**ADEPT Leadership Team 20th September 2018**

**Environment Board ‘deep dive’**

**Key messages**

* The Environment Board has a broad and diverse remit, including some of the cross-cutting issues which don’t sit neatly under the other subject Boards (e.g. climate change, air quality)
* The Board has become bigger and more active over the last two years
* Its agenda is currently driven by the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and the new environmental legislation and regulation that is needed after Brexit
* The Board has strong links with Government departments, particularly DEFRA, and with other organisations
* It will review its terms of reference and working group structure in October.

**Who’s who**

* Chair: Paula Hewitt (Somerset and ADEPT Vice President)
* Deputy: Steve Willis (Lincolnshire)
* Energy Working Group Chair: Carolyn McKenzie (Kent)
* Flood & Water Working Group: Steve Willis (Lincolnshire)
* Waste Working Group: Ian Fielding (North Yorkshire)
* Natural Capital Working Group Chair: Peter Chamberlain (Devon)
* Climate Change Resilience/LAAP: Nigel Riglar (Gloucestershire)

**Board meetings and Working Groups**

The Board meets quarterly, with a business meeting in the morning (including brief updates from each of the Working Groups), and a workshop on a specific theme in the afternoon. We have had joint meetings with other Boards on issues of mutual interest – air quality with the Transport Board (April 2017), and the NPPF review plus green infrastructure with the PH&R Board (April 2018).

For the last 12 months the main focus of the Board’s work has been the run up to and publication of the Government’s long-awaited 25 Year Environment Plan in January 2018. We set out ADEPT’s main asks last October. We have had good input from DEFRA officials. The Board is keen to work with DEFRA and its operational agencies on the local delivery of the Plan going forward. The Plan has many positive aspects including high political profile, broad ambition, linkages to the Industrial Strategy and housing policy, and a proposed new statutory body. But there are challenges around the pace and effectiveness of delivery that will need to be addressed, and work to be done on the ground with LEPs and LNPs to ensure that environment priorities are incorporated into Local Industrial Strategies. The new legislation and governance of environmental matters required as the UK leaves the EU will provide a busy agenda over the next couple of years

Some other subjects covered in recent meetings: Natural England’s Nature Conservation Strategy, ash dieback, draft Clean Air Strategy, environmental principles and governance post-Brexit.

Themes of recent workshops: air quality (April 2017), Local Environmental Partnerships (July 2017), energy (October 2017), flood and water management (January 2018), Smart Places (April 2018, jointly with EIC).

Attendance: generally good, an average of 18-20 people attend and this might include approximately 12 councils, 4 or 5 partners (see below), and 1 or 2 other speakers or guests.

Partners: DEFRA and BEIS are regular attenders, plus Environment Agency and Natural England. Other organisations have engaged on particular issues e.g. ADPH on air quality, EIC on Smart Places.

**Annual Conference representation**

2016: Plenary session ‘Natural opportunities for growth’ plus a workshop ‘Capitalising on growth: the case for valuing our environment & heritage’.

2017: We organised a plenary session, specifically a hackathon on air quality using the Slido interactive tool to facilitate questions and contributions from the audience. There were great contributions from speakers Houda Al-Sharifi (Association of Directors of Public Health) and Andrea Lee (Client Earth), and the session had really positive feedback from delegates. We also contributed to the Energy workshop, where Sheryl French was one of the contributors.

2018: Workshop ‘The circular economy: myth or reality?’ with speakers from DEFRA and Amey.

**Responding to consultations**

* Clean Air Strategy (August 2018, jointly with Transport Board)
* Environmental Principles & Governance (August 2018)
* Climate Change Reporting Power (March 2018, jointly with LAAP)
* National Policy Statement for Water Resources (January 2018)
* Air quality – joint Select Committees inquiry (November 2017)
* Improving air quality – tackling nitrogen dioxide in towns and cities (June 2017)

**Stocktake – positives:**

* Regular meetings, good attendance from councils and partners
* Active and engaged working groups also with good representation
* Joint working with Transport and PH&R Boards on issues of mutual interest – air quality, NPPF, green infrastructure
* Good relationships with various teams within DEFRA and BEIS (wrt energy)
* Consultation responses
* Growing ‘traction’ as an important strategic issue within the Association itself
* Benefits from a dedicated policy support officer

**Stocktake – challenges:**

* Broad and diverse remit of the Board
* Sufficient representation from unitaries and MBCs?
* Keeping all Working Groups consistently focussed and active, esp. Natural Capital & Heritage
* Resourcing work with DEFRA
* No money to undertake R&D
* Meeting venues!

**Terms of reference and organisation**

To be reviewed at the Board’s meeting on 25th October meeting following further work and to reflect any views from LT.