

**ADEPT Natural Capital and Heritage Working Group**  
**19<sup>th</sup> May 2020**  
**Videoconference**

**1. Introductions**

Attending –

Quinton Carroll, Cambridgeshire

Elizabeth Milne, Kent

Peter Moore, Reading

Adam Stewart, Defra

Rebecca Waite, Defra

Peter Chamberlain, Devon

David Sutherland, Buckinghamshire

Hannah Bartram, East Sussex

David Dale

Apologies –

Andrew Leeming, Business Inspired Growth

Jeremy Pickles, East Riding

Liz Small, North Yorkshire

Zoe Sydenham,

**2. Minutes and actions of last meeting**

**Action: Defra to circulate members list of Defra local government liaison group.**

- Quinton followed up with Env Bill concerns with Defra; but to be further followed up, given interruption from CV-19.
- David S that he will follow up with further detail on Ox-Cam project as it's provided.
- It was note that the Environment Board is meeting more frequently on a monthly basis by teleconference. Contact Paula Hewitt PA for meeting details.

**3. Environment Bill update**

- Environment Bill - no firm date of when it is to get started again. Bill team working on emergency response for CV19. Restart initially hoped for mid-June but not clear whether this will happen or not. How is Bill reintroduced in totally different setting? Also need to consider how we harness the green gains of CV19.
- Questioned whether there could be any risk of watering down? Difficult to answer but cannot imagine a desire. Env often goes down pecking order in economic crisis. Helps that its already in progress. Also risk to investment promised as we enter economic crisis. Benchmark cannot and will not be watered down - but challenge will be high. And some focus/priority may be different - may even be call for greater ambition as it passes through committee.

- Need for social (behavioural) research when bill is reintroduced - how we embed the changes. Understanding and importance of green space - people's links; realignment of public's alignment to green space. Need to harness this.
- DS noted that they were about to go out with BNG SPD in summer; viability question has been raised again.
- Noted that ELMs consultation paused; will there be any pressure to change focus of this in terms of food security? ELMS team reforming imminently. Encouraged to feed through any concerns to the ELMS and BNG team directly.

**Action: pull together questions and concerns relating to Env Bill and ELMs in light of current situation.**

#### **4. Impacts of and response to CV19**

- There is a desire internationally and nationally for a green recovery - don't assume we will fall down pecking order. Need to hold them to this and help that understand what this means in practice.
- Letter from Committee on Climate Change and their broad principle of green recovery was referenced. We should be echoing these calls.
- Also ADEPT are doing some work on CV19 recovery and renewal - including green recovery. Task force - to support members in recovery and also liaise with government on the delivery of recovery. Have surveyed to look at impacts of CV19. Objective to feed into government an evidence base - principles when helping recovery - not one size that fits all.
- ADEPT clean growth policy position has been in development for some time - being reviewed in light of CV19 - supporting green recovery. Was developed with other environment groups and NGOs - presents five priority asks - nature is one theme; was to be used to lobby in advance of COP26. Now this will be used to feed into recovery. Aiming to publish in mid-June. Not for wider circulation at time being.

**Action: all to comment on the shared policy asks document (in particular 5 main priorities and nature section) asap by close of play Thursday.**

- Noted that Susanna May at Defra keen to engage with us on green recovery.
- Opportunity to accelerate climate change planning. Opportunity to reframe the arguments.
- Redeployment from a lot of environment services - challenge of pulling staff back from redeployed areas.
- Future of town centres - but reallocation of road space - not just for travel but for hospitality industry - to enable distancing. Future on high street retail
- Local government funding.
- Recovery planning complex and multi-faceted; complexity of stakeholders and players
- What are LEPs doing wrt economic recovery? LIS refresh: skills assessment to be revisited; smaller scale initiatives - not all large infrastructure; SME support.
- Local community hubs established - focus on local food supply chain.
- Pressure on open spaces and PROW network - access points pressures.

- Reduced capacity.
- Impacts on those services dependant on volunteers and income from visitors etc.
- Aligning to support gov priorities to ensure funding.
- Smaller env NGOS and charities - Defra priority in environment impact cell. Can ADEPT support survey to pull together evidence base to help develop proposals for interventions? Noted that many have furloughed staff - drop in membership sign up (but digital sign up being used effectively) - loss of visitor income. Loss of volunteer - loss of conservation work and cost of rectifying it. Could also be an impact on LNPs sustainability as some rely on cash or in-kind support from NGOs. Agreed that ADEPT would support survey.

**Action: to consider how we might support the nature element at the next meeting**

## **5. Ongoing responses to climate and ecological emergencies, including tree planting**

- Work is progressing but there has been some stalling owing to CV19.
- ADEPT published a blog not long ago about tree planting/climate change - see the ADEPT website Climate Hub:  
<https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/climate-change-blog>  
<https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/news/can-we-plant-our-way-out-climate-emergency-guest-blog-1st-vice-president-nigel-riglar>
- ADEPT looking to work with LGA for climate change case studies.
- Feasibility of large-scale tree planting in Bucks - including financial analysis both negative and positive (e.g. loss of land to tree planting)

**Action: David to see if it can be shared**

## **6. AOB**

- Update on intention for capability/capacity for Env Bill - noted that funding for additional burdens will be key given anticipated financial issues for local government; need for ring funding
- General request - please consider writing a blog or article for the ADEPT website on anything interesting or new you're working on. ADEPT can write it - just need time for interview. Also for Environment Journal. Potential themes:
  - Standard approach to carbon accounting
  - Natural solutions
  - Importance of green space

**Action: all to note and consider articles**