

## **ADEPT President's first special recognition awards winners**

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The first winners of the inaugural ADEPT President's Special Recognition awards were celebrated at the Association's Annual Dinner at One Whitehall Place, on the 28th January.

Heather Barnes, President of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport introduced the awards this year to recognise members' outstanding achievements in three areas: devolution, resilience and communities.

Heather Barnes said: "In a background of continual change, Local Authorities are under constant pressure to deliver more for less. Amongst all the noise and headlines, however, the very real success stories being delivered by ADEPT members throughout place-based services can get lost.

"With these awards, we wanted to ensure that successful and innovative projects received the recognition they were due and that ADEPT members were commended for their exceptional contribution to the transformation of services in their areas."

In the 'Meaningful Devolution for all Communities across the UK' category, the Award for was won by the East West Rail Consortium, comprising Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire councils. The East West Rail project will reconstruct a partially disused railway and reinstate train services on a section of the former Oxford to Cambridge 'Varsity' Line linking the growth towns of Bicester to Bedford and Milton Keynes to Aylesbury.

Neil Gibson, Managing Director Transport Economy Environment at Buckinghamshire County Council and Chair of the East West Rail Consortium Project Executive Board said: "We are delighted to have received national recognition for the innovative, partnership approach we're pioneering, for joint delivery between the local authorities in the Consortium and Network Rail. We're committed to making it work and establishing a new delivery model for railway investment projects that may be adopted for future schemes."

The award for the final 'Long-term Funding to Prevent, Prepare and Respond' category was given to Essex County Council for their flood partnership's work in securing long-term investment from the government for Canvey Island's flood defences.

Graham Thomas, Head of Planning & Environment at Essex County Council and Chairman of the Canvey Island Multi-Agency Partnership said: "It is fantastic that the innovative work the team have done has received the recognition it deserves. Not only for the approach to dealing with the issues around community resilience and partnership working in dealing the issues of flooding in Canvey, but ensuring that we are all better prepared for these events in the future. By working together with our partners we have been able to deliver more than the sum of the parts as well as move this work forward at pace."

Devon County Council was successful in the 'Powers to Plan and Grow Successful Communities' category for their work in piloting and mainstreaming a series of initiatives to develop stronger relationships with local communities and help those communities to deliver services themselves – including volunteer snow wardens, community-run libraries and the transfer of community centres.

David Whitton, Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste Management, Devon County Council, said: "In responding to the ongoing challenges facing local authorities, Devon has done some excellent work to transform service delivery, including the development of a wide range of options to mobilise the enthusiasm, expertise and skills available in Devon's communities. This has led the development of more resilient communities, economies and infrastructure. It is good to see that ADEPT recognises that Devon is the very heart of this change."

ADEPT is the voice of Local Authority county, unitary and metropolitan Strategic Place Directors across England with responsibility for the key place based services, including transport, environment, planning, economic development, housing and waste.

#### **ENDS**

For more information and further case studies, please contact Julie Everett at Coast Communications on 01579 352600 or 07866002635 or email [Julie@coastmarcoms.co.uk](mailto:Julie@coastmarcoms.co.uk)

#### **About ADEPT**

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) represents local authority county, unitary and metropolitan Directors. Operating at the strategic tier of local government, members are responsible for delivering public services that primarily relate to the physical environment and the economy, but which have a significant impact on all aspects of the nation's well-being. ADEPT represents members' interests by proactively engaging central Government on emerging policy & issues, promoting initiatives aimed at influencing Government policy and through the development of best practices and responding to European and UK Government initiatives and consultations.

For more information on ADEPT please visit the website: [www.adeptnet.org.uk](http://www.adeptnet.org.uk)