



Discussion Points & Actions from Networking Meeting, January 2010 (Perth)

PRESENT

President - Helen Zealley

Chairing – Deborah Long (Vice Chair)

Member Reps - John Mayhew APRS; Helen McDade JMT; Calum Duncan MCS; John Rosser NTS; Andrew Wallace RAFTS; Katrina Marsden & Vicki Swales RSPB, Rob Thomas RZSS; Judy Wilkinson SAGS; and Jonny Hughes SWT/Board; Dan Barlow WWFS/Board; Eila Macqueen AS/Board

Trustee – Mike Robinson

Staff - Jen Anderson, Susan Guest, Kate McColl, Andy Myles, Alice Walsh

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Board - Ian McCall, David Downie, Andy Fairbairn, Lloyd Austin, Ian Findlay;

TF reps - Maggie Keegan PTF, Steve Gardner, Pauline Jewett for SEFF, Sam Gardner CTF;

Reps - Keith Irving LivStreets, Juliet Swann FoES, Gordon Gray Stephens SNW, Alistair Beeley NEMT, Tony King SWT, Paul Kirkland BCS, Drennan Watson CC, Roger Powell SCRA, Helen Todd RS and Craig McAdam Buglife.

2. UPDATES ON PARLIAMENTARY WORK

Staff continue general contact with parliamentarians and parties on a range of issues; LINK reputation is high; marine has been recent priority with good progress by all involved and Alan Wells trusted by parliamentarians as a rep for the LINK interests.

Reps are asked to consider organising one or more hustings for the Westminster elections and to confirm with Andy Myles by 2 February. A hustings guidance pack (updated) will go on the members' pages very soon. **Action: Reps, Susan/Andy**

Reps and convenors are also invited to volunteer to draft some of the c 40 subsections of our Manifesto – during February. **Action: Reps/Convenors**

Party conferencing – pre-election flavour anticipated to most; Parliamentary Forum agreed to send only observers to Con and Lab, to take the LINK stall to SNP and LibDems whose main annual conference is in the spring. Members who would like to attend should get in touch with Susan – we do have passes to share. **Action: Interested members**

SEW 2010 programme developing on theme of 'Scotland's Environment, It's Great' with events on Business, Communities, Health, Kids, History. **Action: Programme to website by end Jan**

Proposals for Parliamentary Inquiry – AM flagged the opportunity during the coming parliamentary year which would otherwise be 'legislative light'. He would invite members and TFs to flag issues. Susan outlined a starter list compiled by the Parliamentary Forum including Peat, Alternatives to GDP, Biodiversity (2010 & LBAPs), Urban environment, SOAs, Implementation of Aarhus (access to justice). **Action: TFCs please put on TF agendas**

Thanks were noted to Andy for his help and expertise on LINK Marine Bill Team

3. POLICY PRIORITIES

Andy Myles prompted discussion (paper circulated). He noted LINK's bottom-up approach to issues and flagged the danger of missing certain big picture and/or overarching issues, including process-type issues such as the way in which Government consults (value of stakeholder group engagement / consultation fatigue / not taking on board key issues from consultation). Andy encouraged LINK to invest more in identifying social and

economic benefits of this or that environmental policy and consider what we want for the environment in the context of social and economic development.

The meeting discussed this, broadly agreeing LINK work should:

- continue to promote sustainable development – it is one of our three strategic objectives and the context for our policy work and messages; we should resist redefining this as environmental sustainability – also other attempts to re-present it - eg, as sustainable economic growth
- promote the UK principles of sustainability esp that of *Living within environmental limits* applied to the economic and social debate
- make a stronger case for environmental recovery in terms of economic and social development
- be aware that this relates to how we set measures for others (eg in relation to SOA work)

Action: Tony King (SWT) to prepare draft LINK definition of living within environmental limits

4. TAKING FORWARD ISSUES AGREED NOVEMBER

Sustainable Land Use Task force met SG officials and have since identified key issues (paper circulated) intended for submission to SG shortly. Vicki Swales flagged that other TFs might want to make the case for particular aspects of SLU and asked them to keep SLU TF informed, if so. SLU TF's wider plans included parliamentary debate and public conference later in 2010. Helen McDade noted LINK's experience over planning and NPF which demonstrates the earlier we press principles the better. **Actions: Vicki to email other Convenors; Convenors to explore with TFs; Convenors to inform SLU TF if submitting**

Agri/CAP Ongoing ATF – see report below.

Biodiversity post 2010/IUCN Year of The BTF is active – see report below.

Budget / Economy / GDP alternatives We noted there is a lot of interest in LINK's doing something on this. WWFS, RSPB will discuss with FoES, perhaps SWT; options include manifesto work, assessment of budget / carbon commitment. SAGs work with Federation of City Farms on SROI may relate.

Carbon accounting (eNGOs) Members strongly encouraged. Chair shortly writing to them encourage carbon accounting and offer LINK spreadsheets. SCVO is using LINK's template to promote action across the third sector.

Climate Act - Implementation Members interested in Climate TF work taking forward key aspects of implementation are meeting late January.

Climate / Engagement/ Communications Mike Robinson and Andy Myles will discuss proposals for LINK work and bring to April Networking. **Action: M Robinson, AMyles**

Energy - marine renewables – LINK MTF about to commission work; brief to circulate for information to members **Action: Jen Anderson circulate brief**

Freshwater/ Flooding / RBMPlanning / Habitats Directive we noted that RAFTS and RSPB were interested in seeing the FWTF revive. Others interested include SWT, Buglife. There is an email grouping which includes other members also. **Action: discuss at induction**
Aquaculture? Crosscuts marine and freshwater; not a LINK marine TF priority. MCS, WWFS have staff and active programmes. **Action: RAFTS discuss with these bodies**

Health/Wellbeing / Curriculum Excellence / travel school LINK had taken discussions on our interface with wellbeing issues as far as possible with SNH, Paths for All and others. We noted that the collection of data in relation to LINK priority issues could perhaps be coordinated through the SOA TF. **Action: SOA TF to discuss**

Landscape Ongoing TF exists – see report below.

Marine Ongoing TF focussed on Marine Bill and its implementation – report below.

Planning / NPF review/ SEA Active TF exists – report below.

Resource Use/ Consumption/Energy/Waste/Re-use Various members interested in different aspects. Andy encouraged members to consider what we can contribute to Government, keen to look at resource use and our global footprint, and to hear from LINK *per se* on waste issues. There are links to any work on economy. We would map aspiration under this combined heading and discuss further. **Action: Kate McColl to map (brief paras) members' action/aspirations under Resource Use heading**

Social links to include environment Discussed under 3 above.

SOA Active TF exists – see below.

Sustainability champions / pressing for Govt leadership We would pursue this via the Inquiry route and discuss again at the April meeting. **Action: An Inquiry candidate /Next meeting**

Urban sustainability We agreed to coordinate a conversation/meeting among interested members to establish value of any LINK work. Whilst there are other organisations and networks which are pursuing aspects of urban sustainability we noted the value of sorting out LINK's concerns/ positions, initially. **Action: Judy Wilkinson, Jonny Hughes**

WNE The LINK Bill Team is pursuing. There are cross-cutting issues involved and TFs were encouraged to keep an eye on possibilities.

GAPS

Andy flagged transport policy, a possible gap LINK should review esp if other coalitions are not addressing key concerns. The meeting noted that LINK cannot address everything. It was agreed that Andy should continue to consult with interested members and, if sufficient interest is shown, a meeting could be arranged to establish need and capacity for a particular agenda to be pursued under the LINK name. **Action: Andy consult and report at April meeting**

OTHER ISSUES TO NOTE

Historic Environment Amendment Bill ArchScot are working on this with BEFS with Andy Myles' advice. Entails 'duty of care' where previous LINK experience (eg marine) would be helpful. More broadly though, LINK support for the historic environment sector would be helpful. The meeting agreed that ideas should be brought to the Landscape TF to consider. **Action: Eila Macqueen advise LTF on further support needed**

Crofting Bill The meeting noted that NTS has now employed a Crofting Policy Officer and that they are interested in working with other organisations. **Action: interested members contact NTS**

5. KEY POINTS FROM ONGOING TASK FORCE WORK

Agriculture – Big Euro decisions ahead on future of farming subsidy from Eu parliament and Commission. TF are to meet the MEP responsible for the parliamentary report in early February. Scot Govt position set out in Pack report - not awash with solutions – to which TF responded. TF is also updating its CAP vision (pub 2008) and has called a meeting open to other TFs to prepare (relates to SLU). **Action: Jonny Hughes to ring EEB Ag Pol Officer to inform them of LINK work**

Biodiversity – CAP and Eu Budget Review relate. TF meets soon. Current focus on WNE Bill, esp. invasive non-native species (duties to control and presumption of non-release). TF also discussing LINK involvement in Scottish biodiversity process, what this delivers and how to galvanise action around the biodiversity duty. May decide to pull out. A subgroup is looking at peat issues (Clifton Bain). 2010 as international year of biodiversity was announced by the Minister in January.

Landscape – focussed on future of Scottish Landscape Charter – Scot Govt frustratingly undecided about signing. Other issues : tackling spread of / damage by bulldozed tracks (mainly via WNE Bill route); protection of wild land (possibly pressing for designation as

other routes have failed). Beaulieu-Denny Power line was not an LTF issue though that coalition duplicates with many LTF members. Meeting with SNH on renewables planned.

Marine – LINK very active around key issues, via a bill team. Thanks to WWF for current e-action. TF hopes to secure 3-year continuation funding from April 2010 from EFF, to match Tubney offer. About to circulate a brief for marine renewables work to consultants; complementary SWT work on marine renewables due to publish March. Resources for implementation of the Bill is being explored with special advisers (including importance of officials who understand the issues). MTF liaising with other non-members for support of our amendments.

Planning – OPTF work led to revised Scottish Planning Policy with improvements. TF is talking about how to approach the swathe of development plans to come out – may respond with generic set of key principles (drafted by MCoS and SWT). Wishes to meet with MTF (BEFS too potentially) on marine spatial planning. Would like to see judicial review of inclusion of Hunterston in NPF though potential cost is off-putting; raises whole issue of need for Scotland to bring in Protective Costs Orders. TF liaising with Planning Aid about training opportunities. TF wants to monitor its key aspirations of the planning system. Also has a remit to assess implementation of SEA and will discuss at next meeting. Overlap between Planning and SOA also needs discussion. Overlap with SLU TF should be covered by presence of John Mayhew and Jon Wordsworth on both.

SOA TF - Will publish in early February LINK's report. Plans to maintain overview of how SOAs deliver against our key headings; will discuss monitoring and reporting concerns with SDC Scotland, Audit Scotland, Improvement Service and others; plans to pull together a review of progress and publish critique during 2011 when LAs are likely to produce their next SOA, ahead of the local government elections in 2012.

SLU TF – reported under 4 above.

WNE – responded to the consultation on the Bill; have recently met with the Minister; plan to commission legal opinion on claims of some, that European human rights legislation bestows the right to shoot game; sharpening thinking on a biodiversity duty on public bodies.

6. AOB

6.1 Reporting on our stakeholder engagement The meeting noted that LINK would no longer compile the spreadsheet which graded these groups according to their usefulness; data was hard to secure from task forces and not used (as originally planned) with SG; it was assumed that TFs would cease engaging in forums which were particularly poor. LINK would, every 3 years in relation to development of corporate strategy, take soundings about task forces' experience on stakeholder groups.

6.2 Changes to reporting for delegates on cross-cutting groups The meeting noted that delegates on stakeholder groups that were cross-cutting and did not apply neatly to a task force area, would be asked to keep in touch with members in future via the Bulletin, and not with smaller 'constituencies of interest'. These were time-consuming to maintain.

6.3 Proposals for new category of affiliation to LINK The meeting noted that a proposal for an 'Organisational Supporter' category of affiliation (non-voting) was being considered by the Board; available to non-eligible organisations and companies which had an interest in the environment and in existing LINK services including monitoring, parliamentary receptions, etc. More details would be brought to the next meeting.

6.4 Co-optees Task Forces were advised that the Board's approval is required for the co-option of non-eligible organisations as members of task forces.

6.5 Discretionary funding for projects 2010/11 The Board had in principle approved a fund of £15k to be available from 1 April to support pieces of work proposed by LINK task forces and other groupings. Any early indications of such work would be welcomed by the Board's Funding Subgroup at its mid February meeting (contact: Hugh Green). The

application form was available on the website

<http://www.scotlink.org/files/internal/FinancialPolicies/LINKFinancePolicyDPFApplic.doc>

6.6 SNH role in relation to planning The meeting considered whether and what action LINK should take re impact of SNH's decision not to object in relation to planning issues (except in designated sites). Rather than to try to pursue this with SNH's Chair (LINK had raised concerns in early 2009 and had been promised SNH's justification, which staff would continue to pursue), the meeting agreed this was a governance issue which should be addressed at the political level and pursued via a Parliamentary Inquiry. **Actions: PTF and Andy Myles to draft proposal**

6.5 LINK and energy / transmission issues John Mayhew flagged the recent publicity over the Beaully-Denny decision, reporting that he regretted the apparent splits within the network and proposing that LINK find an opportunity to talk about how to avoid these happening in future. Scotland's climate and energy strategy was bound to provoke further debate (for example in relation to marine renewables development, highspeed rail links). LINK should always be prepared, and able to stress the consensus in common. The meeting thanked John for raising an important point and agreed LINK could have managed the B-D scenario better. Deborah invited the group to carry out an after-action review and to circulate findings more widely.

Actions: LINK to organise discussion to ensure members are prepared.

B-D group: carry out AAR

Members: Keep other members informed about changing positions / proposed positions in relation to new issues / cases.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next networking meeting is scheduled for Thursday 22 April 2010, from 13:30, in Perth.