

## **Note of key points of LINK SEPA Liaison meeting 16 April.**

Attending for LINK: Deborah Long (LINK Chair, Plantlife), Ross Finnie (LINK President), Dan Barlow (WWF, LINK Convenor), Lloyd Austin (RSPB, LINK Trustee), Jonny Hughes (SWT, LINK Trustee), Alice Walsh (LINK staff).

Attending for SEPA: David Sigsworth (Chair), James Curran (CEO), Paula Charleson (Head of Environmental Strategy).

Apologies: Stan Blackley (FoES).

1. Welcome and intros: DL congratulated JC on his appointment. David Pirie had been appointed as new Director of Science & Strategy. DL asked SEPA to be alert for a request from consultant Bruce Britton for input to a LINK review of effectiveness. PC would respond for SEPA.

## **2. Climate**

Report on Proposals and Policies development - current challenges and concerns. How can we champion and strengthen this:

DB outlined concerns from a range of those working closely on the issues that the development of the RPP2 seems to be receiving less support and profile in government than the previous RPP, with particular concerns about the strength of input and support from those responsible for housing and transport sectors (50% of emissions), and some reliance on reaching targets as a result of the economic downturn, which is not sustainable. He asked if there were ways SEPA could help build better support for the step changes required over the next 20 years, and in particular developing ideas around some of the innovative/win-win solutions. SEPA recognised the concerns but felt more optimistic about RPP2. JC now sits on the Scottish Government Emissions Reduction Programme Board, overseeing delivery of reduction targets and he would be proactive there, with SEPA generating ideas. This group would shortly be finding supplementary reductions to achieve; win-wins tying in with other objectives (eg health) were the obvious place to start. Agreed it was a good strategy to focus on 2 or 3 big issues, like housing and transport, keeping open to emerging technologies, eg hydrogen for transport. DS, from experience on the Public Sector Climate Action group and subgroups, including on sustainable housing, felt there was good work going on to support Government objectives, and that SEPA would put in effort not only to provide the information but to promote them and support practitioners in using them, eg in development planning. On waste, where few LINK bodies have an active role, JC suggested that there needs to be some thinking strategically about the infrastructure

needed to integrate dealing with that resource aligned to other needs; JC felt there may be an opportunity now for more ambition. There was general agreement that the renewable targets have broad support, though effort to build national pride in sustainable housing and transport solutions needed.

3. Land Use Strategy – How SEPA sees its role in making this deliver at catchment scale with other partners.

JH asked for SEPA's views on if current governance structures for various types of land use (catchment management, indicative forestry strategies et al) are being effectively influenced by the LUS as a useful tool for integrating disparate strands on a landscape scale. Whilst there has been some useful academic work it has not translated into practice. SEPA considers the LUS fits well with the ecosystems concept, which JC views as a good way to communicate with business, and that the LUS has potential to be useful in discussions between sectors of competing priorities. There is little sign that it is influencing the National Planning Framework and Local Development Plans. DS considered that more engagement with Community Planning Partnerships, where land use decisions are taken, is needed. SEPA has been aligning its Flood Risk Management Planning and Water Framework Directive Planning processes better, and where SEPA had the ability to improve or influence governance structures, it would do so. PC, on the SLUS steering group, noted similar issues had been raised at its recent meeting, possibly prompted by discussions at the Biodiversity Strategy Group. A **LUS stakeholder event on 27 June** could be a good opportunity to develop it.

4. Better Environmental Regulation – Government's intentions for it, and keeping it on track.

LA outlined the effective liaison there has been on BER. LINK's response was supportive, agreed the objective of coming down hard on criminals without overburdening the champions. LINK had an eye on diffuse pollution breaches in this regard and how they are addressed. SEPA is currently working jointly with Scottish Government to develop necessary legislative change and is also aware of the existing Scottish Government commitment to bring forward a "Better Regulation Bill" which looks more broadly at regulation in Scotland. The work Scottish Government and SEPA are doing on legislative change ties into a broader package of development work including exploring a more sustainable funding model for SEPA, which e.g. supports SEPA in fully tackling environmental crime. SEPA has already

driven down its spending and activity by 25% and requires legislative change for the next transformative step. SEPA can continue to operate meantime on current levels without further cuts to the budget. It was felt that the business parts of Government better appreciated the contribution that SEPA makes. Jo Green was keen to engage with LINK on BER. PC had sent a link to a progress report

[http://www.sepa.org.uk/about\\_us/news/2012/sepa\\_outlines\\_progress\\_in\\_new.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/about_us/news/2012/sepa_outlines_progress_in_new.aspx)

**Action: Jo / Lisa Webb to liaise if meeting desired.**

5. SEPA corporate plan and priorities, resources

The CP would shortly be signed off and should be on the SEPA website after the Minister has approved it (likely by May). It is a 5 year plan with the same 4 outcomes as previously. The operating budget was reduced by 25%. SEPA expects to have achieved 19 out of 21 targets in the previous plan. The new plan has fewer targets, with several exploratory or developmental at this stage though these will have numeric values as the plan develops. The effect on SEPA from the Hydro Nation document was mentioned; this is expected to increase profile though at the moment there is little clarity. SEPA has engaged with the consultation, done some thinking internally and liaised with CREW and Scottish Water, whose remit all agreed the HN agenda goes way beyond. Low carbon and water are areas where Scotland has expertise; a UN Centre of Excellence has been mooted, though no details are yet available. LINK had flagged in its response the embedded water footprint a significant indicator of sustainability. This tied in with a theme of EU Green Week. PC and JH would liaise.

LINK raised the issue of more responsibilities coming down to SEPA as a result of the Scotland Act, eg Landfill Tax for which SEPA may be the collecting agency. DS underlined SEPA's intention to not just to implement legislation narrowly, but to encourage better environmental performance eg through the BAT process.

6. **Updates** (some info may be circulated beforehand)

Dalgety Bay. Not discussed

Exxon Mobil fine and media coverage: SEPA is reviewing its process and future breaches would be made more proactively public. The EM case had been available for interested parties on the website.

Monitoring potential release of shale gas into non-surface water from fracking –who is the responsible authority in Scotland?

The briefing circulated was under review and there were some comments for clarification discussed at the meeting. It clarified where SEPA's responsibilities lay though there was a wider issue of climate advice with shale gas extraction being another source of fossil fuel. SEPA did not give a view on this, though JC felt that fracking could become a bigger political issue with some European countries already banning it. The UK stance was permissive though there was no particular steer from Scottish Ministers on it.

7. Rio + 20 event and aftermath – can we get more out of this.

PC was at the event in December which led to the Flourishing Scotland report and was interested in how LINK was progressing the issue. She felt the summit was an opportunity to reinvigorate SEPA's role on sustainable development, and SEPA is proactively reporting its progress under Public Body Duties. JH outlined plans for an event in Parliament on 29 May prior to a members' debate on 30 May, with a view to heightening Government's scrutiny of sustainable development performance. The Flourishing Scotland document will be sent to the summit. A steering group to keep up momentum is being formed, which needed some focus. JH and PC will liaise re Parliamentary event.

8. Next steps from this meeting and agreement on any practicalities of taking forward some of the issues identified in recent summit (28 Feb).

DL would circulate a note of the summit once comments had been received from all participants. SEPA was most interested in numbers 2 and 4, the alternatives to GDP work that LINK was working on, and the wider narrative.

AW and PC would update the key contacts table.

Revised contacts list.

Issue	SEPA lead	LINK member leads. Green indicates where there is an active LINK taskforce.	LINK staff In general please contact Kate MacColl for circulating info/requests to members, <a href="mailto:kate@scotlink.org">kate@scotlink.org</a> / <a href="mailto:enquiries@scotlink.org">enquiries@scotlink.org</a>
General information to disseminate to member bodies			<a href="mailto:kate@scotlink.org">kate@scotlink.org</a>
Agriculture, including CAP reform, SRDP	Dave Gorman/Mark Aitken	Agriculture taskforce convenor Jonathan Wordsworth. <a href="mailto:j.wordsworth@archaeologyscotland.org.uk">j.wordsworth@archaeologyscotland.org.uk</a>	

		Vicki Swales <a href="mailto:Vicki.Swales@rspb.org.uk">Vicki.Swales@rspb.org.uk</a>	
Air quality	Jane Allan	Dan Barlow, WWF, FoES, Keith Irving, Living Streets, <a href="mailto:keith.irving@livingstreets.org.uk">keith.irving@livingstreets.org.uk</a> ; <a href="mailto:dbarlow@wwfscotland.org.uk">dbarlow@wwfscotland.org.uk</a> ;	
Biodiversity	Depending on issue- Roger Owen or Scot Mathieson	General interest, please contact staff.	
Local Government/SOAs	Alan Farquhar	Maggie Keegan, convenor LINK Local Governance TF) <a href="mailto:mkeegan@swt.org.uk">mkeegan@swt.org.uk</a>	
Scotland's Environment Web	Martin Marsden, Peter Singleton	Paul Kirkland, Butterfly Conservation and Craig MacAdam, Buglife are delegates to the steering group.	
Waste	Adrian Bond/John Kenny , Alan Reid	FoES, Dan Barlow, WWFS <a href="mailto:dshiell@foe-scotland.org.uk">dshiell@foe-scotland.org.uk</a> ; <a href="mailto:dbarlow@wwfscotland.org.uk">dbarlow@wwfscotland.org.uk</a> ;	
Freshwater, including FRM, WFD, Hydro Nation, Better Regulation	David Harley/Scot Crawford for water issues  David Faichney, Les Watson for flooding	Lisa Webb convenor Freshwater taskforce <a href="mailto:lisa.webb@rspb.org.uk">lisa.webb@rspb.org.uk</a>	
Land Use Strategy	Dave Gorman/ Paula Charleson /Mark Aitken	Vicki Swales <a href="mailto:Vicki.Swales@rspb.org.uk">Vicki.Swales@rspb.org.uk</a> Tony King SWT, <a href="mailto:tking@swt.org.uk">tking@swt.org.uk</a>	
Climate/energy	Dave Gorman/Paula Charleson	Sam Gardner WWF Scotland <a href="mailto:sjgardner@wwfscotland.org.uk">sjgardner@wwfscotland.org.uk</a> ; Jim Densham RSPB Scotland <a href="mailto:jim.densham@rspb.org.uk">jim.densham@rspb.org.uk</a> FoES, <a href="mailto:dshiell@foe-scotland.uk">dshiell@foe-scotland.uk</a> Many member bodies are interested in aspects. Staff can advise.	
Climate change adaptation	Dave Gorman/Paula Charleson	Jim Densham convenor of LINK Climate Adaptation taskforce <a href="mailto:jim.densham@rspb.org.uk">jim.densham@rspb.org.uk</a>	Kate MacColl
Economics/alts to GDP	Dave Gorman/Eric Mcrory/Ishani Erasmus	Dan Barlow WWFS, <a href="mailto:dbarlow@wwfscotland.org.uk">dbarlow@wwfscotland.org.uk</a> convenor LINK Economics Forum	Andy Myles <a href="mailto:andy@scotlink.org">andy@scotlink.org</a>
Environmental Governance		Lloyd Austin <a href="mailto:Lloyd.austin@rspb.org.uk">Lloyd.austin@rspb.org.uk</a> Andy Myles, LINK Parliamentary Officer <a href="mailto:andy@scotlink.org">andy@scotlink.org</a>	
Land and ecosystem services	Roger Owen for ecosystem services	Deborah Long Plantlife, <a href="mailto:deborah.long@plantlife.org.uk">deborah.long@plantlife.org.uk</a> Jonny Hughes SWT <a href="mailto:jhughes@swt.org">jhughes@swt.org</a> , Vicki	Kate MacColl

		Swales RSPB Vicki.Swales@rspb.org.uk (SLUS TF) Of wide interest to many other members, please contact Kate.	
Landscape	-	John Mayhew, convenor Landscape TF info@ruralscotland.org	
Marine, all issues	Brian Miller Sandy Downie Phil Leeks  (depending on the issue)	Callum Duncan Marine Conservation Society convenor of LINK Marine taskforce scotland@mcsuk.org	2 dedicated marine policy officers Lindsay Roberts and Sarah Archer. <a href="mailto:Lindsay@scotlink.org">Lindsay@scotlink.org</a> ; <a href="mailto:sarah@scotlink.org">sarah@scotlink.org</a>
Planning, Strategic Environment Assessment	Alan Farquhar, Neil Deasley or Lesley Duncan	Aedan Smith, convenes LINK Planning taskforce <a href="mailto:Aedan.Smith@rspb.org.uk">Aedan.Smith@rspb.org.uk</a>	
Citizen Science	Anne Conrad		Kate MacColl for circulation of info