**Research into the impact of ADEPT**

**January 2019**

Last Autumn, ADEPT commissioned Shared Intelligence to carry out research into the impact of the Association in terms of the services it provides to its members, its relationships with key stakeholders and its success in influencing government and key agencies. Interim results were shared with delegates at the Autumn Conference last November. The consultants have now submitted their final report, which draws on two sources of evidence: an on-line survey of ADEPT members; and 22 non-attributable interviews with members, non-members, business partners and key stakeholders.

The research shows that there is a high level of satisfaction with the information ADEPT provides to its members. Sixty per cent of survey respondents said they used information from ADEPT regularly in their work. Fifty two per cent see ADEPT as the first port of call to share intelligence, but around a quarter do not. Several interviewees said time pressure mean they are less likely to access material from the association. There was a also a call for ADEPT to do more to capture and disseminate good practice.

The survey shows that networking is the aspect of ADEPT’s role that most members are most satisfied with. Opportunities to meet and discuss issues and challenges with peers are highly valued by most of the people interviewed. For some members, including some new members, these networking opportunities are all they are looking for from the association. Others, however, place less value on networking alone and are looking for more tangible discussions.

The survey suggests that members are positive about ADEPT’s influencing work. Sixty six per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that ADEPT is strengthening its influence with government. The interviews, however, suggest that there is an appetite among the association’s members for it to become a louder voice with government. Significantly many of the organisations ADEPT seeks to influence and work with want to see it have a stronger influencing voice.

Some stakeholders and members see the breadth of ADEPT’s remit as a challenge, with the danger of it being spread too thinly or typecast for its technical expertise. Others, however, see its credibility and capacity across the full range of place disciplines – planning, transport, environment, economy – as an advantage as long as it argues strongly and confidently from that platform. Some see the economy as a crowded space in terms of national voices, others see a gap in terms of the wider place dimension which ADEPT could fill.

On the basis of this research the consultants recommend that ADEPT should develop a stronger influencing voice, building on the distinctiveness of its expertise across the wider place agenda. ADEPT should see the breadth of its remit as its core strength and a foundation for a more assertive, confident voice. Its influencing work should be underpinned by a small set of priorities. At any one point in time it must be clear what its three or for influencing priorities are, what it is seeking to achieve, who it is seeking to influence and who its allies are.

The consultants also recommend that ADEPT should pay attention to three other issues: ensuring that its communications are as crisp, salient and accessible as possible; ensuring that its networking opportunities continue to meet expectations in the face of increasing time pressures; and responding to the appetite for more best practice material.

The Leadership Team is currently discussing the outcomes of the review, with the aim of sharing proposals for ADEPT’s future business model and strategic influencing priorities with members over the next few months.