

## ADEPT - Energy & Clean Growth Working Group Minutes

<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February 14:30 - 16:00 PM</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	Microsoft Teams Meeting
<b>Chair:</b>	Daire Casey, Energy Services Manager, West Sussex County Council Deputy Chair: Katie Sargent, Greener Futures Group Manager, Surrey County Council
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p>Aoife Dudley - Oxfordshire County Council (ADU)            Brian White - Clean Energy Project Manager, Enterprising Cumbria (BWH)            Cat Halter - Surrey County Council (CHA)            Daire Casey, Energy Services Manager, West Sussex County Council (DCA)            Ellen Rodger - Energy Programme Manager, Devon County Council (ERO)            Fotini Kallipoliti Vickers - Surrey County Council (FVI)            Hayley Ash - West of England Combined Authority (HAS)            Heather Stevenson - Greater South East Net Zero Hub (HST)            Karan Purewal - Surrey County Council (KPU)            Katie Sargent - Greener Futures Group Manager, Surrey County Council (KSA)            Kylie Russell - Deputy CEO, ADEPT (KRU)            Margaret Enstone - Darlington Borough Council (MEN)            Millie Macdonald - Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (MMA)            Olivia Mortimer - West Sussex County Council (OMO)            Patrick Allcorn - Head of Local Energy, Department of Energy Security &amp; Net Zero (PAL)            Sarah Kerr - Oxfordshire County Council (SKE)            Sheryl French - Cambridge Climate Ltd (SFR)            Stacy Sheppard - Retrofit Development Manager, Wiltshire Council (SSH)            Sylvie Allan - Senior adviser, Environment Agency (SAL)            Thomas Day – Head of Energy and Low Carbon Programme, Essex County Council (TDA)            Victoria Burvill - Wiltshire Council (VBU)</p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<p>Alistair Wagstaff            Carolyn McKenzie            Eithne George            Lynn Trigwell            Sarah Gilbert            Steve Baggs            Steve Palfrey            Steve Palfrey            Wayne Lewis</p>
<b>Guests:</b>	<p>Heather Stevenson, Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p>Sheryl French, Cambridge Climate Ltd</p>
<b>Note Taker:</b>	Olivia Mortimer, West Sussex County Council

Item No.	Item	Lead	Time
1.	<p><u>Welcome &amp; minutes</u></p> <p>Welcome to,</p> <p>Heather Stevenson, Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p>Sheryl French, Cambridge Climate Ltd</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	Daire Casey	14:30
2.	<p><u>Research to build a regional picture of clean energy skills and jobs</u></p> <p><u>Purpose of Regional Mapping:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hub is working with the Office for Clean Energy Jobs (OCEJ) DESNZ to build a regional picture of clean energy skills &amp; jobs within local authority areas.</li> <li>• This will support the transition to Net Zero.</li> <li>• Aim of this work is to review, collate and interpret significant studies, reports and assessments of green job need within the Hub area – which will inform delivery of government’s Clean Energy Jobs Plan.</li> </ul> <p><u>Scope:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DESNZ has produced a detailed technical annex [Clean Energy Jobs Plan: technical annex] which details the scale of the workforce transition including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of new roles which will be needed</li> <li>- Prioritisation of occupation(s) and skill</li> <li>- Mapping these aspects across different regions of the UK</li> </ul> </li> <li>• DESNZ also requested Net Zero Hubs to produce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An evidence-based report providing forecasts for workforce needs - in priority occupations, expected in each region.</li> <li>- A catalogue of evidence &amp; data sets used within the report.</li> <li>- Stakeholder engagement with Mayoral Strategic Authorities to inform report where possible.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• HST comments that this work aims to support understanding between the bottom-up local approach - mapping through to the national top-down modelling which has already been done.</li> </ul>	Heather Stevenson, Greater South East Net Zero Hub	14:35

Delivery:

- 5 Hubs have been provided with DESNZ funding to complete the project.

Objectives:

- Identify available data sources, collection methods and analytical frameworks
- Determine which Key Research Questions (KRQs) can be answered using existing evidence
- Identify where new research is required

Key Research Questions:

1. What priority occupations in clean energy sectors are expected to be in demand at present, 2030 & 2050 – at regional + local authority level?
2. What gaps exist between DESNZ national data and regional data on clean energy workforce forecasts?
3. What are the causes of these discrepancies?
4. What are the key clean energy sectors and projects driving job creation in each region?
5. What clean energy workforce data do Mayoral Strategic Authorities (& other relevant regional bodies identified) hold and use?

Specification of work for evidence-base report:

- Use existing evidence to map forecast direct jobs within priority occupations expected in each region, broken down by sectors and mapped to SOC4 classification at key time points:
  - Baseline (actuals)
  - 2030
  - 2050
  - Intermediate time points

- Should be disaggregated into as many of following Clean Energy Sectors as possible:

[Offshore Wind, Onshore Wind, Solar, Fusion Energy, Nuclear Fission, Clean Flexibility & Smart Systems, Electricity Networks, Hydrogen, Carbon Capture Utilisation (CCUS), Long Duration Energy Storage, Greenhouse Gas Removals, Domestic & Non-Domestic Heat Pumps, Heat Networks, Biomethane, Energy Efficiency and Retrofit]

Your Potential Input:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call for Information document which sets out project + the information being asked for should have been circulated.</li> <li>• To be completed &amp; returned by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March.</li> <li>• Can pass onto relevant colleagues.</li> <li>• HST comments that for those not in Hub areas- if people get in contact with her, she is happy to signpost on to relevant Hub colleagues.</li> </ul> <p>In Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCA comments that West Sussex County Council have little visibility of most of the technology types listed – but asks whether submitting information on e.g. Solar + Battery Storage which current team do have visibility of would still be useful.</li> <li>• HST states that this would still be very useful &amp; not expecting colleague(s) to fully answer questions across all the different technology types listed/the full scope.</li> </ul>		
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>An introduction to Government’s Local Power Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Power Plan is a joint document published by DESNZ and GB Energy in February 2026.</li> <li>• Aim is to drive long term growth in both local and community energy sector.</li> <li>• GB Energy can commit up to £1bn in funding support &amp; support at least 1000 local and community energy projects across the UK.</li> <li>• Aims to address the 4 largest barriers to growth which have been identified as: 1. Funding &amp; finance 2. Capacity and capability 3. Business model development 4. Policy and regulatory change.</li> <li>• Primary focus is around renewables energy &amp; renewable power generation projects led by local government and community energy.</li> <li>• But does also allow for complementary tech like EV charging &amp; batteries.</li> <li>• GB Energy will be focused on capacity and capability building.</li> <li>• This will involve producing standardised guidance.</li> <li>• GB Energy will also be leading on the finance &amp; finance.</li> <li>• DESNZ will be focusing more on policy, regulations and public engagement.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Power Plan (LPP) Evidence Annex : provides the research, analysis, and economic justification for investment in community-owned energy projects.</li> <li>• PAL comments on the potential usefulness of the figures listed in this to colleagues making business cases locally.</li> </ul>	<p>Patrick Allcorn,          DESNZ          GB Energy          rep</p>	<p>14:55</p>

	<p>In discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HAS comments on the need to further platform community energy + community energy organisations &amp; emphasize the fact that profits will go back into the local community.</li> <li>SKE states that, within the Local Power Plan (LPP) whilst there was a large focus on shared ownership – there was less on mandating a community benefit payment. PAL comments that there are certain aspects which will hopefully be put into primary legislation and that prior to this being put in place, for legal reasons, these couldn't be fully detailed in the LPP.</li> </ul>		
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>ADEPT response to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation</u></p> <p><u>Consultation Scope:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is seeking views on how to revise national planning policy to support our wider objectives.</li> </ul> <p><u>December 2024 -Urgent revisions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SFR states that when the current government came into power they looked at some urgent revisions– these were agreed back in December 2024.</li> <li>These included things such as housing targets, affordable housing provision, brownfield approach &amp; reversing the ban on onshore wind.</li> <li>SFR comments that the driver of this narrative was to show shifting of the planning system to support growth.</li> </ul> <p><u>Now proposing a fuller update to NPP:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SFR comments that as part of the update – what is aimed to be achieved through the reforms is to create a set of rule-based policies into the framework. This will hopefully speed up the process for developing local plans.</li> </ul> <p><u>Underpinning further policy reforms:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlock housing supply</li> <li>Facilitate growth supporting commercial development</li> <li>Simplify and improve the approach to climate change, environmental protections and heritage assets</li> </ol> <p><u>Framework Structure Changes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic context (Chapter 1)</li> <li>Procedural policies relating to plan-making ( Chapters 2,3)</li> <li>Chapters on planning topics, starting with Sustainable Development (Chapter 4) and Climate Change (Chapter 5)</li> </ul>	<p>Sheryl French, Cambridge Climate Ltd</p>	<p>15:20</p>

- Grouping topic chapters into 3 key areas:
    - Steering development
    - Creating sustainable places
    - Conserving and enhancing the environment
- 12 key policy changes:
- SFR states that of the 12 key policy changes which the reforms are trying to achieve – the key ones that may be of particular interest to the Working Group are:
    - A permanent presumption in favour of sustainable developments
    - Streamlining local standards
    - Boosting regional and local economies
    - Better addressing climate change
    - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Policy making - Two key areas:
1. Plan making policies set the strategy for future growth and protecting and enhancing the environment
  2. Decision making policies
- Chapter 5 – climate change Q42-27 David Dale:
- David Dale from ADEPT has looked at Chapter 5 which is on Climate Change.
  - SFR states that there were 5 questions around the different policies which have been put forward in this chapter. Overall, the response given was to “Partly Agree” to the first 4 policies listed however – “Strongly agree” to question 44 [44) Do you agree with the approach to climate change adaptation through planning decisions in policy CC3?]
  - SFR states that as an example of why David only answered “Partly Agree” to question 42 – the language included in this policy which is around mitigating climate change was rather weak.
- Chapter 10 – Energy and Water:
- SFR states that there were 4 questions here which required responses.
  - All of these were answered “Partly Agree”
  - SFR comments that whilst the response given was that the policies are progressing in the right direction - they could still be improved upon.
    1. Q 96 : Support the intent of policy W1. However, the policy is currently stronger on process rather than on delivery outcomes.
    2. Q97 : Support the direction of W2, especially the explicit inclusion of electricity network infrastructure, repowering/life extension, and opportunities for decentralised and district

	<p>energy systems. However, the policy should be made more operational.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Q98 : W3 could be improved by clearer decision tests to reduce uncertainty and appeal risk. Given the context of the National Climate Emergency declared by Parliament in 2019, the Clean Power 2030 legal commitment to rapid deployment of renewables and NPPFs own requirement for proactive climate action - should the following words ‘very special circumstances’ be deleted and replaced with ‘justified circumstances’.</li> <li>4. Q99 : Support the introduction of W4 and the proposal to give substantial weight to schemes that increase capacity, strengthen security of supply and improve water quality/reduce water-borne pollution. However, W4 should go further on future resilience and demand management.</li> </ol> <p><u>Annex A – Data Centres and on-site energy generation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFR comments that this section focuses on data centres &amp; that data centres tend to come through local planning, but to be able to manage them there’s often co-location with renewables.</li> <li>• Often these renewables are at the threshold of being looked at in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP).</li> <li>• SFR states that much of what was being looked at in this section is around thresholds and putting stronger definitions on this.</li> </ul> <p><u>Responses:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Q195 : Disagree that the regime is yet sufficiently flexible in practice for co-located data centre + generation projects to be consistently consented quickly and predictably under either NSIP or TCPA.</li> <li>2. Q196 : “YES BUT MANAGED” If AI Zones or data centre hubs promoted in the Industrial Strategy are allocated in development plans, along with ‘strategic renewables zones’ next to or close to the AI Zones, a targeted uplift on RE thresholds could be beneficial.</li> <li>3. Q197 : To prevent ambiguity and gaming, co-location should be defined using physical, operational and contractual tests. Annex A is right to seek a clear definition.</li> <li>4. Q198 : Threshold changes should initially be limited to co-located data-centre projects. BUT DO WE THINK FREIGHT HUBS? A broad uplift for other project types risks moving strategically significant energy projects out of the regime best suited to nationally coordinated infrastructure planning.</li> <li>5. Q199 : Benefits and risk:  <u>Benefits:</u>        -Faster and more coherent consenting for integrated data centre + energy schemes;        -Greater investor certainty;</li> </ol>		
--	---	--	--

	<p>-Potentially reduced dependency on delayed grid reinforcement where on-site generation/storage is integrated;</p> <p><b>Risks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Fragmentation of strategic energy planning if thresholds are too high;</li> <li>-Increased local cumulative impacts (land, biodiversity, water, wastewater) without strong tests;</li> <li>-“Nominal co-location” is used to bypass appropriate scrutiny;</li> <li>-Data-centre demand pressures are material (electricity demand is expected to rise sharply), while water impacts remain less transparent</li> </ul> <p><b>Other questions Q 18,19, 22,30:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFR comments that there were other areas which climate, net zero, energy and water infrastructure impact - which are detailed in 4 Questions : (Q18,19, 22,30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Q18 Local Standards</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Q19 – Soundness test</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Q22 – Information requirement</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Q30 – Clarifies relationship with other RGs</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Final thoughts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFR comments that the reforms are an improvement and going in the right direction &amp; there seems to be a desire to include more around electricity and water infrastructure.</li> <li>• However, there is a need to ensure that carbon assessment and climate are part of this hierarchy of plan making policies.</li> <li>• Different regulatory regimes needed to provide clear strategies and plans on grid constraints and investment timelines to ensure no further infrastructure deficits when development comes forward.</li> </ul>		
<p>5.</p>	<p><a href="#">ADEPT update</a></p> <p><b>Transport / Infrastructure</b></p> <p>1. We are working with Local Partnerships to develop a <b>LGR highways toolkit</b>. The purpose of the toolkit will be to provide a collection of resources (processes, templates, checklists etc) to support council officers navigating transport and highways aggregation / disaggregation of services due to LGR. The toolkit will be loosely based on the Local Partnerships waste LGR toolkit, which has been well received across the sector <a href="#">LGR Waste Toolkit - Local Partnerships</a>. It will be launched at the ADEPT Spring</p>	<p>Kylie Russell</p>	<p>15:40</p>

	<p>Conference (13th May); we will also co-host an introductory webinar on 4<sup>th</sup> June. Details on how to register for the webinar to follow.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. ADEPT responded to the recent publication of the ‘<b>pothole ratings map</b>’ (<a href="#">here</a>). Angela Jones, President of ADEPT said: “We acknowledge the government's commitment to transparency and long-term investment in local roads, however the newly published ratings raise significant questions about the assessment methodology.”</li> <li>3. <b>Live Labs 2:</b> We have launched a pledge that invites stakeholders to drive meaningful decarbonisation across all aspects of the UK’s road network and rethink how the highways infrastructure reduces carbon (<a href="#">here</a>). The second webinar for pledge signatories took place on 28<sup>th</sup> January, focusing on the outputs and outcomes emerging from the East Riding Live Labs project and the Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads (Transport for West Midlands). Webinar No 3 will take place from 9-10am on 25<sup>th</sup> March. If you would to attend, please email <a href="#">Damon McVeigh</a>. The latest blog is from Graham Martin, Head of Commissioning and Project Delivery for the Liverpool Live Labs 2 initiative, who shares an update on all the latest news and achievements from the team (<a href="#">here</a>). We are delighted that DfT has recently confirmed an <b>extension of the ADEPT Live Labs 2 programme for an additional year</b>, with up to £300,000 in total (<a href="#">here</a>). This extension will enable the programme to deliver a comprehensive Year 4 programme of communications and dissemination with a view to scaling and adoption by the sector; ensuring that the insights, evidence and innovations generated by the seven Live Labs 2 projects are shared widely across the sector. The LL2 projects finish 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, with the exception of the Devon Live Lab which received a year’s extension due to delays.</li> </ol> <p><b>Devolution / Growth / Planning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The ADEPT Digital Connectivity Working Group have responded to the current call for evidence on <b>reforming planning rules for digital infrastructure</b> (<a href="#">here</a>).</li> <li>5. We are hosting a webinar with Natural England on 10<sup>th</sup> March to launch the <b>Natural England EXPLORE Framework</b>. EXPLORE is a practical, applied and evidence-based framework for integrated planning and decision-making. It is designed to support strategic conversations across health, wellbeing, nature and sustainability, helping local government teams address complex challenges in a systemic way. The Framework aims to contribute to better places, healthier communities, and greener futures. To register to attend, see <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ol>		
--	--	--	--

6. We hosted a joint webinar with Natural England on 15<sup>th</sup> January, focusing on one of the elements of the new Planning & Infrastructure Act: the new **Nature Restoration Fund**, Environmental Delivery Plans & conservation delivery in local planning. Over 100 people attended – if you missed out and would like to see the recording, please contact [Hannah Bartram](#).

### Environment / Climate

7. We responded to the publication in December of the consultation on the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) ([here](#)). We are presently pulling together the response to the NPPF consultation and will be circulating it for comment.
8. In the most recent **climate change blog**, ADEPT Chief Executive Officer, Hannah Bartram discusses the launch of the President's Awards 2026 and looks at why entering your sustainable growth project could mean national recognition for your achievements.
9. On 20<sup>th</sup> January colleagues from Defra attended the Environment Board to brief on the long-awaited revised **Environmental Improvement Plan** that was published in December 2025 -see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-greener-and-more-prosperous-future-with-new-environmentalimprovementplan>.

### Events/Other

10. The **2025 PACE Programme** wrapped up with a Lunch & Learn session on 28<sup>th</sup> January, and a [blog](#) from one of the cohort, Emma Gee, Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services at Reading Borough Council. Amey has confirmed ongoing support for the PACE Programme in 2026, which is fantastic news. The programme is only open to executive directors. If you would like to participate, please get in touch with [Hannah Bartram](#) as soon as possible.
11. We are celebrating **ADEPT's 140th anniversary year** by showcasing the voices of past and present Presidents, reflecting on the evolution of place leadership and exploring the challenges, innovations and aspirations shaping the future of the sector. We'll be publishing one essay a month over the anniversary year. Next in the series is the essay by Angela Jones, President of ADEPT and Director of Thriving Places at Westmorland and Furness Council, who examines the question "what is place, really?" You can read Angela's essay [here](#).
12. **Dates for your diary** – for more detail please visit the Events page on the website ([here](#)):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A draft of ADEPT’s new Strategic Plan for 2026-29 has been released for consultation, with members invited to provide feedback ahead of its formal launch in May. You can read the draft <a href="#">here</a>. The proposed plan, currently titled <i>Making Better Places</i>, sets out our strategic objectives for 2026-29, celebrates some of our key achievements over the period of the previous Strategic Plan and outlines the main changes and challenges that we must address. Please send comments / responses to Katherine at <a href="mailto:secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk">secretariat@adeptnet.org.uk</a> by Friday 13th March.</li> <li>• Building on the momentum from our ADEPT Autumn Conference workshop, Stantec and ADEPT are hosting a focused roundtable to move from discussion to action. This session will bring together senior leaders from local and regional government and delivery-focused private sector organisations to explore the opportunities, pressures, and emerging solutions shaping collaboration today. Thursday, 19 March 2026, 11.30 – 13.00, MS Teams. Please email <a href="mailto:zoe.plenderleith@stantec.com">zoe.plenderleith@stantec.com</a> if you are interested in being an important part of the conversation.</li> <li>• Colas, Equans and ADEPT are hosting an in-person roundtable session, “From Mitigation to Adaptation: Embedding Resilience in Place Based Infrastructure”, which will bring together leaders for an in-depth discussion on future ready infrastructure. The workshop takes place on Thursday 19th March at the Manchester Art Gallery. Please complete the registration form for this invite only event: <a href="#">From Mitigation to Adaptation: Embedding Resilience in Place-Based Infrastructure</a>.</li> <li>• The Spring Conference, AGM and Annual Awards Dinner will be held in London on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026. Transport Minister Simon Lightwood is confirmed as the headline speaker – to see the full programme and to register, see <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>		
6.	<p><u>DESNZ update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energising Britain (published Dec 2025) is the UK government's public participation plan for the Clean Power Mission. It outlines strategies to engage communities in the net-zero transition, including a Youth Climate and Nature Panel.</li> <li>• DESNZ also hosting annual Energizing Britain event – first one held last year – MMA comments that those interested can get in touch with her as currently in planning stages for next upcoming events.</li> </ul>	Patrick Allcorn	15:50
7.	<u>A.O.B.</u>	ALL	15:55

<b>8.</b>	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> March at 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM		
-----------	---	--	--