**Climate Change work programme:   
Update and forward look**

**July 2020**

1. **Background**

It is timely to take stock of the climate change work programme in light of the events of the last 6 months, and to ask members what type of support they want going forward.

At the end of January Clare Perry O’Neill was sacked as the COP26 President, subsequently replaced by Alok Sharma. Since then, one of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown from March was the postponement of COP26 to early November 2021.

As governments have started to address the issues of recovery from the pandemic and rebuilding economies, there have been many calls for a ‘green recovery’ from campaigning, professional and academic bodies. These included the [Committee on Climate Change letter](https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/letter-building-a-resilient-recovery-from-the-covid-19-crisis-to-prime-minister-boris-johnson/) to the Prime Minister (6 May) and their subsequent report to Parliament on [Reducing UK Emissions](https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-uk-emissions-2020-progress-report-to-parliament/) (25 June). There have been various public statements by the Prime Minister and senior Cabinet Ministers about the Government’s commitment to ‘build back greener’, including the PM’s Project Speed speech (30 June) and the Chancellor’s summer statement on the economic response to Covid-19 (8 July).

1. **Progress to date**

So far this year ADEPT has:

* Published the climate change support & resources map and developed the [climate change hub](https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/projects/climate-change-hub).
* Delivered the *Excellence in Place Leadership* (EiPL) session on Green Finance (January).
* Provided speakers on climate change issues at various national conferences and workshops.
* Held an advisory panel session on housing retrofit (February).
* Run 4 regional workshops – Midlands (20 January), South West (30 January), South East (28 February), and East of England (10 March). However, due to Covid-19 the workshops planned for the North West, North East and Yorkshire & Humberside (April/May) were postponed (more below).
* Hosted a seminar for Corporate Partners (12 March) facilitated by WSP and with input from Skanska, Costain, Amey, Somerset and Oxfordshire councils (more below).
* Published the [Green Finance Toolkit](https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/green-finance-toolkit-place-leaders) (20 May) based on the EiPL session on green finance.
* Spring conference input from Friends of the Earth on ensuring climate change and green growth are included in councils’ Covid-19 recovery plans (21 May).
* Published the [Clean Growth policy position](https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/adept-policy-position-clean-growth) (9 June).
* Published [The future of aviation: a policy challenge paper](https://adeptnet.org.uk/future-aviation-paper) (27 February).
* Worked with local government and green partners to develop and publish a shared policy asks document [Blueprint for accelerating climate action and green recovery at the local level](https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/blueprint-accelerating-climate-action-and-green-recovery-local-level) (22 June).
* Developed the Net Zero Carbon / Economic Restart Live Labs proposal.
* Published a series of blogs on the Climate Change Hub.
* Hosted a transport decarbonisation workshop with DfT (13 July).

1. **Lessons from regional workshops and CP seminar**

Some of the common themes and challenges raised in the regional workshops included:

* How to turn a Climate Emergency Declaration into action.
* Funding squeeze for place services – reduced capacity.
* Complex marketplace of advice and support for councils.
* Government departments are keen to tap into our knowledge.
* Scale & pace – moving beyond more case studies to find the things that really have a big impact, and quickly.
* Engaging communities in shaping and delivering local action.
* Governance – local and national – complexity of tiers, politics, departmentalism.

At the corporate partners seminar in March the biggest barrier to faster council action on net zero was seen to be finance.

1. **Partners**

Various other local government and green organisations and academic institutions, including some of the partners in the blueprint coalition, have developed climate change offers to councils individually and collectively. These were originally listed in the support and resources map (to be updated).

Of particular note are:

* **LGA** – their climate change support offer to councils is set out on their [hub](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/climate-change).
* **LEDNet / London Councils** – both engaged with ADEPT’s environment and climate change work via the blueprint coalition; LEDNet a signatory to the blueprint document <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/environment/london-environment-directors-network>.
* **Ashden** – part of the blueprint coalition, their co-benefits [toolkit](https://www.ashden.org/programmes/co-benefits) for councils now has a section on community and citizen engagement.
* **UK100** – has a [Countryside Climate Network](https://www.uk100.org/campaigns/countryside-climate-network/) for Leaders and Portfolio Holders in rural councils to lobby for these areas to receive more funding for local climate actions. They are also running a research project on policies and powers to support local climate emergency declarations, in 6 different local authorities.
* **Centre for Sustainable Energy** – provides a Climate Emergency [Support Programme](https://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2392) for individual councils, and local leadership training to help build cross-party support for local climate emergency action plans.

In terms of work being undertaken by government departments and agencies, we are engaging with the Treasury’s Net Zero Review; also various studies by the National Audit Office (e.g. the role of local authorities in achieving net zero carbon; EV rollout), and the Environment Agency’s £200m funding for a flood and coastal resilience programme, with a prospectus due to be issued in September inviting expressions of interest.

1. **Proposals**

We recommend that the forward programme of climate change work includes:

Membership services

* Deliver the webinar for ADEPT members on 30 July, with input from Committee on Climate Change and Ashden. Consult members on what other services they want going forward.
* Update and maintain the resources on the Climate Change Hub.
* Update the climate change policy position and review other policy positions to ‘net-zero proof’ them.
* Publish the active travel policy position (July); e-scooter policy position (Aug) and skills policy position (autumn).
* Run the remaining regional workshops in the North West, North East, and Yorkshire & Humberside – need to determine timings (late 2020 / early 2021), format (virtual / in person), partner with others (e.g. Ashden in the North East).
* EiPL Session 4 (18 September) –the cohort will work in master class format to tackle the climate emergency challenge in Gloucestershire, including how to achieve a collective approach to carbon reduction and adaptation across the main public sector players.
* Develop a communications strategy to influence COP26 in Nov 2021.

Partners, influencing, research

* Net Zero / Economic Restart Live Labs proposal.
* Green finance training with CIPFA.
* Provide ADEPT speakers for conferences as and when approached.
* Respond to relevant government consultations and inquiries.
* Update and relaunch the coalition blueprint (Nov).

1. **Capacity**

We do not have the capacity to work with individual councils on developing and delivering their climate change action plans, but there are many providers out there offering to do so. We do not have the capacity to set up and maintain regional hubs or other networks of council officers leading on the development and delivery of their local climate action plans, although again there are other opportunities for this. We will wind up our independent Advisory Panel while continuing to work closely with some of the organisations that were part of it.

Given limited capacity within the secretariat to work on climate change, we recommend:

* Securing volunteers from the ADEPT Leadership Development Programme and EiPL cohorts to work on some issues.
* Continuing to use expertise from corporate partners for specific issues (e.g. Amey, WSP).
* Continuing to work with other partners including LGA and Ashden to provide mutual support and publicity and avoid duplication.

1. **Feedback**

We are looking to ADEPT members to tell us whether the proposals set out above will provide the type of support they need, and to suggest anything that is missing that could be provided in addition (subject to capacity).