



## Note of LINK Networking Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2011, Perth

Present: Helen McDade (JMT), Helen Todd (Ramblers), Jonathan Wordsworth (AS, LTF), Katrina Marsden (RSPB, ATF), Tony King (SLU TF, SWT), Deborah Long (Plantlife, BF, Chair), John Mayhew (APRS, LTF), Eddie Palmer (SB), LINK Staff: Jen Anderson, Andy Myles, Kate MacColl, Alice Walsh, Sarah Archer.

### 1. Apologies

Andy Fairbairn, Dan Barlow, Lloyd Austin, Roger Powell, Vicki Swales, Gordon Gray Stevens, Keith Irving, Eila MacQueen, Calum Duncan, Sarah Dolman, Helen Zealley, Craig MacAdam, Bob Dawson, Alison Connelly, Maggie Keegan, Dennis Mollison, Paul Kirkland, Jim Densham, Susan Manson, Gus Jones, Aedan Smith, Lisa Webb, Steven Gardner, Janice Grey, Jenny Mollison

### 2. Board Update

#### 2.1 External Relationships

Relationship with SNH – LINK is making a specific effort to improve relationships with SNH at all levels. Operational relationships continue to be good. There will be a series of meetings starting in September, plus regular board level meetings with Andrew Thin and Simon Pepper. LINK has already met once with Kenneth Fowler, Head of Communications at SNH and he will be attending LINK's next networking meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, to meet with members and taskforces to develop an understanding of how LINK operates, and explain SNH's new corporate structure. SNH's new corporate structure was circulated, with details of their new Programme Managers. Taskforce Convenors are asked to get in touch with relevant Programme managers to arrange introductory meetings.

**Action: TF Convenors contact SNH programme managers**

Relationship with SEPA – Annual high level meeting planned with David Sigsworth, Campbell Gemmell and senior staff. On agenda will be outcomes of Elections. They are looking for support for a new Environment Bill, a meeting to discuss in more detail will be held on 25 May – Andy Myles attending. Please contact Alice if there are strategic issues for the high level meeting.

**Action: TF Convenors and members**

Cairngorms National Park Authority – A board level meeting is planned for 31<sup>st</sup> May.

#### 2.2 Budget/Discretionary Funding

There is a possibility that there will be a gap in LINK's budget this year due to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation grant which may not be re-awarded for core work 2011-12. LINK is also in the last year of a three year award from Scottish Government, and whilst SNH has given indicative figures for the next two years, they can't make a firm commitment. The LINK Board is applying caution to any budget decisions and forecasts.

A modest fund of £5k has been allocated for 2011-12 with the potential to increase it if funding sources allow. .



### 2.3 Strategic Review

LINK's corporate strategy ends in 2012. The plan is to refresh the current strategy, with a review of internal bodies conducted internally, and a commissioned review of external views of LINK. A survey will be circulated to members during the summer, and all members are encouraged to respond.

**Action: LINK Staff and members**

### 2.4 AGM

LINK's AGM will take place on the 30<sup>th</sup> August. It will be linked to a one-day TEEB workshop for members with invited experts.

### 2.5 Invitation for Nominations to the LINK Board

A number of Board members are stepping down this year and members are invited to forward LINK their nominations to the Board, who will be voted on at the AGM. Notification will be sent to members in early summer.

**Action: LINK Members**

### 2.6 Congress 2011

Ideas put forward so far for this year's Congress theme are:

*Rescuing Sustainable Development*

*Rio plus 20*

*Resource Efficiency (EU)*

*Smart Cities/Towns/Settlements (Carbon consumption)*

*Renewables (examining the consequences of Scottish targets for emissions)*

*The Urban/Rural split versus Left/Right divide*

Final decision will be made post-election.

## 3. Recent work/Lessons Learned

### 3.1 Biodiversity TaskForce (now disbanded)

TF held workshop with LBAP officers last summer, which has resulted in good relationships with LBAP officers, plus the opportunity for LINK members to attend LBAP networking meetings.

### 3.2 WANE Bill (didn't operate as a TF)

Objective of the Bill group within LINK was to improve the contents of the Bill and to increase LINK standing with MSPs. Both objectives were achieved. LINK work resulted in improved vicarious liability for landowners, a wildlife plan, and a three year reporting cycle for the Biodiversity Process.



There wasn't a lot of uptake from LINK members, perhaps due to technical nature of the Bill. In fact forming a united front of LINK members might have been detrimental as it would offer only one bite of the cherry.

Lobbying issues need to be addressed with the RAE Convenor, as factually based lobbying is difficult to achieve due to capacity limitations. LINK found itself outgunned by landowning interests and civil servants at times. This is in contrast to LINK's work on the Marine Bill which was much better resourced. LINK added value but not as much as we might have done.

Lessons learned:

- "playing nicely" doesn't always work (e.g. working collectively limited our voice to a count of one rather than many)
- we shouldn't be bound by what is in bills when they are introduced
- Evidence matters (we would need more the next time)
- Bill came forward because we had a minority government so it was a rag-tag thrown together by civil servants.
- Non-native species is groundbreaking
- We need to be suggesting additions/amends from earliest consultation stage
- Important to raise issues at Stage 1 because things can't be included later on
- We should still push for amendments/additions even if we are being told no point
- Could have possibly been more co-ordination from Parliamentary staff

### 3.3 Single Outcome Agreements

Having put two years work into what government was offering through SOAs, through working with Cosla, getting key players in the room talking environment, the agreement is that the process needs more resources. The focus should be widened out to local governance in general, with the initial organisations we worked with still wanting to be involved. We will reassess what adds value after the election.

Possibility that we will approach Improvement Service and Cosla for secondment staff.

Engagement with the SOA process has demonstrated the effectiveness of the discretionary fund.

Rolling manifesto will keep influence going through local asks. Two thirds of local authorities took part in SOA seminar. The issue is now with Scottish Government, Cosla and Improvement Service.

### 3.4 Sustainable Land Use Strategy

Land Use Strategy arose out of the Climate Change Act (LINK lobbied for a requirement to be in it for a land use strategy for Scotland). LINK did everything we could to improve the strategy; setting out our stall in Living with the Land; regular meetings with civil servants; case studies; SLU Conference (which provoked RAE to call in strategy for examination).



All this activity turned a poor first draft into mediocre policy (success!)

Because civil servants focused on rural concerns, urban bodies weren't included. RSPB (Vicki Swales and Jim Densham) put in a huge amount of work. Parliamentary input was greatly appreciated and LINK discretionary funding was crucial. The new government needs to be lobbied to make the strategy more effective. Member groups must also be consulted about what we want out of the Action plan.

#### 4. Political Strategy

##### 4.1 Spring Strategy Report/Manifesto

Small organisations report that they find the LINK Manifesto very valuable for lobbying purposes. LINK's principle job of lobbying was to extend the environment throughout party manifestos. Ongoing, the manifesto is designed to give an indicator for ways forward in policy. Board has agreed to a refresh over the summer.

**Action: Parliamentary Officer, TFs and members**

##### 4.2 Governance Paper

This paper has been produced by Andy Myles, Parliamentary Officer. Its purpose is to examine if after three Scottish governments it is now time to see if there are significant barriers to sustainable development e.g. if the government is abusing the consultation process, courts ignoring Aarhus convention. LINK would very much appreciate comments from members/TFs regarding process

**Action: TF Convenors please highlight paper to their Taskforces**

#### 5. Operating Plan

Some questions regarding relevance of current KPIs, which were developed partly to meet SNH grant requirements. LINK KPIs will be reviewed in LINK's upcoming strategy review.

All the Taskforces signed off on the Operating Plan, with these additional comments/actions:

Agriculture TF: LINK Liaison fund will go towards review of CAP document

Biodiversity: No longer a TF. Wildlife Forum will be meeting SNH on 5<sup>th</sup> May

Climate Adaptation TF: Jim Densham will circulate GAP Analysis to TF convenors

**Action: Jim Densham**

Environmental Governance: Governance Paper will be discussed at rescheduled network meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Landscape TF: Capacity limited but will do their best



Marine:

- Working with Andy Myles on Advocacy planning
- When wind and tidal consultation start will keep landscape TF informed on LINK responses.
- ACME – ongoing discussion with other stakeholders re MPAs
- Drafting an SEA brief which will also be circulated to Landscape TF

**Action: MPAOs**

Planning TF: Expertise may be useful for Marine TF in marine environment

Sustainable Land Use: Job only partially done. Suggestion of commissioning an academic economist to examine Scottish Budget from an environmental point of view for lobbying purposes.

Sustainable Development/Economics: ask Dan Barlow for update after May launch of Carnegie Report.

## 6. AOB

### 6.1 Organisational Supporters

Currently KSB, Paths for All. LINK is pursuing a pilot list which may be a source of income, but will not in itself plug the funding gap. John Mayhew offered to help with RCAHMS.

**Action: Alice, John Mayhew**

### 6.2 Media and Advocacy Training

An Advocacy training day will take place during the summer recess. Ramblers are possibly interested for their new member of staff. JMT also might be interested.

**Action: Andy**

### 6.3 Presidential Candidate

Initial list has been shortened to an A-list of eight people. Jen will circulate new list to members.

**Action: Jen**

### 6.4 Carbon Accounting Review of LINK members

Results of the survey will be circulated by Hugh. An email work group is being set up as a pilot. Plus there will be a half day workshop for members who want to develop carbon management in their own organisations. The review will be repeated every two years.

**Action: Hugh, members**

### 6.5 Membership

Royal Zoological Society of Scotland have not paid their subscription for 2010-11 and have withdrawn from LINK.