

## **General Members Meeting November 2025**

### **Reviewing the ADEPT offer to Corporate Partners**

#### **Recommendation**

To ensure our offer to Corporate Partners continues to deliver value and opportunity, the ADEPT Leadership Team recommends that we:

- Reintroduce individual six-monthly catch-ups between each Corporate Partner and the ADEPT President and Chief Executive.
- Retain two Corporate Partner seminars per year but move to one face to face event and one virtual event.
- The face-to-face seminar will be scheduled to take place immediately following an ADEPT Leadership Team meeting to encourage attendance. In addition, we propose to:
  - create a more interactive format for this seminar, with greater emphasis on dialogue and collaboration
  - hold a networking/drinks event following the seminar.
- Develop a more structured approach to R&D collaboration by identifying priority themes in advance and inviting expressions of interest from Corporate Partners.
- Increase the annual Corporate Partner membership fee by £1,000 in order to establish a bursary fund supporting local authority attendance at ADEPT conferences.

#### **1. Background**

The Association introduced Corporate Partner membership in 2016. We currently have 24 members (see Annex 1). The number is capped to ensure we retain the right balance of local authority versus private sector representation within the association (NB: we also have a waiting list of potential members). Many have been partners for a number of years; a number also sponsor our events.

We are reviewing how we engage with Corporate Partners to ensure our approach continues to deliver value, particularly around opportunities to connect with local authority members and the ADEPT Leadership Team. The membership fee is presently £5,767 per annum.

#### **2. Current membership benefits**

Corporate Partners benefit from a wide range of engagement opportunities, including six-monthly 'hot topic' seminars with the Leadership Team, networking with local authorities and like-minded organisations at the spring and autumn conferences, and involvement in/sponsorship of research, training and innovation programmes such as Live Labs, the Gen Z recruitment campaign and the PACE programme (see Box 1).

They can present to ADEPT members via the monthly Lunch & Learn sessions or regional/subject boards (by invitation) and receive a complimentary ticket to key events including the Spring

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Conference and Annual Dinner and the full residential Autumn Conference. Additional benefits include discounted event rates, promotional listings on the ADEPT website and in the Annual Review, use of the Corporate Partner logo, a membership certificate, access to our publications, and sponsorship and promotional opportunities. Full details [here](#).

**Box 1.** Examples of where Corporate Partners are involved with ADEPT activities:

- **Ringway:** involved in the Live Labs programmes from the outset, including providing seed funding for the initial desktop study that led to Live Labs 1; a member of the Live Labs 2 Commissioning Board.
- **Colas:** worked with ADEPT on several workforce initiatives including a staff retention guide, a compilation of EDI case studies, the Gen Z recruitment campaign; co-produced climate change workshops (with **Equans**); a member of the Live Labs 2 Commissioning Board.
- **Amey:** co-designed and sponsored the Excellence in Place Leadership programme (2020-22) and the PACE Programme (2023-25).
- **Arcadis:** developing a Highways Resilience toolkit with the Engineering Board; sponsoring four Gen Z roundtables focused on the 2025 Autumn Conference themes.
- **WSP:** involved in the Live Labs programmes from the outset, including providing seed funding for the initial desktop study that led to Live Labs 1; a member of the Live Labs 2 Commissioning Board; a contributor to our LGR & Devo webinar series; keen to work with ADEPT on their *Driving Devolution* thought leadership series.
- **Atkins & Kier:** involved in the Live Labs programmes from the outset, including providing seed funding for the initial desktop study that led to Live Labs 1; members of the Live Labs 2 Commissioning Board.
- **Balfour Beatty & Brightly:** actively working with clients to get them involved in the Carbon Leadership Programme.
- **Multiverse:** delivery partner for the Digital Academy.

### 3. Offers from other similar organisations

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) each take slightly different approaches to corporate engagement. ADPH offers sponsorship opportunities linked to awards, events and development programmes, with recognition in publications and the chance to co-produce content such as podcasts or thought leadership pieces – further information [here](#). ADASS provides a broader partnership model, inviting organisations to collaborate on webinars, reports, and its flagship Spring Seminar, with a strong emphasis on shared policy goals and charitable objectives – further information [here](#). ADCS does not currently offer sponsorship or exhibition

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opportunities at its Annual Conference, instead directing interest to the National Children and Adult Services Conference.

### **4. What more can ADEPT offer?**

#### **4.1 Corporate Partner seminars**

Originally, ADEPT hosted two Corporate Partner seminars each year. These seminars focused on a chosen theme, with presentations and discussions involving the Leadership Team and Corporate Partners.

During the pandemic, through necessity, this moved to individual catch-ups every six months between each Corporate Partner, the ADEPT Chief Executive and President. From January 2025, we reverted to six-monthly seminars.

These events require significant resources to organise. In addition, they have not always had full leadership team or corporate partner attendance. Feedback from corporate partners is that they would like more networking opportunities with local authorities.

We are therefore exploring new ways to strengthen engagement and maximise the value of corporate partnership. Initial ideas include:

- Reintroducing individual six-monthly catch-ups with the President and Chief Executive.
- Retain two Corporate Partner seminars per year but move to one face to face event and one virtual event.
- The face-to-face seminar will be scheduled to take place immediately following an ADEPT Leadership Team meeting to encourage attendance. Create a more interactive format for this seminar, with greater emphasis on dialogue and collaboration. Hold a networking/drinks event following the seminar to encourage networking.

#### **4.2 Establish a bursary fund – proposal to support local authority attendance at conferences**

We have already suggested establishing an ADEPT Bursary Fund to support officers from those local authorities with restrictions on attendance at events. This initiative aims to ensure a good balance of public/private sector representation at the spring and autumn conferences, which we know is a shared priority with corporate partners.

We propose to do this by increasing the annual corporate partner membership fee by £1,000. This will ensure that no funding can be linked back to individual organisations or recipients, ensuring there are no conflicts of interest. 100% of the additional income will be used to cover travel, accommodation and conference registration costs for bursary recipients. None will be used for administration overheads.

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ADEPT will invite applications from local authority members who would otherwise be unable to attend. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate that attendance would not be possible without bursary support.

We will review the success and uptake of the bursary annually to decide on its continuation.

### **4.3 Further research & development collaboration**

ADEPT has previously explored establishing a limited R&D programme with Corporate Partners, aiming to co-develop innovative projects aligned with board and working group priorities. However, initial efforts yielded few suggestions from board chairs, indicating a need for a more structured and proactive approach.

The proposal is to be smarter about this by identifying priority themes in advance, inviting ideas and expressions of interest from Corporate Partners, and offering clearer pathways for collaboration—such as short-term pilots, joint funding bids, or contributions to ADEPT-led research. We will link the ideas to the refreshed ADEPT Strategic Plan which will be published in 2026.

### **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

ADEPT's Corporate Partner offer provides a strong foundation for engagement, with a wide range of benefits and opportunities for collaboration. However, their feedback and comparison with other sector organisations suggest there is scope to evolve the model to better support strategic dialogue, increase visibility, and strengthen connections with local authority members.

Members are invited to consider the proposals outlined in this paper, particularly the introduction of a bursary fund, the potential shift to more interactive and targeted engagement formats, and the reintroduction of individual catch-ups.

*Kylie Russell, Deputy CEO*

*November 2025*

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### **Annex 1: List of Corporate Partners**

1. Aether
2. Amey
3. Arcadis
4. AtkinsRéalis
5. Balfour Beatty
6. Brightly
7. Colas
8. Core Highways
9. Costain
10. Equans
11. HEA
12. Impower
13. Jacobs
14. Kier
15. M Group
16. Multevo
17. Multiverse
18. Norse Group
19. Ringway
20. Stantec
21. Systra
22. Waterman Group
23. WDM
24. WSP