ADEPT
Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Environment Board Quarterly meeting

20 October 2026

Attendees:		Action Owner
• Carolyn McKenzie – Chair • Simon Adams • Daniel Ayrton • Wendy Barratt • Alexander Beckett • Rachel Carless • Jordan Champ • Daire Casey • David Dale • Ellen Fineran • Julie Greaves • Doug Hill • Kristi Nicholls – note taker	• Ralph Kemp • Olawale Ladapo • Mark Minkley • Rebecca Moberly • Andy Ruck • Kylie Russell • Nada Saidi • Tim Simpson • Joe Swift • Charlotte Tompkins • Roberta Wilkinson Apologies: Dan Janota, Tim De-Keyzer, Hannah Bartram	
Welcome and Introductions Carolyn McKenzie welcomed everyone to the meeting. New introductions from: Julie Greaves – Head of Sustainability at Herfordshire CC, Tim Simpson – Interim Head of Climate Adaptation and Nature Recovery at Essex CC, Rebecca Moberly – Planning Advisory Service, Daniel Ayrton – Interim Director for Environment Transport at Derbyshire CC, Alexander Beckett – Climate Change and Flood Risk Manager at Buckinghamshire CC. Carolyn said that she would be reviewing the Board's operation and effectiveness to develop proposals to maximise its relevance for all participants and would be seeking views from all stakeholders (see action below).		
Land Use Framework – role of Land Use Unit, LUF interaction with Spatial Development Strategies – Jordan Champ, Defra & Nada Saidi, Defra add Jordan's slides, received 20 Oct • The Land Use Framework (LUF) was published in March 2026. • Framework contains approximately 82 actions across four implementation themes. • LUF principles have been integrated into the updated NPPF. • DEFRA is supporting MHCLG on SDS statutory guidance development. • Additional LUF spatial evidence and datasets are planned for publication. • ADEPT is running a pilot with six authorities on embedding environmental outcomes into SDSs. • National Soil Map for England and Wales has been published. • Farmer Collaboration Fund launched approximately September 2026. • DEFRA is conducting digital discovery work on spatial planning datasets and data quality. • Government is expanding Green Infrastructure Framework mapping and interpretation support. • Predictive Agricultural Land Classification mapping is being developed. • Rebecca Moberly from Planning Advisory Service confirmed that MHCLG are looking at digitally-enabled SDS, alongside NISTA and this ties into a proportionate evidence framework for SDS. • **ACTION: Carolyn McKenzie suggested to arrange dedicated follow up discussions on SDS implementation and environmental outcomes.** • **ACTION: Establish offline session focused on SDS development and supporting datasets** Land Use in England – The Land Use Story Map publication. Gives an overview to some of the analysis and evidence behind the LUF. https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/map.aspx		**Carolyn McKenzie, David Dale, Defra team**

Index of Multiple Environmental Deprivation and Environmental Equity Index – Joe Swift, Environment Agency add Joe's slides received 20 Oct • IMED combines eight indicators across pollution, nature and climate domains, bringing together different data sources into a consistent and accessible format. • IMED operates at 100m grid-square resolution and can be aggregated to larger geographies. • EEI incorporates the eight IMED indicators plus four additional socio-economic indicators. • EEI includes urban heat island, tree cover deficit, years of life lost and Index of Multiple Deprivation indicators. • IMED and EEI are available through the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework • **ACTION: Explore alignment of IMED and EEI tools with Land Use Framework (LUF) implementation.** • **ACTION: Arrange discussions with Environment Agency colleagues on local government feedback and use cases for IMED and EEI tools.** Urban Heat Index | Urban Heat Island Mapping & Analytics	**Joe Swift/David Dale** **David Dale**
Updates from partners: **Defra – Ola Ladapo** • 45 LNRS's (Local Nature Recovery Strategy) had been published by October 2026. • 3 LNRS's remained outstanding. • Approximately £26 million funding was committed during the spending review period, funding equates to approximately £185,000 per responsible authority per year. 2026/27 funding has been allocated to authorities with published LNRS's. • Government issued the "Rewiring the State" cabinet statement in July 2026. • DEFRA will report on the Pathfinders Programme to the Secretary of State by year-end 2026. • Pathfinder partnerships will continue into 2027. • Pathfinder Leaders Forum first meeting scheduled for 10 November 2026. • First mayoral strategic authority roundtable scheduled for 24 November 2026. • **ACTION: Report ADEPT participation request for mayoral roundtables and Pathfinder forums to Defra team, and request for a communications plan to disseminate the outcomes of these.** • **ACTION: Follow up on ADEPT request regarding involvement in mayoral roundtables and Pathfinder activity** **Environment Agency – Simon Adams** • Mandatory digital waste tracking went live on 1 October 2026. • More than 12,000 permitted waste sites must record waste loads within 48 hours. • Waste tracking expansion programme will continue through 2027. • Ralph Kemp added that digital waste tracking had created operational issues for charitable waste deliveries at household waste recycling centres. • Significant fridge disposal backlog remains nationally following summer capacity pressures. • Severe drought status was declared in parts of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, East Sussex and West Sussex on 15 October 2026. The April-September period was reported as the driest in over a century. 82% of England remained in drought or severe drought status. Emergency response measures may be required • 120% of normal rainfall over the next 6 months is required to restore reservoir levels. • Major Devon/Cornwall reservoir reported at 15% capacity. • **ACTION: explore future in-depth board session on Pathfinder Programme learning** • **ACTION: Raise charitable-waste issues arising from digital waste tracking with EA colleagues** **What is severe drought? – Environment Agency: For homes and habitats.** **Developing the digital waste tracking service - GOV.UK**	**Olawale Ladapo** **David Dale** **Simon Adams**
Updates from Working Groups: **Energy & Clean Growth – Daire Casey** • NESO Regional Strategy Board working group nominations now closed • GB Energy partnership opportunity deadline is 12 November 2026. • New heat network regulations apply to very small shared heat systems, including one boiler serving two buildings, so impacts on local authorities are greater than anticipated. • Energy and Clean Growth Working Group meeting scheduled for 12 November 2026.	

Flood & Water Management – Doug Hill

- Quarterly meeting held on 9 October. Discussions included: NaFRA2 – discussion with EA to understand concerns relating to flood mapping and how enquiries/flood map challenges are managed by the EA and LLFA's. Agreement from EA to set up a joint working group to look at comms with residents, share knowledge and case studies and to look at skills/resources. Funding & Capital Pipeline Development – discussion on barriers to LLFA's submitting bids to the capital programme following implementation of new funding policy. Further discussion with EA/Defra to be held.
- Nation Flood Risk Strategy refresh. Working on November consultation timeframe. Advisory Group held on 5 November.
- Flood and Drought Resilience Taskforce met on 14 October. Combines existing Flood Resilience Taskforce with drought resilience
- We welcome the combination although need to ensure existing workstreams continue such as community resilience. There is a danger that the change is seen as an opportunity to close workstreams.

This is the Clear Waters link for survey about environmental improvements being delivered through investment in water infrastructure https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/clear-waters, closing date 30 October.

DD to ask Glen Westmore to complete

Natural Capital & Heritage – Tim De Keyzer (sent apologies)

- The next Natural Capital & Heritage group meeting is 16 November
- The OEP is undertaking a project to identify practical barriers to nature recovery, the call for evidence is open until 14 December

OEP seeks evidence of regulatory and practical blockers delaying nature recovery measures in Englan…

Waste – Wendy Barratt

- Next meeting for the waste working group is 22 October. Speakers include DEFRA,,Exchange for Change, EA and DESNZ giving updates on circular economy, deposit return scheme, Inclusion of EfW plants into the Emission Trading Scheme and the Waste Crime 10 point action plan.
- We continue to engage on stakeholder meetings regarding the ongoing fridge processing crisis and have contributed to a number of press articles including the Daily Mail.
- We have been invited to sit on the UK Battery Fires Taskforce hosted by the Environmental Services Association, and the Plastic Film Forum hosted by DEFRA
- We are hosting a workshop at the forthcoming ADEPT Autumn conference – Challenges and opportunities on delivering the waste services of the future.

ADEPT business:

Carolyn is to be interviewed by Ecorys who are doing research for Defra on the effectiveness of the EIP.

ACTION: Collect board feedback on Environmental Improvement Plan performance – if you have any feedback contact Carolyn McKenzie

All / Carolyn McKenzie

Transport / Infrastructure

1. Live Labs 2 update: We published the 'Little Book of Live Labs' on 14th October at Highways UK (see here) and are hosting a MP briefing in Portcullis House on 20th October. You can find out more by attending one of the Live Labs 2 roadshows, which provide signposts to a range of strategic and tactical tools, methods and solutions that can identify where efficiencies, financial savings and carbon reductions can be delivered across the local highways sector. You can find locations and dates for each workshop here. Register your interest here. For the latest blog, see here.
2. The ADEPT Carbon Leadership Programme is a programme supported by DfT that will fund local highway authorities to measure and reduce their emissions. The Highways Maintenance Transparency Report Template references the CLP too. We have secured approval from DfT to offer a repeat CLP assessment to those who would like it. If you would like to find out more, there are two introductory webinars on 13th and 20th January – to register see here.
3. ADEPT has announced a new partnership with CIHT, as the Learning Partner for CIHT's new *Highway Preventative Maintenance Training Programme*. It's a practical CPD opportunity for local highway authority teams (online, only 2.5hrs long) - with a discount for ADEPT members – find out more here. See also the blog by James Bailey, Chair of the ADEPT Engineering Board (here).

Devolution / Growth / Planning

4. PACE thought leadership programme: this year's cohort is exploring the theme *Working on the system: place leadership to transform future outcomes*, considering what it means to lead places through uncertainty, build trust and think beyond today's immediate pressures. Read Ann Carruthers' blog from session 1 here; also the summary document (here) and short video (here). The recent second session focused on the energy system / transition as a practical example of why systems thinking matters for Place leaders. The third session will focus on trust as an asset.
5. National Planning Policy Framework: several of the recommendations set out in the ADEPT consultation response are reflected in latest NPPF, including those regarding spatial planning, design and the integration of infrastructure. However, some areas of the NPPF remain overly prescriptive and we have concerns about the lack of flexibility in determining local standards. See our media statement here. On the basis that LGR will resume at some point, we're continuing to develop a new toolkit on LGR and planning, which will support members navigating the challenges and opportunities that LGR presents for planning services. Two workshops are taking place in Oct – details below.
6. We have written to Ian Murray, Minister of State for DCMS raising our concerns about the delivery of Project Gigabit as it enters its most challenging phase (here). Following on from our written response

(here) to Ofcom's discussion paper, *Mobile connectivity you can count on*, Ofcom requested a meeting to discuss the response in more detail. Environment / Climate 7. Waste: ADEPT has written to Environment Minister Emma Hardy MP, calling for urgent government intervention to tackle an acute national shortage of fridge and freezer recycling capacity. ADEPT has warned that increasing numbers of recycling centres across the country are running out of safe storage space and turning residents away (here). We welcomed the government's announcement of a delay to the date for mandatory flexible plastics collection, as part of the roll out of Simpler Recycling (here). We responded positively to the news to delay the inclusion of Energy from Waste (EfW) plants in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (here). Finally, last week we called on the government to pause the rollout of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers and carry out a full review of the cost impact on local authorities (here). 8. ADEPT has responded to the request from Nature Minister, Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP, for views on nature recovery and local growth, setting out our position that local authorities can lead decarbonisation and nature recovery in their places to ensure investing in nature and the environment is an enabler for growth, not a blocker and that local growth and prosperity are built on green, sustainable foundations, improving the environment and making life better for people. 9. We are developing an Energy System Change Training Programme to build leadership and practical delivery capability across local authorities. This will be launched at the ADEPT Autumn Conference in late November. Events/Other 10. We are celebrating ADEPT's 140th anniversary year by showcasing the voices of past, present and future Presidents, reflecting on the evolution of place leadership and exploring the challenges, innovations and aspirations shaping the future of the sector. We are publishing one essay a month over the anniversary year. In his blog Darryl Eyers, ADEPT President 2019–2020, explores the idea of prosperous places, economic leadership and inclusive regeneration (see here). 11. We have announced the dates for the 2027 Leadership Development Programme – to find out more, see here. The deadline for EoI is midnight, Friday 15 January 2027. 12. Round up of dates for your diary – see also the events website page (here) and events calendar page for dates of board and working group meetings (here) ➢ 21st October ADEPT & PAS planning & LGR toolkit workshop, London - register here Planning and LGR workshop, London ➢ 28th October Lunch & Learn with Aether: supporting LAs to continue to deliver climate outcomes during a period of significant change – register here ➢ 2nd November ADEPT/ Natural England/ Environment Agency webinar - The future of planning & environmental advice – register here ➢ 10th November Live Labs 2 triage session - register here ➢ 26th & 27th November ADEPT Autumn Conference, The Metropole Hotel, Brighton. The theme this year is *Making Better Places for People;* many speakers are already confirmed. Book your place here – please note the deadline to book is 10th November.	
AOB: The next meeting is on Thursday 19th November 13:00 – 14:00 **ACTION: conduct review of board effectiveness and gather member feedback via survey and engagement of these meetings going forward.** **Engage working groups and stakeholders on future board format and requirements**	**David Dale/ Carolyn McKenzie**