



## **Sub-national and subject board updates 2021**

### **South West Board**

The SW Board held four formal Board meetings between May 2020 and April 2021 as well as four more informal sessions to discuss issues relating to COVID-19. This included regular engagement from partner agencies such as the DfT and Highways England.

At each meeting over the last year the Board has continued to receive updates on the progress being made by the region's two Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs): Peninsula Transport and Western Gateway. Collaboration between Peninsula Transport and Western Gateway continues to ensure that they remain well aligned. A range of other topics were also covered throughout the last year:

#### **July 2020**

- The Board received an update from Katherine Hunt, Head of Natural Environment Strategic Engagement Team at DEFRA on a number of key priorities within the Natural Environment (NE) Directorate including the Environment Bill, green recovery and the 25 Year Environment Plan.
- The Board welcomed Cllr Clyde Loakes, Deputy Leader of Waltham Forest Borough Council and Lead member for the Environment on Enjoy Waltham Forest - a major scheme to encourage more active travel in the outer London boroughs.
- Peter Kydd, Chair of the South West Infrastructure Partnership (SWIP) provided an update on the recent activities of the partnership which included several workshops on the decarbonisation agenda and ICEs' State of the Nation engagement.

#### **October / November 2020**

- As part of the October COVID-19 call the Board received an update from Freddie Hopkinson, Transport Policy Lead at the CBI who attended to discuss the CBI/KPMG report on the Future of Commuting 'Connecting Communities' which was launched on the 02 October 2020.
- At the formal Board in November, the Board welcomed Sarah Sutherland, Senior Associate in the Planning CPO team and Olivia Heininger, Solicitor at Burgess Salmon LLP, who gave an informative and engaging presentation on the Planning White Paper. They provided a detailed overview of the 3 Pillars in the White Paper and its alternative (fall back) options as well as discussing the consultation responses and views from a large number of industry bodies and interested parties on the emerging themes from the consultation. Paula McGeady, Director at Burgess Salmon was also on the call and available for questions.
- Samuel MacNab from DEFRA provided an update on the Environment Bill target setting process and ongoing work to develop those targets.
- Alastair Johnson, Senior Economic Advisor at the Environmental Analysis Unit in DEFRA attended to discuss the principles of natural capital and provided an introduction to ENCA

(Enabling a Natural Capital Approach) as well as discussing ways to undertake economic valuation of the environment.

- Alice Lord, Natural capital and ecosystem approach – Senior Specialist from Natural England provided an update to the Board on the work of the North Devon Landscape Pioneer, the Natural Capital Strategy and lessons learned.

#### **January 2021**

- The Board welcomed Michael Greatwich, Director of Commercial Capability, Defence Equipment and Support at the MoD as the new SW Heads of Place, at the time this was still in its initial pilot phase.
- Cathryn Brown, Clean Air Zone Manager at B&NES also attended to discuss the development and introduction of Bath's Clean Air Zone that was due to be launched in March. Cathryn discussed how the CAZ would work, the public consultation process and the support available to individuals and community groups to move to compliant vehicles through their financial assistance scheme as well as some of the challenges faced.

#### **April 2021**

- The Board welcomed back Jon Rattenbury, SW Energy Hub Programme Manager, WECA. Jon provided an update on the services and programmes offered by the SW Energy Hub, in particular Local Capacity Support and Public Sector Decarbonisation.
- Kate Ryan, Corporate Director Community & Environment and Roxanne King, Strategic Lead for Climate, Resource & Sustainability at BCP provided an update on their climate change journey, challenges and case studies as well as leading a broader Board discussion on climate action, investment and delivery to encourage sharing of best practice and knowledge between the group.

For more information please contact the current Chair Anthony Payne at [anthony.payne@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.payne@plymouth.gov.uk) or Policy Advisor Lucy Davis at [lucy.davis@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.davis@plymouth.gov.uk)

## **Midlands Board**

The Midlands Board has met virtually three times in the past year, and particularly focused on increasing membership and representation from the West Midlands and strengthening the peer support available within the group.

### **June 2020**

1. In a first for the ADEPT Midlands Board, the meeting was held virtually on 11 June 2020. There were nine attendees from local authorities, along with representatives from Highways England, Department for Transport (DfT), East Midlands Councils, Midlands Connect and ADEPT.
2. The Board received insights from the ADEPT Leadership Board on the work of ADEPT's Economic Recovery and Renewal Task Force and proposals for an ADEPT Zero Carbon and Economic Recovery Live Lab (for which government and private sector support was being sought).
3. Headlines from the ADEPT Spring Conference and Members Survey were shared.
4. The remainder of the meeting focussed on a lively roundtable discussion on shared experiences, best practice and who's got what sorted in terms of responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Key examples were shared with the Board from Staffordshire County Council, the West Midlands Combined Authority and the City of Wolverhampton.

### **September 2020**

1. On 25 September 2020, representatives from eight Local authorities (representing both the East and West Midlands), Midlands Connect, Highways England, Department for Transport and ADEPT, met virtually.
2. The meeting started with a 'check in' to understand how members were feeling, mentimeter was used to create a word cloud and by far the most common words were - tired, lonely, burnt out and buoyant.
3. Midlands Connect led a discussion on some of the challenges we face in capacity and capability in certain key/niche areas to help with a planned formal review of the region's current capacity and expertise across a range of specialisms required to develop and deliver major transport infrastructure. In addition, it was noted that the review will cover other emerging key specialisms to help the region take full advantage of technological developments in transport. Group members can expect to receive invites for structured discussions around 'asks and ideas', with the aim of Midlands Connect colleagues feeding back findings to their November Steering Group.
4. A round table discussion took place in which updates to share practice on 'build back green' recovery plans, including post-COVID experience were shared, as were views on the devolution and recovery white paper planning for the future consultation.
5. An update from the ADEPT Leadership was provided on their recent work undertaken by them and the working groups. Three items of notable interest were:
  - Recently announced restrictions mean this year's Autumn conference (5 and 6 November) will take place online
  - The ADEPT spending review submission
  - National Traffic Managers conference

## January 2021

1. On 21 January 2021, representatives from eleven local authorities, East Midlands and West Midlands Councils, Midlands Engine Partnership, Midlands Connect, Highways England, Department for Transport and the Cabinet Office virtual met.
2. The meeting started with a 'check in' to understand how members were feeling about 2021, mentimeter was used to create a word cloud and by far the most common words were – optimistic, hopeful, nervous, excited tired and weary.
3. The Board were delighted to receive presentations from the Midlands Engine Partnership and Cabinet Office.
  - Rachael Greenwood (Executive Director) spoke to a presentation on what's happened at the Midlands Engine over the past year and what's going to happen this year, which led to a discussion on areas for collaborations. Attendees were encouraged to view the Midlands Engine's Year end video: Midlands Engine Review 2020 film, visit the Observatory which contains information and insight: <https://www.midlandsendengine.org/our-programmes/observatory/> and explore the link to the Mental Health and Productivity Pilot website: Helping Employers Improve Workplace Mental Health | MHPP
  - Melinda Johnson, Dept for Health and Social Care – East Midlands talked about the role of Heads of Place and discussed possible opportunities for collaboration and support. An event will be held around March time to engage with the wider public sector.
4. Feedback was received from the ADEPT leadership covering four items: COVID-19 related activities; Subject Board work plans (Engineering Board; Transport & Connectivity Board; Environment Board; and Sustainable Growth Board); a blueprint for accelerating climate action and a green recovery at the local level (now looking for Local Authorities to sign up to the initiative); an update on Live Labs 1 and developing thinking for Live Labs 2.
5. A reminder on the forthcoming ADEPT events was given (click here):
  - 3 Feb - ADEPT / Arcadis webinar on learning from the Dutch experience of developing / implementing active travel solutions
  - 5 Feb – ADEPT / Proving webinar introducing the work of the Future Highways Research Club
  - 27 May – Spring Conference and Annual Awards Dinner – in London. Fingers and toes crossed.
6. A live poll was conducted to identify top topics members of the board would like to cover this year. Common themes included – defining 'levelling up', peer support, addressing internal skills gaps, future of public transport / future mobility / DRT, building on active and sustainable travel behaviours, post covid opportunities, decarbonisation agenda, EV infrastructure, green economy and build back better.

## **East of England Board**

The East of England Board began 2020 focussing on housing policy, with a special workshop organised for board members in which Homes England and Engie were invited to provide contributions. Unfortunately, along with many other things in 2020, this never took place! The group's focus on housing policy had to be sidelined in favour of discussing how they as local authorities were responding to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this light, the group met monthly for much of 2020.

At the start of this year, Steve Cox, Director of Place & Economy at Cambridgeshire County Council took over as Chair of the Board, with Graham Bygrave, Director of Highways & Waste at Norfolk County Council taking on the role of Vice-Chair. The group has met twice in 2021; highlights so far have included a presentation from Marcus Richards and Mike Clifford from EY on the economic impact of lockdown and how to remobilise, as well as presentation from Stephen Jones, Co-Director of Cities and Local Growth Unit on innovations within the Civil Service and how it can be more connected to both central and local government. The group is looking forward to discussing broader policy aims beyond the pandemic, though it still may be a while until it can meet again in person!

## **SEDEPT (South East Board)**

Like so many of the other ADEPT networks and boards, the South East network's year did not go to plan for 2020, but that said it still had a very productive and collaborative year. Very soon after the March 2020 lockdown was announced the network moved to a weekly Friday meeting. These sessions gave Place Directors or their representatives space to discuss some of the difficult issues they were dealing with, to share best practice, and to raise issues that ADEPT could pick up on behalf of its members. The meetings covered the impact lockdown was having on the highway network, continuation of major infrastructure schemes, home to school transport, and public transport to name but a few key themes. If nothing else these sessions provided a supportive, safe space for members to express concerns and share experiences. As lockdown eased we too eased the frequency of the meetings with the focus moving to recovery and the opportunities it presented. We faced the same challenges with the Active Travel bids as many of the English authorities faced, but saw the opportunities recovery presented and reshaping how we connected our places, the importance of access to green space, and the changing shape of our high streets.

Since lockdown eased in 2021 SEDEPT have held two of their regularly quarterly meetings. The first in February focusing on place shaping and welcoming Paul Morrison the South East Director of Place, followed by an update on the impact Brexit was (or was not) having across the South East. And most recently in April SEDEPT welcomed Nicola Bell from Highways England to discuss their approach to decarbonisation, Bev Hindle from Ox-Cam Arc on the role of strategic spatial planning, and Kate Atkinson from the Cities and Growth unit who ran through the opportunities the Levelling Up fund presents councils.

As ever it's been a busy and at times difficult year for colleagues within SEDEPT, but if there are any take aways from the past year it is the importance of collaboration and the value of peer-to-peer support that the network provides. Looking forward there are significant opportunities to embrace the zero carbon agenda as we recover from Covid-19 and this will be a key thread through the network's activities.

## **Environment Board**

I was privileged to take over the Chair of the Environment Board from Paula Hewitt in the summer of 2020 amid the turmoil of the pandemic.

The Board has found that monthly catch ups between the main quarterly meetings – all via Teams – have proven extremely valuable in comparing notes particularly around impact on waste services. We have continued that into 2021.

I would like to pay tribute to the retiring Chair of the Waste Working Group, Ian Fielding, who held the role so effectively for several years and my thanks to Steve Palfrey and Wendy Barrett for taking over the roles.

Ian instigated the weekly survey of impact on waste services early on in the pandemic, an exercise that attracted wide interest and media coverage. Ian and I also continued to represent ADEPT at numerous workshops and round tables around the Governments Resources and Waste Strategy. Steve and Wendy have taken this up and since the publication of Defra's consultation pieces have organised both leads for, and weekly meetings to discuss the emerging position and response. This has included liaising with other bodies representing LA interest including LARAC, NAWDO and the LGA.

The Board has also, through the Groups, responded to consultations on trees, environmental land management system, biodiversity net gain and the Planning White Paper from the environmental point of view

Similarly we're indebted to Julia Beeden who is moving on from the local authority sector and to Max Tant and Alys Bishop for taking on the Chair and Vice Chair roles for the Flood and Water Management Group.

The Natural Capital & Heritage Group led by Liz Milne and Liz Small has done excellent work on the response to Environment Bill and 25 Year Environment Plan and biodiversity net gain. The latter crosses a number of working areas. We ran a survey in partnership with Defra and Association of Local Government Ecologists, to gauge local planning authorities' readiness.

Carolyn McKenzie has continued to lead the Energy and Clean Growth working around corporate decision making, procurement and place-based strategic guidance.

I have barely scratched the surface of the excellent work by all four groups and my thanks to current and past Chairs and the active membership input enjoyed by all groups.

The Boards main quarterly meetings via Teams have proved popular thanks to some excellent speakers covering highly relevant topics these include:

In a packed agenda in October 2020 we welcomed Chitra Nadarajah, Strategic Manager, Climate Change, Hants CC to run us through Hampshire's Climate Change Strategy and Phil Korbel, Cooler Projects, gave an overview of The Carbon Literacy Project. Jo Wall from Local Partnerships/UKCIP introduced us to the adaptation toolkit and Paul de Zylva, Senior Nature Campaigner, FOE to speak to their fascinating report on England's Green Space Gap.

In January 2021 Katy Losse, Audit Manager and Keith Davis, Director, National Audit Office ran us through their study on Government Response to climate change and we offered support which was readily taken up on their review of local authority response. Andrew Holden from Defra gave an update on the forthcoming duties around Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

In April we were very pleased to welcome Natalie Prosser, Interim CEO Designate Office of Environmental Protection to give an overview of the formation and role of the OEP. Heather Britton, Senior Policy Adviser, HM Treasury gave an overview of *The Economics of Biodiversity* - The Dasgupta Review.

Climate change is increasingly an area of focus with members speaking at various conferences and webinars.

I'd like to thank David Dale and Tracey Butcher for all their support in making the Environment Board so effective.

Steve Read, West Sussex County Council  
ADEPT Environment Board Chair  
May 2021

## **Transport and Connectivity Board**

The Transport and Connectivity Board has had a very successful year with the move to virtual meetings resulting in an increase in attendance. We have produced a position statement on Active Travel and have hosted a number of events to support the DfT response to the covid pandemic. The working groups have continued to do excellent work in their areas of expertise and the Digital Connectivity Board recently presented to the Leadership Team. We have responded to a number of calls for evidence around areas such as evaluation of major projects, electric vehicles (including e-scooters), road pricing, rural mobility, pavement parking and the bus strategy and we gave evidence to the Transport Select Committee in relation to the implementation of the new Bus Strategy. We have also worked with both the LGA and the NAO in relation to areas of mutual interest. A series of mini workshops have proved invaluable in all this and the support of WSP and their on-line systems has been vital to the successful outcomes. Mark Kemp has replaced Neil Gibson on the DfT Transport Research and Innovation Board ensuring that local government is represented on this important Board. We held a successful virtual National Traffic Manager Conference in October and this is clearly becoming another annual event that promotes the value of Adept.

Finally a few thanks from me:

- Thanks to Arcadis for a fantastic webinar on Active Travel which generated much conversation around what they are doing in the Netherlands and how transferable this is to the UK.
- Thanks to Emily Ellis who provided policy support but has now moved on to a new phase in her career.
- Thanks to Paul Newark for his chairing of the RoW group. Paul has had to step down and has been replaced by Shona Butter.
- Thanks to Nicola McCoy-Brown for her leadership of the Digital Connectivity Group. Nicola is evidence of the success of our leadership development programme and has moved to a new authority and has been replaced by Ceren Clulow.
- Thanks to Anushia Vettivelu who has supported me at meetings and in the preparation of agendas for our Board and to my EA Adele Adamson.
- Thanks to all the Board Members who attended and contributed so enthusiastically to the meetings.
- Finally a huge thank you to Hannah and Helen who have kept us sane during this very interesting year.

Mark Kemp, Hertfordshire County Council  
Chair of Transport & Connectivity Board  
May 2021

## Sustainable Growth Board

Darryl Evers took over the role of Chair of the Sustainable Growth Board in June 2020. Initially the board met for an hour every fortnight. Since January, the board has moved to meeting for an hour every month. The intention is to hold a longer meeting every third month, to allow more detailed discussion on an identified theme. There are regularly 30-35 attendees at the meetings.

Over the past year the Board has received presentations from:

- Simon Gallagher, Director of Planning, MHCLG – Planning White Paper
- Will Davis – Economic Strategies, Cities & Local Growth Unit
- Marcus Richards, EY – ADEPT/EY *Resolute & Resilient* report findings
- Debbie Ward, Assistant Director, Homes England - Update on the HE strategy and ambitions
- Christina Kaiser, LGA - consultation on a proposal for new permitted development rights
- Kate Atkinson, Cities & Local Growth Unit Deputy Director, Funding Policy Design - Update on the Shared Prosperity Fund / Levelling Up Fund
- Robbie Bates – Futurgov 'Places & Participation'

The Board has also prepared and submitted responses to four government consultations on planning:

- Planning White Paper
- Right to Regenerate
- NPPF changes and National Model Design Code
- Supporting housing delivery and public service infrastructure

In addition, we submitted written evidence to the HCLG committee inquiry into Planning White Paper and were subsequently invited to give oral evidence.

Due to the heavy government focus on reforms to planning policy and legislation, the Board has set up a Planning Working Group, chaired by Paul Barnard (Plymouth City Council).

The Board signed off a Forward Look programme in December 2020 which focuses on housing, growth, high street, skills and Covid-19 recovery. Suggested key themes to be covered over the next 12 months:

1. Planning – Planning White Paper response, shaping future development and implementation.
2. Housing – A number of issues to consider (possibly in conjunction with other boards) including clean / green housing and retro-fit; affordable housing, type and location of housing post-Covid, future role of Homes England.
3. Sustainable Growth – A number of issues to consider (possibly in conjunction with other boards) including refreshed Industrial Strategy, building a green economy, future skills.
4. Economic Regen - town centres / high streets.
5. Covid-19 Recovery - repurposing of offices/town centres (could we invite a developer to talk about how the market is changing and what is needed from LAs to respond?); LIS updates and LEP Recovery Plans; Shared Prosperity Fund.

The forward-facing policy development sessions are intended to cover issues such as:

- How do we transform the economy through digital infrastructure?
- What is the future of place shaping in a post-Covid world?
- What does a future sustainable community look like?
- Should we be aiming for 20 min or 20 millisecond communities?

Ian Thompson, Buckinghamshire Council took over as the chair in April 2021 with Laura Ambler, West of England Combined Authority taking on the role of vice chair. Policy support is provided by James Chadwick, Staffordshire County Council and Connor Sheffield, Buckinghamshire Council.

## Engineering Board

12 months of ups and downs!

Chair – Mark Stevens (Haringey Council)

Deputy Chair – James Bailey (Staffordshire County Council)

Secretary – Liz Kirkham (Gloucestershire County Council)

Last year's report reflected on what appeared to be a more positive outlook – a rise from a nationally-shared £1bn per annum capital allocation from the Department for Transport for the maintenance of all highway infrastructure assets to a much improved £1.65bn. Of that overall sum, £50m represented the last of the Pothole Action Fund, being replaced by the £500m for 'potholes' for a five-year period – a hefty step-up and for a prolonged period – and the £100m that represented the remainder of the Challenge Fund, allocated on a much-preferred hypothecated basis rather than the far less palatable bidding process that left more 'losers' than successful bidders. But, as we all know, COVID-19 increasingly took its toll on the world, proving to be somewhat like a wrecking ball, smashing all hopes of a bright funding future. Not only did the repeatedly deferred Comprehensive Spending Review not ultimately materialise, but the needs-based assessment element for highways infrastructure fell even more dramatically than Devon Loch in the 1956 Grand National. The collapse from £1.65bn in 2020/21 to £1.125bn for 2021/22 brought almost as much bewilderment to Engineering Board members as the announcement of the European Super League did to the football fraternity. Rather than attempting the storming of DfT's Headquarters at Great Minster House, the Engineering Board's response was to begin working in earnest to (once again) set the record straight on what funding is needed to 'keep Britain moving'. Through increased Engineering Board representation on the UK Roads Liaison Group/ADEPT joint Asset Management Board, a more robust case for funding – using HM Treasury's 'Public Value Framework' approach – is being developed.

COVID-19 brought other challenges, other than to impact on funding levels. In response to the call for the highways sector to play its part in the construction sector doing its bit to prop up national economic activity, the Engineering Board collated individual authorities' varied reactions to the plea for a 'business as usual' approach and shared this with the DfT. Given the different approaches being taken, help was provided by way of the production of the Local Highways Safe Operating Procedures guidance document, endorsed by the evolving Highways Sector Council and published on both ADEPT's and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's websites. That guidance document underwent numerous revisions during 2020 as Government guidance on social distancing and the wearing of face masks changed and the implications had to be appropriately played out for both office/depot and site-based works locations. In addition, the production of the Project Safestart advice (a joint effort from ADEPT and some of its corporate partners) helped demonstrate to the DfT the ability for the highways sector to pull together and show much-needed resilience.

There were personnel changes within the DfT as it introduced a shift pattern to cope with the demands of COVID-19. This meant that taking forward the investigative work into deteriorating road condition jointly developed with the RAC Foundation had more false starts than you'd find in a Olympics 100m sprint final. More recently, though, all runners are out of their blocks with increasing levels of understanding emerging within the DfT's Statistics Team and within HM Treasury about the true rate of decay of the country's road networks. Consequently, further thought is being given to how to better understand local road networks by looking at those in amber and green condition, rather than sticking with the overly simplistic consideration of just considering red condition roads.

However, tied in with this is broadening the understanding within the DfT that, at different points in time, other elements of highways infrastructure gain prominence over four-wheeled dominated space. The Engineering Board is therefore raising the profile of the need to invest in converting antiquated street lighting, refurbish crumbling bridges, replace rotting sign posts, bring traffic signal control into the 21st century and deal with increased incidences of flooding, as well as ensuring roads are suitable and safe for e-scooter users and footways safe for the elderly and infirm to use with confidence. The Engineering Board has also tackled, in conjunction with the Transport and Connectivity Board, the Office of Rail and Road's consultation on level crossings and awaits the ORR's response. However, all board members are deeply saddened by the premature passing of one of its staunchest DfT allies in Steve Berry OBE.

During lockdown, membership of the Engineering Board has grown. Potentially meeting again on a face-to-face basis will undoubtedly re-energise those able to meet in that way. But any meetings will necessarily be a blend of real and virtual – particularly from an inclusivity perspective so that onerous travel requirements can be avoided. That's just one way that the Engineering Board sees the next 12 months as an opportunity to effect positive change. It will be looking to make stronger links through a wider range of contacts within the DfT and work together with government officials to more fully address the funding issue. It hopes to make some significant progress into a review of 'commuted sums', a piece of work that dates back to County Surveyors' Society days. That review needs to be integrated with the refresh of the CIHT's Manual for Streets which the Board is contributing towards. But it's also looking to play its part in helping to address climate change by being involved in decarbonisation in terms of materials used, reduced street lighting energy consumption, carbon calculation, and ensuring local networks are better equipped for increased levels of sustainable travel. Applying the learning from the current Live Labs projects at a local level will be key and the Engineering Board will act as a vehicle for positive learning in that regard.

## **ADEPT Northern Ireland**

ADEPT NI's members, who previously were all within the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads, have been joined by Rivers colleagues formerly of the Rivers Agency but now also within DfI and, from an ADEPT perspective, have a particular interest in climate change and potential impacts on flooding.

DfI is a Northern Ireland Government Department and has responsibility for all roads (and designated watercourses under Rivers) across the province. Unlike other parts of the UK, Councils in Northern Ireland have no responsibility for local roads. ADEPT membership is linked primarily to the Engineering and Transport & Connectivity Boards and their working groups.

Since the introduction of virtual meetings participation has been much easier and, despite the loss of the ability to network, we believe this would be an aspect that may be beneficial to retain going forward, at least to some degree.

The Covid-19 restrictions played havoc with arrangements for the President's visit last year and eventually plans for an actual visit were abandoned and a virtual meeting arranged which took place in October 2020. We were very pleased to be joined by Nigel, Darryl and Hanna and we all enjoyed a presentation on the A6 Dungiven to Drumahoe dualling major road scheme in the North West.

For more information contact the Chair, Damien McQuillan  
([Damien.McQuillan@infrastructureni.gov.uk](mailto:Damien.McQuillan@infrastructureni.gov.uk))

## **CSS Wales**

CSS Wales have been an integral part of ADEPT for many years. Although there are many differences in the way some services are delivered due to devolution, there are also many more similarities in the services and local demands that are faced by all Local Authority's around the UK. CSS Wales value the opportunity to engage with national peers learning from their experiences and sharing knowledge to improve how we all deliver services to the public. The Covid pandemic has actually brought us all much closer together with the opportunity to meet increasing as a result of the new virtual world that many of us are now using as the go to option. Maximising the use of IT not only provides more efficiency for our daily lives but is also making a significant contribution to carbon reduction and improved air quality as a result of more home working with less travel required. This almost immediate escalation overnight to home working has had positive impacts on the environment and contributes to the Climate Change agenda. However, we must not lose sight that the wellbeing of those involved is key in maintaining a good work life balance and delivering the outcomes for which we strive in the public sector. CSS Wales members are looking forward to strengthening the working relationships and positively contributing to the valuable ADEPT work.