

## Notes LINK Ministerial Meeting 7 May at the Scottish Parliament

### Attending

#### Government:

Mike Russell MSP – Minister for Environment

David Doxford – Scottish Government

Gabby Pieraccini – Scottish Government

John Mason – Scottish Government

#### LINK:

John Mayhew – Chair Scottish Environment LINK

Duncan Orr-Ewing – Deer TF Convener (RSPB Scotland)

Calum Duncan – Marine TF Convener (Marine Conservation Society)

Steve Gardener – Fundraising TF Convener (Scottish Wildlife Trust)

Niall Lobley – SEFF Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association

Richard Luxmoore – Deer, Funding, Marine and Biodiversity TF's (National Trust for Scotland)

Eilidh Macpherson – LINK Parliamentary Officer

### Agenda

1. Matters arising from last meeting – Climate and Forestry
2. Deer issues
3. Marine issues
4. Funding of the environment

#### 1. Climate

John Mason noted the strong response to the Climate Bill consultation, with over 22,000 responses. He confirmed that the analysis of the responses should be out within the next four weeks.

A number of event are planned to coincide with 'European Green Week' 3-6 June, including publication of the government's commissioned research on 80% reductions and the fifth Volume of the Energy Review.

The adaptation strategy consultation will be launched at the end of June.

The minister noted his interest in the transitions town movement.

LINK was asked to approach Jim Mather directly for a meeting on energy issues.

## 2. Deer Issues

The Minister confirmed the following:

That he is supportive of, and looking for an opportunity for, new deer legislation, possibly tied in with other wildlife legislation in 2010. This legislative change would pick up the suggested reform of deer seasons. No confirmed legislative slot.

There appears to be recognition that current deer legislation is not fit for modern purpose and this has emerged strongly during recent strategy/merger consultations.

The DCS work programme will continue as planned up until final merger of DCS/SNH in 2010. This includes joint working on designated sites.

Deer fencing; no changes envisaged to current provision/guidance and the Minister supports FCS Guidance Note 8. SNH are apparently producing further guidance, which should be made available to us prior to issue (Minister asked David Doxford of Scot Gov to speak to SNH).

Promotion of venison event planned for autumn at the parliament.

## 3. Marine Issues

The Minister, in response LINK questions over cooperation with Westminster over both Marine bills, argued for LINK to adopt a position of support for planning as well as nature conservation to be developed to 200nm.

He expressed surprise that LINK were only recognising a conservation case for MNC to be devolved to 200nm, and not planning as well. He said that we were 'making a big mistake' and suggested that if LINK didn't support SG, Parliament and other stakeholders' calls for devolving planning as well, then we might not ultimately get the outcomes we want for biodiversity.

This minister offered that both he and Richard Lochhead could meet with the LINK MTF (and UK colleagues as well if required). The LINK MTF is to discuss internally and respond.

## 4. Funding of the environment

In response to LINK concerns about general levels of funding for the environment decreasing and the subsequent worries that goals such as biodiversity target would be met, the Minister emphasised local decision making powers but suggested we approach him with any individual cases of concern.

Ranger Services: The minister expressed support for the work of ranger services, but emphasised that any funding decisions are the responsibility of local authorities and that representation must be made to them.

Flooding: The minister emphasised the long timescale of many flooding schemes, and that current applications may not make it into this spending review. However he said there may be room for an increase in the next spending review.

## 5. DONM

The next ministerial meeting is scheduled to take place in September, and more details will be circulated once that date is confirmed.