

G6 agenda for 14th May 2012

St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

Present: G6 and Link: Stuart Housden, Simon Milne, Kate Mavor, Deborah Long
SG: Minister Stewart Stevenson, Bob MacIntosh, Keith Connal, Gareth Heavisides.

1. **Biodiversity:** SBS review, and reflections from recent SBC.

Good progress seen so far. Keen to build momentum lost during bureaucratic process 2004 – 2011. Need to see new life with clear aims and objectives, clear actions and agreed leads. Rather worried by excessive layering evident in SBC papers – advocate a simpler approach based on outcomes with key steps / priorities (these are the same thing) plus actions with responsibilities for lead.

Minister agreed he wanted to see progress on the ground and that the review should identify actions to take Scotland forward. Agreed it should be a tool for Scotland to be proud of in delivering for nature conservation and being seen to deliver for it.

2. **Rio+20:** Scottish Government plans for this UN conference

Minister is going for approx 1 week, probably as part of UK delegation. Expecting to be a part of events with climate group and business for environment group. Sees Rio as opportunity to showcase Scotland. Minister will let G6 know his contact and G6 agreed to let Minister know of opportunities they are aware of, through Birdlife Int for example, in terms of opportunities there to showcase Scotland. Minister keen to invite G6 to operate as part of Team Scotland. Minister given copy of Flourishing Scotland.

Minister talked of the role of “critical friends” and how important they were and the strength that relationship brings. Examples given of Climate Act.

3. **RPP2:** progress on development of the second RPP WWF/ RSPB

G6 sees report as part of the journey. Like with the biodiversity review, Link is anxious to see words turned into effective action moving in the right direction with lessons from RPP1 learnt and momentum maintained. The risk is where business interest is not as engaged in for eg housing and transport as it is in renewable energy. The Minister acknowledged the difficulties in transport and said that it was always helpful if eNGOs were part of changing public opinion. For eg the SG are not likely to look to increase motorway speed limits to 80mph, cf UK govt, but they need help to build on the goodwill of the people and get public support behind green transport initiatives. SH stressed that SG needed to find the balance between regulation and market drivers. It needs a balance to ensure political drive builds on public support for green measures. The Minister wanted to see public support for regulation and suggested the eNGOs could help with that! SH responded that SG needs to provide leadership on where regulation sits. SNP are up for leadership but not suicide. LUS and climate adaptation were offered as eggs for synergy but still needing work to translate ideas into action. Both SH and Minister keen to see peatland restoration reap wider benefits.

4. **2013 Year of Natural Scotland:** a legacy for the environment?

Event Scotland are the lead for this which gives the strong tourism perspective. Embedded with the Year of NS is the idea that Scotland is a leader in environment. Progress has been made in the last couple of months and a list of events has been drawn up, mostly events that are happening anyway. This included a National Parks Week. The Minister said they were looking for community led events. The structure set up for the first Year of Homecoming meant that events could be added at a fairly late stage. The Minister wants to see this year including a range of events bringing people out into the countryside and increasing participation and not just observation. G6 stressed the need for the year to build a legacy for the environment, similar to the way Food and Drink had done. The year should be used to promote sustainability and conservation

messages. It should be looking to create raised levels of awareness to build a legacy for the environment, in terms of support and resources.

Fergus Ewing has responsibility for the year of series, ending with the next year of Homecoming in 2014. Stewart is giving advice and inputting into the year of NS.

5. Landscape scale conservation initiatives: building on NPF2, LUS and NGO initiatives. G6 is looking for Minister's support in showcasing the very wide range of initiatives outside CSGN including Cairngorms and Coigach. Pulling together LUS, WFD into seamless delivery role – this needs more help and eNGOs are keen to be involved. This means using our protected landscapes and areas of interest to increase awareness amongst the general public and using them to increase support for them. The meeting agreed that wider initiatives across Scotland should be promoted and Minister said he would be happy to do so. Agreed the principle of a legacy from the year was a good one and one that Scotland could promote its lead. G6 encouraged him to maintain an interest in this and promote it to his colleagues.

6. Aquaculture: proposed legislation.

Simon began with the worries of pressures from the industry to see less regulation than that proposed in the consultation and put in a plea to the Minister to put regulation in place to protect Scotland's water environment. The quality of the environment gives industry its premium and this will be lost without regulation. The Minister thought that self regulation wasn't working too badly with the back up of current regulation by SEPA. He was clear that the govt was unlikely to take on all measures proposed in the consultation although he agreed there was work to do with the industry and with retailers. Industry was supportive of minimum technical specifications so that was a common cause. He was resistant to higher levels of regulation but he heard the G6 voice. Specifics mentioned included unused consents and the opportunities they provided for following.

The Minister is supportive of the industry and wants to see it expand because of its economic and employment potential. Given that he wants to see it grow in Scotland, he did not appear persuaded of the need for a regulatory framework because he did not want the industry to move to Norway or Nova Scotia. He stressed he will act proportionately. G6 stressed that the competitive advantage of the Scottish brand, depending on the high quality environment was key to industry's success which must be protected by a higher level of regulation than the current light touch approach.

AOB: Phytophthora:

Kate asked the Minister to again consider the discussion at the last meeting for strategic pulling together of the stakeholders in combating Phytophthora to ensure the most effective and efficient response. The current approach may well mean that eradication in one area will be nullified as it pops up next door. The Ministers will speak to bob Macintosh about encouraging this to happen.

Deborah Long, 14 May 2012.