

Transport and Connectivity Board

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 25 September 2026, 10:00–12:00 via Microsoft Teams

Chair	David Shepherd
Apologies / non-attendees	Ceren Clulow, Julian Gould, Jamie Blake, Nigel Riglar, Paul Fermer, Chris Henning, Hannah Battye, Jamie Hassall, Jamie Hulland, Kylie Russell, Liz Harrison, Lynne Stinson, Neil Gibson, Samantha Howell, Daniel Clarke, Giles Perkins
Next meeting	11 December 2026, DfT offices, Great Minister House, Horseferry Road, London (with an option to attend virtually)

10:00 Welcome and apologies

Lead: David Shepherd

Discussion

- DS welcomed attendees and opened the meeting.

10:05 National round-up

Leads: Becky Morrison, Jessica Matthew and Stephen Fidler, DfT
 Kamal Panchal, Local Government Association
 Damien Jones, Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers

Discussion

- BM framed the update around devolution, reflecting the government’s direction that devolution should be central to current and future work.
- BM advised that the application window for the Structures Fund had closed at the start of September. Submissions were being assessed, with an announcement due later in the autumn.
- BM confirmed that Manual for Streets was being updated through a consultative process. New material was expected in early 2027, with a focus on providing a useful and flexible resource.
- BM explained that side-road zebra crossings would not be lawful until the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions were amended. The working expectation was that the changes would come into force in summer 2028.
- BM advised that work on floating bus stops remained paused while national safety research was undertaken.
- KP highlighted work on a wayfinding blueprint and wider proposals intended to inform transport devolution and the forthcoming white paper.
- JM outlined the direction of English devolution, including the government’s aspiration for more areas to move towards mayoral strategic authorities and for mayors to have a greater role in transport decisions.
- JM said the boundary between nationally and locally managed transport assets and services was being reviewed, including how National Highways and the future railway structure would work with mayors.
- JM described proposals for greater fiscal devolution from April 2028. Detailed arrangements had not yet been settled and were expected to be developed through the Spending Review and forthcoming white paper.

- JM emphasised that additional financial freedoms would need to be accompanied by stronger accountability and local scrutiny arrangements.
- JM confirmed that transport authorities were required to submit plans by the end of October through the Local Transport Portal and encouraged authorities to provide feedback on the system.
- JM advised that changes to the local government finance settlement would alter how much transport revenue funding was distributed, although the overall amount was not expected to reduce solely because of the administrative change.
- SF updated the Board on bus fares, concessionary travel and the balance between national expectations and local flexibility under devolution.
- SF noted that policy development on taxis and private hire vehicles was also progressing, including consideration of the appropriate level for decision-making and enhanced DBS checks for safety-critical work.
- DJ confirmed that the main ATCO issues had been covered through the wider discussion.

Actions

- **BM:** Confirm the expected publication timetable for updated guidance on setting local speed limits and the road safety strategy.
- **KP:** Share the written Local Government Association update and relevant devolution material when available.
- **DS:** Collate any further questions from Board members and share them with DfT.

10:30 Local highway transparency reporting and RAG ratings

Lead: Tim Rowland-Deverall and Dominik Lengauer, DfT

Discussion

- TRD thanked authorities for submitting their local highway transparency reports and noted a significant improvement in the quality of information provided.
- TRD confirmed that DfT would undertake evidence checks on a sample of authorities to provide assurance that published information was supported by appropriate evidence.
- TRD said each authority would be given an opportunity to check the data DfT intended to use before ratings were finalised.
- TRD advised that the ratings methodology would remain broadly consistent with the previous year, covering road condition, expenditure and best practice. The richer asset management information submitted this year would strengthen the best-practice assessment.
- TRD acknowledged requests for authorities to receive advance notice before ratings were published and said DfT was considering an appropriate communications period.
- DL confirmed that DfT would write to authorities to confirm whether the transparency-reporting requirements had been met.
- DL reminded authorities that evidence of the required highways officer training was due by the end of November. The final 12.5% of the incentive allocation was linked to the training requirement.
- DS asked DfT to publish results promptly while taking account of local election sensitivities and allowing authorities reasonable notice.
- DS highlighted the highways sector's positive use of technology, particularly in inspection, asset management and deployment of limited resources.
- Board members asked DfT to avoid duplicating information requested through other funding and reporting arrangements and to clarify which expenditure should be included so that comparisons were made on a consistent basis.
- TRD agreed that further review sessions would be useful, while noting the need to retain a stable reporting approach from year to year.

Actions

- **TRD:** Issue extracted data to authorities for fact-checking and continue work on the advance-notice and communications arrangements for publication.

- **DL:** Confirm whether transparency-reporting requirements have been met and confirm the final share of incentive funding payable in quarter four.
- **DfT:** Consider further review sessions to improve guidance, reduce duplication and clarify the treatment of expenditure.

11:00 NPPF and implications for highways and transport, including housing developments near stations

Lead: Robert Singleton, DfT

Discussion

- RS outlined the revised National Planning Policy Framework and its implications for transport, highways and growth.
- RS explained that the revised structure separated plan-making and decision-making policies more clearly and gave transport a higher profile within the framework.
- RS highlighted the emphasis on homes and development near well-connected transport hubs, together with clearer consideration of walking distance, safety, connectivity and appropriate density.
- RS confirmed that the framework supported a vision-led approach to transport planning, moving away from predicting traffic in isolation and towards planning for people, places and a wider range of transport choices.
- RS stressed that transport considerations should be addressed early in the planning process and integrated with spatial planning, housing delivery, logistics, goods movement and access to services.
- RS advised that supporting Planning Practice Guidance was being developed with input from local government and other stakeholders. The guidance would be supported by training for different user groups, including councillors.
- RS confirmed that DfT was working with National Highways so that national and local approaches aligned, including work to update the relevant roads circular.
- Board members welcomed the policy direction but raised concerns about applying station-focused development policies in rural areas where stations had limited services or poor connections to other modes.
- RS acknowledged those practical concerns and emphasised that local plans should identify the interventions needed to improve connectivity rather than treating every station in the same way.
- DS highlighted the need for consistent application of vision-led planning across the public sector and for accessible training for newly elected and existing councillors.
- RS invited ADEPT members to support policy development and indicated that a secondment opportunity might be offered to strengthen the DfT team.
- RS clarified that support in principle for housing and mixed-use development near well-connected stations would not amount to an automatic approval, as proposals would remain subject to the wider framework.
- RS defined reasonable walking distance as around 800 metres or a 10-minute walk, taking account of topography, route quality and physical barriers. It also set out minimum densities of 45 dwellings per hectare around the best-connected stations and 35 dwellings per hectare around other well-connected stations, with higher densities encouraged where appropriate.
- RS highlighted strengthened policy for freight and logistics, including the need to plan for facilities and infrastructure, allocate accessible sites and give substantial weight to proposals supporting the sector.
- RS advised that the emerging guidance was based on six principles: outcomes first; one vision per place; evidence supporting rather than determining decisions; acceptability considered in the round; proportionate assessment; and monitoring and management.
- RS confirmed that walking, wheeling and cycling would be assessed alongside vehicle movements, with Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans used as a key reference and route quality, accessibility and personal security considered from the outset.
- RS explained that the proposed approach would treat transport planning as a continuous process from establishing the vision and testing options through to delivery, monitoring, review and adaptation. Assessments

would use scenarios rather than relying on a single forecast, with agreed triggers and interventions for larger developments.

- RS also emphasised that Local Transport Plans, Local Plans and Spatial Development Strategies should be mutually aligned, with Infrastructure Delivery Plans helping to connect spatial and transport planning.

Actions

- **RS:** Continue engagement with ADEPT, the Planning Advisory Service, National Highways and other stakeholders on the Planning Practice Guidance and training package.
- **RS:** Share details of any DfT secondment opportunity with HB.
- **HB:** Advertise the DfT secondment opportunity through the ADEPT website and noticeboard once details are received.

11:30 Forthcoming changes to the Highways Act 1980 and Transport and Works Act 1992 consenting regimes

Lead: Jennifer Hurley, DfT

Discussion

- JH outlined forthcoming regulations intended to allow prescribed bodies, including local authorities, to recover the reasonable costs of providing relevant services through the consenting process.
- JH explained that recoverable activity could include technical advice, document review and attendance at meetings.
- JH confirmed that the power would be discretionary rather than a requirement to charge. The authorities prescribed in the regulations would be able to tailor their approach to local circumstances.
- JH said authorities using the power would need to publish clear information about their charges, with accompanying guidance to support implementation.
- JH advised that implementation remained subject to the parliamentary process, with the changes expected later in 2026.
- DS welcomed the proposals, noting that early, properly resourced engagement by highways and planning teams could reduce delay and avoid additional costs on major infrastructure schemes.

Actions

- **JH:** Continue engagement with prescribed bodies and seek volunteers to review and sense-check the draft guidance.
- **DS:** Support further engagement on the draft guidance and encourage other interested authorities to contribute.

11:45 ADEPT update

Lead: Hannah Bartram

Discussion

- HB provided an update on the Live Labs 2 programme and a series of roadshows planned for October and November.
- HB highlighted DfT-funded support for highway authorities to reduce carbon emissions, identify financial and energy savings, benchmark performance and support preventive highways training.
- HB confirmed that ADEPT members could receive a 35% discount on the new CIHT training offer, *Highway Preventative Maintenance Training*.
- HB reported that the Economy Planning & Housing Board had reviewed the final NPPF against ADEPT's consultation response.
- HB advised that October workshops in London and Birmingham would help shape a new LGR & Planning toolkit, with joining information to be circulated.

- HB updated the Board on ADEPT's representations concerning Project Gigabit and engagement with BDUK and Ofcom on connectivity and mobile coverage.
- HB outlined a proposed energy-system-change training programme, with a short session for senior managers and a more detailed in-person session for relevant teams.
- HB reminded members that the ADEPT Autumn Conference would take place on 26 and 27 November in Brighton. A bursary fund was available for financially constrained authorities, with the application deadline extended to mid-October.

Actions

- **HB:** Circulate the written ADEPT update, roadshow information, highways toolkit workshop link, training details and conference bursary information.

11:55 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Lead: David Shepherd

Discussion

- The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.
- No additional matters arising were recorded.

Actions

- **BK:** Resolve the meeting recording and other technical issues before the next Board meeting and circulate these minutes with the available slide decks.

12:00 Close

Lead: David Shepherd

Discussion

- DS thanked attendees and closed the meeting.
- The next meeting will be held on 11 December 2026 at the DfT offices, with an option to attend virtually.
- The CIHT Annual Luncheon takes place after the meeting.

Post-meeting written updates

The following written updates were provided after the meeting and were not discussed by the Board.

Becky Morrison, Department for Transport

- Local speed restrictions: No publication date has been announced for the updated guidance.
- Pathways Project: The project referred to during the meeting as "wayfinding" is understood to be the Pathways Project. The Department for Transport contacts are Paul Nash and Kevin Golding-Williams in the Active Travel team.

Kamal Panchal, Local Government Association

- Highways peer reviews: Ten reviews are confirmed and scheduled between September 2026 and January 2027.
- Street works: The LGA Inclusive Growth Committee will consider street works policy at its meeting on 9 November 2026. The LGA may seek examples of issues and good practice from ADEPT colleagues.
- E-bikes: An LGA webinar will take place from 10:30 to 12:00 on 14 October 2026. The session is open to ADEPT colleagues and councillors.
- Unnecessary obstruction of pavements: The LGA is discussing new powers with DfT and is supporting work to ensure the statutory guidance is enforceable and proportionate.

Booking link: [LGA e-bike webinar](#)

Elliot Shaw, National Highways

- National Highways is focused on the devolution agenda and the implications for its work.
- Work is continuing on the proposed variation to the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3), which would reallocate funding to support the Defence Investment Plan.
- The proposed RIS3 variation has been consulted on. National Highways expects the position to be finalised in October 2026, enabling its delivery plan to be published later in 2026.

Consolidated action log

No.	Owner	Action
1	Becky Morrison	Confirm publication timings for local speed limit guidance and the road safety strategy.
2	Kamal Panchal	Share the written LGA update and relevant devolution material when available.
3	David Shepherd	Collate and share further questions for DfT.
4	Tim Rowland-Deverall	Share extracted transparency-reporting data for fact-checking and progress publication communications.
5	Dominik Lengauer	Confirm compliance with reporting requirements and the final quarter-four incentive funding share.
6	DfT	Consider further sessions on reporting guidance, expenditure and duplication.
7	Robert Singleton	Continue stakeholder engagement on Planning Practice Guidance and training.
8	Robert Singleton	Share the proposed DfT secondment opportunity with Hannah Bartram.
9	Hannah Bartram	Advertise the DfT opportunity and circulate the ADEPT update and associated links.
10	Jennifer Hurley	Continue engagement and seek reviewers for the draft cost-recovery guidance.
11	David Shepherd	Support engagement on the cost-recovery guidance.
12	Bradly Knox	Resolve technical issues and circulate the minutes with available slide decks.