

NOTES AND ACTIONS FROM LINK MEETING WITH IOD SCOTLAND, 13 MAY 2013

LINK sought the meeting, with David Watt Director, as part of our aim to build broader alliance with business and to use business networks as entry points for that. Ross Finnie, Andrew Fairbairn and Jen Anderson attended. This was a first discussion with agreement to find specific issues on which players from both orgs can meet/discuss for mutual familiarisation and identification of common ground. It was useful as a first step, like our 2012 meeting with CBIS, but there is a way to go, and **LINK needs to be proactive in finding issues to spark interest and open this dialogue up.**

The Institute is for individuals who are Directors, not for companies per se. 90% of members are from private sector, the balance from public and third sectors. Membership is 1700 across six branches in Scotland - H&I, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Fife and Tayside - with most working in SMEs and around 10% in larger businesses. Members' concerns are different so helping them can be challenging and is about finding a middle/balanced view on issues by means of discussion (email and in person). They are keen to change the perception of directors as rich and highly pensioned – most are really not in this category.

DW agreed there must be areas of shared interest even if there is also real divergence. He advised the basis for any discussion must be shared desire to find a way forward/different approaches rather than saying 'no' to development. He agreed it was difficult to get businesses to engage and this tends to fall to representative groups. He regrets the lack of an interface and the compounding of a sense of divergence by media and in parliament. His perception though is that the environmental lobby tends to be at war with business, eg, as regards dualling the A9, what merit the views of those not having to conduct business from Inverness? He felt St Andrews is a strangled town for business to develop in, with the individual's right to challenge running counter to the aim of sustaining communities. He feels there is not enough debate around / opportunity to input to, agendas for development of academic research in Scotland.

DW felt the attitude of business to sustainability was changing (towards common ground with others); noted that SSE's outgoing CEO had been devastated by news of the company's activities 'on his watch'. Some of his examples were about the desire to sustain businesses and customer bases and at a local level about business recognising that it needs to know its community, support initiatives with what may be future workforce. DW shared RF's disappointment that the economic crash had not led to significant changes, and that opportunities such as employee ownership and other business models had not been developed more as a result. He seemed to support RF's argument that GDP alone is inadequate and needs backed up by other goals/measures which give a fuller picture of where things are at.

We discussed energy; DW felt business are less interested in the hows & whats of supply than in a good cheap supply, though he agreed security of sustainable sources and some of the complexities around power might be considered legitimate concerns by some players. RF reported LINK's current anti-fracking position because some substrata issues are not yet researched adequately. DW suggested we contact the chair of the Weir Group as they have an interest in fracking

RF asked if IoD would look at minimising the perceived burden of environmental legislation, in the same ways as they might look at how to manage the panoply of company law. DW felt boardrooms are concerned with continuity and risk above all else, felt environment was not a large enough topic within that. In this respect he said there's a perception that SEPA and Scottish Water could be more sympathetic. In planning too, where the debate is broadening from building control to being one of management of development, business wants to talk about how to do things so the best approach to discussion will be to consider where development can happen/is appropriate.

DW recommended identifying suitable issues upstream (having discussions 20 years back about Aberdeen bypassing would have been useful, for example). As regards how to develop more engagement, he suggested LINK could get people involved in the IOD and also encouraged engagement locally in Chambers of Commerce to build the relationships to open doors later. RF suggested we identify a couple of areas which both organisations could use as a framework for building relations. DW indicated town centre regeneration (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/358309/0121114.pdf>) in which SBIC and Scottish Retail Consortium have an interest. We agreed to each reflect on other areas on which to engage.

We should follow the meeting up with a letter of thanks, in which we propose a couple of areas to David.

JA/LINK/14.5.13