



Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

South-East Regional Board of ADEPT (SEDEPT)
Board Meeting
1st December 2022, 09:30-11:30

Notes

	<p>Attending: Simon Cramp, Hampshire CC James Harris, East Sussex CC Bill Cotton, Oxfordshire CC Haroon Chughtai, Kent CC Richard Barker, Buckinghamshire Council Tristan Samuels, Portsmouth City Council Matt Davey, West Sussex CC (Co-Chair) Katie Stewart, Surrey CC (Co-Chair) Hannah Bartram, Chief Exec ADEPT</p> <p>Guests Jonathan Chappell, National Infrastructure Commission James Harris, National Infrastructure Commission Hannah Girven, Cumbria CC</p>
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p>
2.	<p><u>Surface Water Flooding – The report of the National Infrastructure Commission</u></p> <p>Jonathan Chappell and James Harris presented the recommendations of the recently published report. Highlights from their presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided an overview of the NIC and its remit• Confirmed the scope of the study and the purpose, as well as key recommendations for local authorities including<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The need to strengthen requirement to provide sustainable drainage across all risk management authorities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requirement for costed plan with all risk management authorities (including water companies) - completed by 2026 to inform next round of water company business planning ○ Devolution of relevant funding to upper tier authorities <p>Full detail of presentation in slides to be circulated to the Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group raised the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Question as to whether this will add to or replace existing flood risk strategies; NIC colleagues confirmed it would be an evolution of current strategic landscape ideally ○ Concerns about capacity and skills for doing the work around managing flood risk within local authorities - and NIC colleagues recognised the capacity challenges ○ Questions about how the RFCCs would work in the proposed new regime ○ Concern about the extent to which water companies engage so a concern as to the spread of responsibilities. NIC confirmed they wanted to get away from the "duty to cooperate" system as it doesn't work, but any system will need multiple partners coming together. The requirement for water companies currently is just for water companies to drain an area, so NIC saying in this report that this is not sufficient ○ Question raised around misconnections in individual dwellings - a wider issue of surface water ingress into the foul water system which will need addressing; NIC recognises an issue that water companies need to be incentivised to address but separate challenge to what is addressed in the study (which assumes correct connections), so more of an issue for Ofwat ○ Governance seems really important, and question raised whether something like a water commissioner would be an option to have that power to convene and compel. NIC recognised the challenge, and that Government is trying to work toward a more integrated catchment based governance, and that it is starting to happen, albeit incrementally ○ Question raised about whether the report looks at the impact of SWF on businesses; NIC confirmed that the original analysis on SWF was on properties so did include businesses ○ Question about engagement with water companies - NIC explained that the biggest problem that water companies has is Ofwat only measure them on what they are currently required to deliver, and if they try to deliver on SWF beyond current requirement, Ofwat will require them to take it out. ○ Question raised about whether wider Government Departments, including BEIS - NIC confirmed that the scope didn't allow for this ○ Key point raised about the need for all Government Departments to be aware of the need to work together to address SWF - whether not creating barriers to local partners addressing the issues or in ensuring funding for all infrastructure is flexible enough to enable delivery on SWF
3.	<p>Local Nature Recover Strategies – feedback from a pilot. Hannah Girvan from Cumbria CC will give us some feedback on the pilot run in the County</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Came out of need for joined up approach to nature, arising from 25 Year Environment Plan - and the need for these nature networks to connect rural areas, urban areas, etc • Local Nature Recovery Strategy is a spatial tool to identify what is there at the moment and interventions to improve these networks • Pilots in place and awaiting green light to roll these out across the country • Quite a large governance to enable planning authorities to be involved in the area team but continuing to review the governance • Supported by a data map system which was collected from multiple partners and sources <p>Full detail in presentation to be circulated to group</p> <p>Group raised following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question of the status of the LNRS - at moment, it is not mandatory, so relying on buy in of partners, but hopeful for the status to be strengthened when rolled out. HB confirmed that the preparation is required, but the monitoring and delivery is not. Currently waiting for regs and guidance to come out. Trudy Harrison is the MP for Cumbria, and has been engaging with the pilots. Expectation that these will be in place by 2023. No expectation of these strategies being prepared before the guidance is published. Confirmed will give more seed funding to come out via s31 agreement. <p>Video of all 5 Pilot areas: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGUjfkM7NVg Mapping Device: https://www.cbdc.org.uk/about-us/projects/clnrn_story_map/ Cumbria LNRS Strategy: https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/lnrs/default.asp</p>
4.	<p>ADEPT – an update of ADEPT activity</p> <p>HB confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz Truss commissioned a Net zero review, led by Chris Skidmore MP, as to how net zero could facilitate economic growth. The review continued post-LT leaving Government, and is expected to report on 13th December. ADEPT responded to call for evidence in that review (see here). • ADEPT also responded to the House of Commons inquiry into funding of levelling up (see here), and some other policy docs done • Have run a webinar on road pricing, and will likely now produce a policy challenge paper which will set out the issues as we see them, rather than the solutions per se, and will also be discussing with Emma Ward, DG for DfT • Strategic Plan for ADEPT now drafted for next three years (2023-26) – looking to finalise and publish in the New Year • Autumn Conference was held in Leeds, 200 plus delegates, with some high quality speakers including Lord Deben, who was particularly inspirational

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also delivered a Green Finance Training Day on how to access green finance and how to best use that investment – had 22 delegates; looking at similar future events • Leadership development programme - current cohorts coming to end of their course. Now looking for future cohorts – have put out a call for expressions of interest (see here). Feedback on programme to date has been incredibly positive. • Live Labs programme –Phase 2 around decarbonisation of highways (see here). Received 30 bids, and put 10 through a Dragons Den of five independent individuals from industry. Recommendations will go up to DfT Ministers 5 December. Hoping to make an announcement before Christmas to allow successful bids to put business plan in place to go live by April 2023. Bids from across the UK.
5.	<p>Budgets – plans to meet future budgetary pressures within local authorities</p> <p>Round table discussion</p> <p>Group recognised that it is incredibly challenging, and low hanging fruit for savings have been taken, and a need for a fundamental/radical rethink of local government funding is needed. It was noted that it is likely to get tougher in future years. HB noted that ADEPT have been working with other professional networks including ADASS, ADCS and Treasurers association to see what opportunities for joint lobbying. Will be sharing ADEPT survey results with the group in due course.</p> <p>Specific authority feedback :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West Sussex – noted large budget pressures from 24/25 expected but will know more in new year. - Oxfordshire – similar pressures, but from a place services perspective solutions have been found, and some positive income generation including WPL being put in - Surrey CC – similar pressures, although the bigger challenges have been postponed by Government decision to postpone Adult Social Care reform has taken pressure off to have a much tougher conversation locally about how we address the fundamental challenges – which is very much needed across the local government sector and central government as will be critical soon. - East Sussex – set out a core offer a few years ago which enabled a conversation with Government around what can be delivered etc - Hampshire CC – mentioned joint letter with Kent CC explaining a very challenging trajectory to Government. Large savings target
6.	<p>Forward plan – draft list of potential future subjects for discussion and format of future meetings</p>

	<p>Round table discussion</p> <p>Group discussed and agreed to add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Local transport plans, including picking up on DfT guidance expected shortly which could bring together a number of different areas of interest- Climate action and delivery of nature recovery
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>None raised</p>