

# LINK Strategic Planning 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011

## Participants and Apologies – at Appendix 1

### 1. Chair's welcome & updates

Deborah Long welcomed participants; the day was for deciding priorities for the next 12-18 months and how member priorities fitted. This was members' opportunity to influence the collective direction of LINK. DL noted the tremendous levels of engagement over the last year despite economic constraints and 2 new members, Froglife and Planning Democracy. LINK had taken, and made, opportunities for joint work with others in some places putting down markers to take things forward in future. The movement was up against funding issues and capacity was more of an issue for all underlining the need for clarity over priorities. In terms of relationship building LINK Board had worked to reinstate a good level of understanding with SNH, good liaison continued with SEPA and good relations with the national parks. A Board level 'summit' with government agencies on 'environment in an era of austerity' was in the pipeline and the Board would welcome ideas to take to this discussion. A strategic review of LINK to inform corporate strategy to 2015 was starting shortly with a survey of members and external audiences and would assess whether our three strategic objectives remain fit for purpose. Funding for LINK looked reasonable though with questions around some long-standing sources and staff were putting extra resource into fundraising for core work. An AGM in the spring would be arranged to confirm subscriptions for 2012/13 and to formally endorse Ross Finnie's appointment as President (Congress had appointed Ross President Designate). Amongst things flagged at Congress the previous day, for this meeting to consider had been: economics / measures of progress / corporate accounting / preventative spending; key asks for a letter to John Swinney; using and benefitting more from our international allies in terms of EEB and IUCN membership; thinking around referendum strategy in relation to best stewardship of the environment; transport as a serious area of policy where growth (cars/roads) is pretty much unconstrained.

### 2. Achievements and learning from the year past

The meeting watched the CD review of LINK's Year (Nov 2010 – Nov 2011), copies of which would be circulated to main reps to share with colleagues. Deborah Long invited views from round the room on key achievements and lessons from political and policy work, relationships and the broad activity from the year past. The following were noted:

Lessons	Achievements
Relations to develop with CoSLA (via LGTF)	Working well with SNH
Fewer units of local govt here than in Europe	SOA audit and promo of indicators cultural and environmental
Engaging with Parliament makes a difference (SLU) – though current balance of parties makes it a challenge	Economics & Governance groups with work programmes, broad range of members– adding value, broadening discussion
Eye on wider issues such as housing and links with social partners	Freshwater TF gains representation on SEPA working group
Need prep/mulling time for complex issues (eg economics)	SLU Strategy – our engagement improved the draft
Developing and liaising with allies is important	Securing environment as cross-cutting issue in Marine Plan
The power of vested interests is great (eg deer (!) / landowners); capacity in relation to some challenges	Marine Protected Areas development in Scotland informed by LINK
Follow-through delivers (eg climate - now more work with SCVO)	Marine Carbon Sinks research encouraged and informed by LINK

<b>Lessons - continued</b>	<b>Achievements - continued</b>
The potential of being a tougher voice	AgriFilenotes & Joint Links publication (informing CAP review)
Be aware where being a forum constrains opportunity and access (eg WNE legislation – 1 place for LINK, many for other lobbies)	A Nat Parks TF is now up and running to support members in addressing key concerns about Scotland's Parks/strategy
Landscape issues & NP issues – not a successful year?	Planning TF effective info-sharing and liaison with SNH over PDOs.
National Dev'ts – recognising threats upstream in process and getting unity on principles	Wildlife & Nat Env't Bill – some successes from LINK 'prodding' advocacy; follow through on post leg work re sustainable measures
Parliament tendency to see LINK as <i>not</i> an economic interest eg in relation to WNE leg	
Election pushed aside climate follow-up: pick up in year ahead	

### 3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats going forward

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
CAF silos mirror our TFs	Poor landscape protection in Scotland (no designations)
LINK Local Government Manifesto a useful tool – we're ahead!	Energy policy divisions/tensions in network
Additional marine capacity through project & our MPAOs	Our capacity on agri issues
Joint TF work such as ATF & SLUS	Cuts and constitutional issues
Our focus on governance issues - Gov'nance Matters	Parties' lack of engagement on local issues
Our good understanding and expertise re planning	Active travel agenda
Hunterston as opportunity to challenge the Nat Planning Framework	Failing to convince Gov't out of silos (LUS)
Define landscape as everything (urban and rural)	Constitutional debates and our positions
Can use the LUS for our agenda	LUS – civil servant inertia
Existence of SEA Act among other legislation	SEA not being used/applied à la 'Governance Matters'
	Our ability to influence majority Gov't
	LINK as forum securing 'single places' on stakeholder groups weakens our representation alongside other lobbies
	Need to build our capacity
	Consultation overload
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Remaining aware of what comes from Europe and international; using EEB/IUCN/Birdlife/WWF/FOEI/etc	European and international developments; Also Turmoil and deeper recession in Europe
Woodland Expansion	Direction of woodland policy
Addressing underlying concepts	Sustainable economic growth soundbites/re-industrialisation /prevailing economic context
Constitutional debate	Being split/unsure re constitutional debate

<b>Opportunities - continued</b>	<b>Threats - continued</b>
Marine Plan 2012 with national and local dimensions	Our capacity to address and influence all, enough
Rio + 20 in June 2012 & messaging on SD	Durban & Carbon
New Water Bill ahead & better regulation opps	Bleak messages from the UK
Aquaculture Bill planned	Review of Land Reform Act Part 3 perhaps?
Scot Bio Strategy review	Danger of SBS review going nowhere
Scope in review of Permitted Development Rights	Danger of more not less freedoms for managers resulting
Input (linking to LUS, Dev Plans, marine strategy) on principles re design of national developments in Nat Planning Framework 3	Lobbies supporting greater 'easing'; Govt taking view that these strategies should be treated separately
Common Fisheries Policy Reform	The new Enterprise Areas
Ecosystem approach	Balance of jobs and econ growth, with environment needs
Being more challenging as a voice for environment	Member & LINK capacity
Influencing thinking on housing development	Housing policy and development
Active travel agenda	Cars: losing our advance in active travel
Local elections 2012	Local Councils' lack of resources
Marine Strategy Framework Directive and hooks it offers	Insufficient consensus re onshore wind energy re landscape
LUS - convincing managers; integrating woodlands; integrating with Nat Plan Framework	Constitutional debate vs all others (eg affecting Budget proposals)
MPAs - role for sustainable development	Danger of poor take-up of SD role within MPA policy
CAF and our expertise	CAF - who drives process/what if envt not addressed ?
Linking LUS with sust ec growth and SD	Presumption in favour of development is current SG soundbite
Central Scotland Green Network	Silo culture still prevails in Scot Govt
Resurrecting SEA	Civil service reluctance
Arguing for better scrutiny of implementation	Capacity of LINK members to engage in joint work
Building alliance with civil Scotland on governance issues	LINK having insufficient voice for some of these challenges
New activism (discussed at Congress)	

#### 4. Priorities and broad workplan to Spring 2013

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead in LINK</b>
<b><i>Governance &amp; Scrutiny</i></b>			
SEA - Build capax, know what to expect, consider own review of problems/infracton (poss wk'shp). Promote Gov'nce Matters & wide discussion of case. Alliances (+ Activism). Louder voice and capacity. Follow-ups - Biodiversity, Transport, Constitutional.	Selves first; Scot Govt.  Polit parties, civil Scotland; LINK MBs, CEOs, Boards.	First half 2012  Ongoing	LINK Gov'nce Group - <i>ABM, RSPB, JMT, PD, FoES, WWFS</i>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead in LINK</b>
<b><i>Greening Economics</i></b>			
Publish and promote short summary of our vision of a sustainable economy; Work on performance indicators ensuring accord in LINK to take out wider.	Initially LINK, to agree common hymnsheet, then wider policy community in Scotland, but also UK and international (inc Rio, EEB)	Vision done in early 2012. Advocacy strategy developed in spring 2012. Indicators work in 2012.	New LINK Economics Forum
<b><i>Building consensus around difficult issues</i></b>			
Energy, landscape and planning - LTF statement in draft to members; Member workshop on energy & landscape.	LINK members initially	Early 2012 By June 2012	LTF LTF, NPTF, other members
Housing Scope out other work re principles for housing policy and take to PTF. Decide whether LINK research, or alliance and joint work with wider players, is most appropriate.	LINK members initially	Early 2012  By/at April 2012 networking mtg	Andy Myles scopes; PTF considers; Joint PTF, NPTF, LTF discussion of next steps.
<b><i>Benefitting from network</i></b>			
Silo-busting WRT Climate Adaptation Framework	Scottish Government	Jan to March 2012	LINK CATF, ATF, Woodland Forum
<b><i>Other priority actions</i></b>			
Marine planning/policy development needs wider alliances in LINK. Aquac Bill & Fisheries as subsets.	Other TFs; SNH	Spring 2012	MTF working with LTF and PTF. Subgroups of MTF.
SLUS action point???			
Develop vision for agri and woodland. Refer across to Economics vision?	Wider society	During 2012	ATF & Woodland Forum Integrate with Ecs Forum?
Cyber action & hustings for local elections (Lack capax to do more locally than provide framework materials which members can adapt)	Political parties	Early 2012 & April 2012	Members promote to supporters LGTF coordinates
Climate Adaptation Briefing incl other TF input Commission gap analysis of UK Risk Assessment	Scottish Government	Early 2012 First half of 2012	CATF with encouragement to the other TFs
Influencing National Planning Framework 3	Scottish Government	By summer 2012	PTF + other TFs
LTF join Civilscape to use to strengthen EU Landscape Convention Implementation	Scot + wider Govts	Early 2012	LTF via LINK Board
Better landscape protection/mapping	Ditto	2012	LTF/MTF/CATF/JMT

Issue	Audience	Timescale	Lead in LINK
<b>Other priority actions - continued</b>			
Profile Scotland's NPs strategy via a commissioned polemic and a national conference	Scottish Government	By summer 2012 Autumn 2012	NPTF (with links to other TFs including marine)
Wildlife Proclamation promotion SBS review consultation needs input	MSPs Scot Govt & SNH	By Spring 2012 Summer 2012	LINK Wildlife Forum
Water Bill Scottish Water Future RBMP implementation	Scot Gov and other stakeholders	2012 Early 2012 2012	Freshwater TF FWTF + SLUTF, ATF, MTF, etc FWTF + others

## 5. The 'fit' with member priorities and activities ahead

The table circulated prior to the meeting carried a summary of plans from most LINK members. This can be accessed at (<http://www.scotlink.org/members/members/memberspriorities.php>). A quick round of summaries/updates was given as follows:

**RSPB:** slash in agri-env budget – leads into CAP reform CFP reform – feeding in through LINK on marine. Water B; Species policy; planning in case work (Hunterston is big). Forestry feeding in too. Peatlands ongoing. Casework dominated by energy – increasing proportion by off shore renewables.

**Ramblers:** 2014 Legacy work pushing on walking and cycling. Getting projects going. Addressing the renewables subsidy regime. Access issues aren't going away and local govt aren't tackling these.

**SWT:** as in member priority document circulated prior to the meeting.

**Plantlife:** peat features largely /horticulture use /peat as carbon store /pros and cons. Global strategy for plant conservation – 16 targets for 2020. Use of wildflower seeds broadcasting in the wild.

**Soil Assoc:** Campaigning policy work on sustainable procurement of food in public sector and role of low carbon farming and climate change adaption in agriculture and farming. Interested in peatland and soil and sequestering carbon.

**JMT:** conservation and management of wild land. Wider debate of shooting deer / management standards / pushing for land owners to adopt that approach. Building JMT awareness through Award and always expanding/ getting people engaged / outdoor learning. Getting into Curriculum for Excellence. Wildland designation work. National energy strategy.

**LINK Marine programme:** National Marine Plan formal consultation in spring – liaising with planning and landscape taskforce. Seeking more stakeholder engagement in MPAs.

**McofS:** Active in landscape and planning TFs; watching brief on national parks and possibly to be more involved. Decided not to be more involved in biodiversity. Reviewing their LINK membership. Concerned that wind farm development has not been addressed by LINK. Wind farms are major focus in coming year – principal goal is to ensure wind farms don't encroach on access. Will engage actively in LINK in the year ahead.

**SAGS:** produced guidance booklet for plot holders. Aiming to produce user and provider practice guide for which need expert advice from landscape architects. Should be ready May/June 2012.

**Planning Democracy:** Community network from national planning framework. Campaigning for better governance and better decision making. Limited resources so likely to sit between planning and governance TFs in LINK.

**FOES:** continue with access to environment justice work. A lot of work on energy / fracking / biomass / financing of energy (target RBS tarsands). Continue work on climate change budget and on energy efficiency.

**HWDT:** Involve people in work – keep media interested. Carry on with our education programme.

**BBCT:** Focus on outreach / pollination wild life gardening / linking in with central Scotland green network. Improve guidance and encourage restoration.

**SCNP:** LLTNP park plan. Examining section 75 agreements and conditions on meeting local housing needs – tricky bludgeon. Joint project with APRS – engage in NPTF. Parks in 2020 / route map for renewables / still waiting to see SCA on that. Agri-renewable strategy. Oppose damaging wind farms. Management plans with NSAs.

**NTS:** Deer policy is a big issue– esp in terms of communicating that to and with others..

**Archeology:** Community participation and education in environment sector. Access to information services through local authorities.

**APRS:** approved three year development plan on web soon – fundraise for some projects one on landscape one of planning. Landscape Charter work and increase our capacity into helping. Position statement coming on green belt for St. Andrew; interested in off shore renewables. Internally reviewing own wind farm policy. Joint report with SCNP due 2012 which will go round LINK NPTF for support and to consider shared advocacy plan; addresses strategic issues of the future of Parks in Scotland.

**MCS:** MPAs, promotion of new seas project – alternative voice to usual suspect of industry. Strategy work, project work – support for local people taking part in our projects such as beach watch.

## 6. Other actions agreed from the meeting

6.1 LINK response to Scottish Budget proposals – Value of LINK and member letters to Cab Sec John Swinney noted. LINK letter will focus esp on budget proposals for active travel and agri-environment. Highlighting impacts and asking for change in budget. **Action Julia H, Helen T to draft sections for Deborah to sign off**

6.2 Referendum strategy – The meeting supported ABM's proposal that LINK challenge thinking in the lead-up to the referendum, engaging in the debate on network terms, concentrating on methods and process in government and the substance of good environmental governance. It was proposed that LINK do this by assembling 10 questions to take to the three campaigns (independence, devo light and devo max) with which to challenge the parties to justify how their option would make these things happen. The questions would be based on our existing manifesto asks and guidance would be circulated on how to engage on the referendum campaign. **Action: ABM to circulate guidance for members and advise on process to select 10 headings**

6.3 Partnerships – The meeting agreed to continue to work with, and use the opportunity to work through, IUCN, EEB, Civilscape and other networks as a means of pursuing own aspirations and goals. **Action: Board, TFs, Staff, Members**

6.4 LINK and Transport – Our CAF work would cover to some extent. Living Streets, WWFS, Sustrans and others were covering angles of the transport debate as was Transform. SCCS cover some issues and include Unison who won't oppose road projects – so would help if LINK had a position. Though LINK does not have resources to tackle every possible environmental issue, the meeting noted that LINK's lack of positioning on some of the 'general principles' on transport does not help our own case and felt the network should take positions on the direction transport policy is going in – eg public transport vs private, roads vs. other investment. The possibility of statements on the FRB, speed limits (Ministers would appreciate LINK support here) was also noted. **Action: Staff to advise for April networking.**

## Chair's closing remarks

Deborah thanked main Reps and TF Reps for the excellent level of attendance and a very good discussion. Thanks were also made to LINK staff for preparing for this meeting and to Alice particularly, and Kate MacColl, for an excellent Congress and CD review of the year. The meeting recorded a vote of thanks to Deborah Long for her excellent chairing of both days' business. The meeting closed just after 4pm.

## **Appendix 1 – Participants in LINK Strategic Planning Meeting, Birnam, 18 November 2011**

Aedan Smith, PlanningTF Conveor, RSPB  
Bob Dawson, Bumblebee Conservation Trust  
Calum Duncan, MarineTF Convenor, Marine Conservation Society  
Davie Black, Plantlife  
Jon Wordsworth, AgricultureTF Acting Convenor, Depute LandscapeTF, Depute AgriTF, Archaeology Scotland  
Lisa Webb, FreshwaterTF Convenor, RSPB  
Maggie Keegan, LocalGovernanceTF Convenor, PTF Depute, Scottish Wildlife Trust  
Tony King, Scottish Wildlife Trust  
Deborah Long, Chair, Wildlife Forum Convenor, Plantlife  
Charles Strang, Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland  
Dan Barlow, Economics Forum Convenor, WWF Scotland  
David Gibson, Mountaineering Council of Scotland  
Denis Mollison, Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust  
Eddie Palmer, Scottish Badgers  
Eila Macqueen, Vice Chair, Archaeology Scotland  
Francis Stuart, Friends of the Earth Scotland  
Hebe Carus, Mountaineering Council of Scotland  
Iain Thom, Planning Democracy  
Jenny Mollison, Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society  
John Mayhew, LandscapeTF Convenor, prepared recent issues paper for National Parks TF, Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland  
Helen McDade, John Muir Trust  
Helen Todd, Ramblers Scotland, LINK trustee  
Helen Zealley, Honorary Fellow  
Ross Finnie, President Designate  
Diarmid Hearn, National Trust for Scotland  
Julia Harrison, RSPB  
?Kathy Wormald, Froglife  
Lloyd Austin, RSPB, LINK trustee  
Lillian Kelly, Soil Association  
Ron Payne, Mountaineering Council of Scotland  
Vicki Swayles, Sustainable Land Use Convenor, RSPB  
Lindsay Roberts, LINK Senior MPAO  
Sarah Archer, LINK Marine Policy Advocacy Officer  
Alice Walsh, LINK Development Officer  
Andy Myles, LINK Parliamentary Officer  
Rea Cris, LINK Parliamentary Office Administrator  
Jen Anderson, LINK Chief Officer



Apologies were received from  
Sarah Dolman  
Stan Blackley

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