forcing unit prices down to the extent it is barely financially viable to maintain for 30 years.
- Concerns that the bigger (national) habitat bank providers are driving down the prices of units, which is putting smaller providers off.
- Another issue that has come up is around BNG in urban areas is street trees and that you can't get street trees on the BNG register.
- Some areas have very few offsite providers (habitat banks)
- Feedback to Defra is that would help to have better visibility of likely offsite BNG demand in an area from emerging development plan allocations & NSIPs so that market providers can better respond to local needs i.e. right habitat in right place in line with LNRS

AJ/SF - Please feel free to contact us at NETGAIN@environment-agency.gov.uk if there is a comment or observation that you would like to follow up.

Link to training: [A Deep Dive into Watercourses and BNG | Local Government Association](#)

LNRS and other Defra updates

Updates provide by Adam Stewart.

LNRS progressing well – 16 now published, and all bar one expected to have completed pre-consultation panel by end of the year. Following recent engagement with RAs, Defra preparing further guidance on monitoring and other delivery issues – watch this space. Funding for 26-27 – AS clarified funding route will be S31 grant to existing RAs, only through 'integrated settlement' where this applies (some established mayoral authorities)*. Funding envelope should become clear around the Budget, then subject to business planning in Defra to get confirmation out. Three-year funding still being considered. Also LURA schedule 7 requirement for LPAs to 'take account' – still expecting this to be activated by end of year

*here is the info on Integrated settlements for those interested [Integrated Settlement: policy document - GOV.UK](#)

Environmental Improvement Plan – expected to be finalised soon but no firm date

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

TDK updated on latest position – 2 significant amendments in HoL have been rejected in the HoC so now into 'ping pong' to see if any mutually acceptable amendments can be found. Also fed back from NE/MHCLG webinar attended re how the Environment Delivery Plans/ Nature Restoration Fund would work. In that it was clear that nutrient neutrality and GCN would be the first priority for NE in implementing Pt3.

QC also reminded group that there were other elements of the Bill that affected heritage. Provided this summary in the chat:

The Heritage Alliance has been coordinating sector engagement with Parliament over the P&I Bill. In the Lords, THA supported efforts to amend Clause 41 (the disapplication of heritage regimes to TWAOs) and a govt amendment replacing this with a more limited 'deemed consent' as recently agreed. MHCLG's letter confirms commitment to maintaining heritage protection.

There is the possibility of a meeting with Baroness Taylor and sector representation that may or may not include local govt (ALGAO) – we will try!

Lord Parkinson submitted an amendment on the statutory HERs as set out in the LURA that was not taken forwards but resulted in the following comment (from Hansard):

*"...Amendments 109 to 111, tabled by the noble Lord, Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, seek to commence provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 around special regard duties and historic environment records. **The Government are considering the implementation of these measures in the context of our wider planning reforms, noting, of course, that primary legislation is not required to bring either measure into effect. I can confirm that the Government have committed to consult on a suite of national policies for decision-making before the end of this year, and as part of that process we will consider our approach to planning policy for heritage in the round.***

RM noted that PAS are also engaging with NE on the EDP process.

Updates

Natural England

Sadie Hobson (NE) provided an update:

Launch of NEs new strategy

[Natural England's Strategy: Recovering Nature for Growth, Health and Security - GOV.UK](#)

Nature Towns & Cities programme

A UK-wide partnership programme to bring nature into urban landscapes for the benefit of people. Find out how your organisation can be a part of it.

[Home - Nature Towns & Cities](#)

New Green Infrastructure mapping updates/ release

[Celebrating Green Infrastructure Progress: Major Mapping Database Update Launched – Natural England](#)

Environment Agency

AJ/SF ref to work on use of different species mixes on flood embankments; see these You Tube links:

[Future Dikes - De dijken van de toekomst](#)

[Future Dikes: onderzoek naar dijken van de toekomst | Radboud University](#)

The Future Dikes project investigates how we can strengthen dikes with a species-rich grass covering.

Also mentioned Natural Flood Management 'heat maps' – request for further information from several members of the group.

PAS

RM mentioned the work Rachel Murtagh had updated the group on previously; now launched

[Nature Recovery Toolkit for Local Authorities | Local Government Association](#)

PAS is supporting a selection of authorities to test out delivery of the [Nature Recovery Toolkit for Local Authorities | Local Government Association](#) and building a pipeline for next year. Please complete a expression of interest if interested: [PAS Nature Recovery Toolkit for Local Authorities EOI for potential pilots](#) Thanks.

Also that PAS are refreshing our webpages but here's the front page for PSS: [Protected Site Strategies | Local Government Association](#)

AOB

TDK reminded members that anyone wanting to remain on the circulation list needed to respond to his email request for that to be confirmed dated 3/11/25.

The updated membership list will be used for future meeting invitations.

END