



## **Note of discussion and action points of LINK Network meeting held 3 June 2011 at the Quaker Meeting House, Edinburgh**

Present: John Mayhew (APRS, LTF), Lisa Webb (RSPB FWTF), Sarah Dolman (WDCS, MTF), Deborah Long (Chair, P'life), Aedán Smith (RSPB, PTF), Andy Fairbairn (WTS), Roger Powell (SCRA), Maggie Keegan (SWT, PTF, LGTF – am), Jonny Hughes (SWT, pm), Katrina Marsden (RSPB, ATF), Julia Harrison (RSPB, PF), Jonathan Wordsworth (AS, LTF, ATF), Vicky Cairns (NTS – morning), Kathy Wormald (F'life – pm), Eilidh Spence (F'life – pm), Dan Barlow (WWFS), Calum Duncan (MCS, MTF), Staff: Jen Anderson, Sarah Archer, Andy Myles, Hugh Green, Alice Walsh.

Apologies: Lloyd Austin (RSPB), Tony King (SWT), Lindsay Roberts (LINK staff), Vicki Swales (RSPB), Angus Yarwood (WTS), Judy Wilkinson (SAGS), Jenny Mollison (SAGS), Jim Densham (RSPB), David Gibson (MCofS), Hebe Carus (MCofS), Lillian Kelly (Soil Assoc) Steve Jackson (Scot Badgers), Helen McDade (JMT), Beryl Leatherland (MCofS), Diarmid Hearn (NTS).

*Purpose - to share intelligence post-election and review network strategy in relation to that.*

### 1. Holyrood general election outcome analysis

#### 1.1 MSPs, Committees, Parties

Andy Myles (AM) had circulated a note to members 'Special Report on the political situation after the Holyrood election' as a basis for discussion. There were 40 new MSPs, some new faces. Julia Harrison had drawn together brief biogs and would make this available to all members. **AP Julia, LINK staff**

There had been good sign-ups to both the Wildlife Proclamation and the Marine Declaration. Both lists would be shared with members. **AP Craig MacAdam, Sarah Archer**

LINK has good relations with many MSPs now on new committees and must build good relations with new chairs (eg Gavin Brown at Economy Energy and Tourism Cttee). Indications are that relations between the parties will not be confrontational and that SNP will be courting civic society, trade unions etc in the run up to the independence referendum likely 2014-15. SNP will want to do well in the local elections in 2012.

Climate change move back to ERA cttee is a backward step. The National Performance Framework can hold government to account on climate – something to watch in budgets.

SNP back benchers on cttees will be important – likelier to change minds than opposition – eg to question the line the civil servants may be taking. Constitutional issues will become more important; similarly constituency issues and urban issues. LINK will continue to brief all parties equally and openly. The welcome letters from LINK to MSPs and new ministers had been sent. **AP: All - important to start meeting MSPs on Committees to raise awareness**

In terms of network resources the scope for influencing parties was lower with the opposition than with the SNP although we would continue to brief even-handedly. We should hold these parties to any commitments in their manifestos and work with them to assist them in the development of their policy.

#### 1.2 Likely forward 'programme' for Government

SNP does not have a big programme of legislation; there is scope for cttee bills and members' bills. **AP: All should read the SNP manifesto and assess what it means for TF areas and members' interests.**

There will be a speech in the autumn. It is likely to contain bills about: community empowerment; alcohol pricing; sectarianism. SEPA's environment bill is at a very early



stage, and will not be ready for autumn; though this is mainly a tidy-up bill for SEPA there is scope for the wider environment within it – **AP: opportunity for TFs to consider.** The Hydro Nation consultation (no analysis of responses available yet) on Scottish Water is also relevant and there may be some portal to integrate legislation reflecting the work of the SEARS process. Zero Waste legislation is also likely to go through a committee. SNP manifesto has commitment to bill on sustainable procurement - one to watch. LINK's ideas include a bill on environmental justice. LINK should also press Government to hypothecate the money from the Aggregates levy to the environment. It was important to look at the manifesto in relation to what may damage SD objectives and gaps. Also much that is sketchy in the manifesto will need filling out. WWFS, RSPB, Marine TF will be analysing the manifesto and will share with members. **AP: WWFS, RSPB, staff.**

### 1.3 Constitutional debate – LINK position

The extent to which there will be pressure to get drawn into the constitutional debate was discussed, LINK's letter of support - on environmental grounds- of devolution for marine nature conservation to 200 nm being an example of where careful negotiations within member bodies were required. Similar issues may arise in relation to energy, agriculture and fisheries, while in a wholly devolved area like planning, government may look to invoke the national interest more in terms of decision making. It would be useful to know where members stand and important to avoid divisions appearing in the sector. In the 90's there were early supporters of devolution within the network which gave these NGOs an initial advantage with the first administration. With no member present declaring itself pro or con, it was agreed that there was careful advocacy to be done on a case by case basis and that there may be some opportunity to influence the independence debate in terms of the environment. **AP: Members consider constitutional debate internally and keep LINK informed**

An MTF briefing in preparation on the Crown Estate issue would be made available to members. **AP: marine staff.** MTF had decided otherwise not to get drawn into pre-election debate on nature conservation powers wrt Scotland Bill, as LINK had no detailed proposals.

#### Action Summary (flipchart)

- Cross match SNP manifesto commitments against TF objectives. Include a gap analysis, and identify 'damaging' commitments
- Build relationships with MSPs, especially new ones, to influence committees aka Bill Wilson model
- Assess Alex Salmond's vision for Scotland for opportunities

## 2. The Government programme

*What is in it, what is not?*

Sustainable Economic Growth is sustainable development. What priority do we give to challenging that? We need to connect to the prevalence of jobs. We can legitimately engage in the debate on what kind of Scotland we want to live in. Need to find ways to get our ideas across.

National Performance Framework is coming up for a 'refresh'. Need to focus on what we can change in it, realistically, and that may be promoting one indicator each for SD and biodiversity.

The budget – focussing cuts appropriately. Good if damaging plans are unaffordable though budget may cut good things to pay for these.

Our 3 biggest priorities are:

- Delivery of Climate Act
- Delivery of Marine Acts

wrt Carnegie report and 1<sup>st</sup> Minister's vision statement: valuing overall wellbeing above money

*What is missing from the Government programme?*

Reclaiming Sustainable development – key areas to develop are climate and marine act delivery, forestry policy, ecological networks. Using the Carnegie/SDC report (*More than GDP: Measuring what matters*) and identifying appropriate measures.

NPF relates. If there were to be an SEA of the NPF (there wasn't the first time around) it would have to go out to consultation.

?Any scope to get committees to go back to earlier environment legislation, eg Access, Land Reform.

Scottish Water is using its sustainable management fund for training staff up to SEPA standards – misuse of funds that should be outed.

Members in LTF keen that the National Parks do their jobs properly – is in the manifesto. CNPA meeting (31 May) indicates they would like a Chatham House Rules discussion. NPs are keen to have demonstration landscape scale projects and would welcome members involvement.

Also clear from recent discussions that SNH, CNPA are looking for LINK to provide some kind of leadership on sustainable development.

It was agreed that our 30 August focus on the 'Beyond GDP' agenda, include the Carnegie report, the Nat Performance Framework (key asks of a refresh – key indicators) and the TEEB agenda; aiming to identify what LINK can do realistically to push Carnegie / TEEB approaches up Scotland's agenda. **APs - Dan drafting briefing on what LINK want of NPF with support of RSPB policy officers. Wildlife Forum meeting 8 June – opportunity to get a clear biodiversity ask**

Transport/cycling/walking – none of the relevant orgs present though agreed to be a key area. Some LINK members work with Transform Scotland to share intelligence on asks. Relates best to PTF currently where some angles can be covered. **AP – LINK staff to discuss further with members not present**

*From the flip chart:*

1. Scrutiny of current legislation
2. Habitat/ecological network delivery within
  - SEA
  - Sustainable Flood Risk Management and River Basin Mgt plans.
  - Marine Act
  - NC Act and biodiversity Duty
  - Climate Act
  - Land Reform ] SLU Strategy
  - Access ]
  - National Parks – are they deteriorating? New NPs? ]
3. Scrutiny of local government eg delivery of duties. Local development Plans.
4. Delivery of EU Landscape Convention.

### 3. Governance Matters (AM's paper circulated)

Paper is framed to review 4 fields of governance of which civic society plays a major role. Key questions:

How do we tackle this huge agenda having identified barriers to SD (a) – ourselves, (b) and/or with others in the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector.

It was agreed that in view of resources for this – ie., AM backed up by members – that the meeting ruthlessly prioritise LINK's key priority areas, and that we punt the revised

document after the summer to wider Scotland in anticipation that other sectors will have similar issues and would support a collective push for some of the higher level aspirations, or there will emerge areas for other appropriate bodies to take forward. Feedback to AM from members and from some externals has been good, we noted.

Priorities as agreed in terms of effect and achievability (\* denoting top priority):

Legislative:	Balancing interests (start a discussion)
	General duties
	Scrutiny*
	Committee structure
	Secondary legislation
Executive:	Silo thinking – (NPF related issue)
	Complex structures – (NPF related issue)
	Independent advice* - SDC commissioner?
	Accessibility and consultations
Judicial:	Protected cost orders*
Civil:	A "civic forum"*

#### 4. Local Council Elections 2012

There are plans to refresh LINK's manifesto over the summer with the LCE in mind. This will be overseen by the Local Governance (formerly SOA) TF and it is important for all TFs to feed in – TFs' key asks of local government are needed. Aim is for 1<sup>st</sup> draft to be ready for end August. Andy will send it out as a word doc to all for return by 1 August. Parties have not done much thinking on manifestos. LGTF will cover in terms of our SOAs work. All will be brought together in the one document. **APs – Andy, TFs**

TFs are asked to let others know if they plan to campaign around any issues for these elections. The political context has changed in that these are now separate and parties are out of practice in producing separate manifestos – an opportunity for LINK. **AP TFs to keep LINK centrally informed of thinking**

SCCS action planned? Feeling that it is difficult to mobilise people at local level. No members are planning anything definite at this stage.

*A suggestion* - One hustings in each Council area divided among member bodies? **AP Members to consider**

#### 5. Other Business.

30 August workshop – discussed above. Scottish person in SAC could be good. The goal of the workshop is to agree what LINK can do to promote alternatives to GDP. More information will follow soon. **AP Members encouraged to put the date in diaries**

Congress Theme and Planning: A theme around Sustainable Development has been widely supported, probably linking to Rio + 20. Jonny Hughes reported that SSDF will be running a series of events and suggests a session at Congress. JH is representing LINK angle on a steering group looking at a Scottish charter for Rio + 20. The new director of IUCN would be happy to come to Congress to capture LINK views on IUCN plans for the future. The international element appealed to the meeting and the hook of Rio + 20 to reclaim SD reflected the suggestions of the April meeting. We should invite John Swinney or S Stevenson. Deborah, Jonny and Aedán volunteered to be on the steering group. It was agreed that there should be integration between the 30 August and 17 November events. Julia noted that the RSPB Scottish Committee has an economist member who may be able to do some work.

Discretionary Project Fund. TFs were reminded that there is £5k in the fund for this year. The fund was useful to help take forward network priorities. **AP TFs**

Advocacy Training Day. This is organised for 17 August (9 to 5) in Edinburgh. Andy will circulate more information. **AP: AM, Members**

CNPA meeting: This was held on 31 May at request of the Park. Outcomes are an offer of a workshop for LINK members to contribute to its new NP plan and revision of its local plan – keen for greater environmental representations. The consultation runs from September to November. As mentioned previously, the CNPA had agreed to consider a Chatham House Rules discussion around SD/sustainable economic growth. CNPA were keen to hear to hear ideas for projects the Park can pilot to demonstrate SD. Jonny Hughes would forward details of a CNPA landscape scale approach discussion to others.

**AP Jonny Hughes**

Another issue discussed was the value of ensuring more join up of LINK member bodies engaged with CNPA and it was agreed that LINK should facilitate a meeting of all interests. **AP Staff**

### Next steps for LINK

#### Broad strategy

1. New legislation, Scrutiny, Getting to know MSPs – TFs' task
2. NPF indicators – biodiversity and sustainability
3. Economics/SD Seminar 30 August (with Congress 17 November taking that another step forward)

#### Beyond GDP workshop (30 Augs) elements

Carnegie report  
NPF refresh – key asks  
TEEB thinking applied  
Rio + 20 charter

Congress November takes forward the SD theme linked to Rio + 20