

Draft notes of LINK Economics Group meeting held 18.10.16, Thorn House Edinburgh

1. Attendance, apologies

1.1 Present - Matthew Crighton FoES (C), Bruce Wilson SWT (VC), Lloyd Austin (RSPB), Jen Anderson & Daphne Vlastari (LINK); Ric Lander FoES (for final item)

1.2 Apologies – Phoebe Cochrane (annual leave)

2. Notes of the meeting on 19 July 2016; matters arising inc:

2.1 Notes of last meeting - Agreed as accurate record.

2.2 Briefing on economy - Went to all MSPs for information; no response was expected.

2.3 Just Transition - MC had attended C Beamish (Lab Env Spokesperson) roundtable which sought Labour position on JT. Make-up of gathering incomplete though wide-ranging. Comms planned with Lab economic spokespeople. MC had offered our/FOES support. Meantime, FoES with STUC and NEF will work on JT.

Actions: MC circulate paper to Group, shareable with other interested members/Groups

2.4 Conference - Invites circulated early Oct, bookings coming, no Cab Secs or Ministers accepting. Latest programme discussed with strategic changes agreed as: gap between initial strategic presentations and panel discussion needs plugged (ie Allan Grant, Fraser Allander if necessary for very modest fee of £100); combine morning panel sessions in one and reduce panellists to 5/6 max, to include SNP Govt rep and/or a Green. Other panellists could be part of later group sessions. Stronger LINK 'presence' in programme not vital as this is an 'opening up' with other interests. Bruce can help in developing briefings. Half hour teabreak advised.

Actions: MC/PC revise programme; PC invite Andrew Wilson to conference and Charles Dundas to relevant workshop; PC/DV continue to manage promotion carefully, using known organisations & appropriate networks

2.5 NPF Roundtable and Draft Briefing – Roundtable minutes and consultation due this autumn after which Govt will finalise before reconvening Roundtable in early 2017 – all noted. Our 1st draft briefing (potentially to be agreed with other allies) welcomed, with agreement to develop by incorporating case studies for the bullet points (to show why current use does not work/ benefits of using differently) and to include reference to FM's signing-up to SDGs. Meeting later agreed advocacy around this briefing is our top priority for coming months using the consultation phase to promote our briefing and encourage convergence of views about future form and use of the NPF. Post consultation outcomes we will reflect on how much more to invest in this area.

Actions: PC revise briefing; PC& DV & Parli colleagues develop advocacy plan

2.6 Natural Capital statement – Agreed this should be an internal statement at this stage, aiming to inform LINK members about the extent of consensus, maximising that level of agreement, encouraging understanding of where and why members don't agree and prompting members to confer in future when planning to be public about the issues. Noted the final version can be published on website, should not be promoted more actively, is unlikely to prompt same degree of media interest as our climate and energy positioning tends to do.

Action: Bruce and Ric draft and circulate by Christmas

3. Reports

3.1 Minutes of PDG meeting on 28 September - Minutes noted including updates on subsequent developments (to be flagged as such). PDG intent to extend project endpoint to March supported, incl. possibility of hosting Phoebe at Dolphin House for that stretch, lower cost recovery for all

parties, and the agreement reached by MC, JA and PC on a 2-day week from 1 Jan. Bruce confirmed he could act as a sounding board for Phoebe if needed, during Matthew's 2-month leave in Jan and Feb.

Actions: JA confirm arrangements in writing with PC & with FoES

3.2 Project Report – Phoebe's useful report on the period Jul to Oct noted; no points raised.

3.3 Lessons from Flourishing Scotland project – PDG proposal for a final report on outcomes and lessons from the project supported; best provided online as contextual background with links to all project outputs and with key recommendations for policy-makers going forward. A separate Y3 report for funder FP Foundation would be required at the end of the project, also.

Actions: PC drafting both between now and Feb 17

4. Economics Group Forward Plan

4.1 Updates from LINK members:

FoES – Just transition is increasingly important; also investment/financial work by Ric; dialogue with Common Weal and other interests around these areas.

SWT – Supporting Irish Forum on Nat Cap and ScotGovt's discussion with Ireland on Scotland's economic strategy natural capital (thinking reflected in SG's recent Programme for Government); hoping consultation on NPF useful and will reflect on outcomes. Promoting NC Protocol for business through meetings with various businesses, and IoD. Networking with Robert Costanza at ESCOM event, Macaulay Lecture, etc.

RSPB's work on economic issues focusses through their engagement via the Economics Group, the SFNC and other partnership initiatives; RSPB lacks resource to do more specifically and value the collective work through LINK. Recognise the influence of policy community approach to economics on their policy work around agriculture, marine, etc, and wish to influence this. Their economists team at UK level advises on areas such as renewables, inputting to SFNC, though this resource too is limited.

WWFS – We agreed to seek briefing on focus of their work via Robin Parker or Sam Gardner.

Action: MC to get briefing from WWFS on their investment work

4.2 Scottish Government bills and consultations which are opportunities for future effort:

NPF consultation 2016 & outcomes

SNP manifesto commitment to align NPF with the SD Goals

Brexit debate & the new SNP Growth Commission (influencing debate)

Climate Change Plan 2017 & RPP3 (in drafting)

Energy strategy (currently influenced by SCCS including FoES, RSPB, WWFS)

Holyrood Economy Committees

Circular Economy Bill (2-3 years)

Good Food Nation Bill (2-3 years)

Inshore Fisheries Bill ((1-2 years)

Planning White Paper (planned)

Land Rights and Responsibilities statement (being drafted now as part of Land Reform)

Visioning for land use / rural economy (inform LINK Land thinking)

Budget scrutiny on an ongoing basis

Actions: BW circulate LINK land vision to Economics group: PC forward relevant outputs to Andrew Wilson who chairs new Growth Commission: BW attending 27/10 Agri meeting; DV to keep eye on SNP manifesto intent to align NPF indicators and SDGs;

4.3 Priorities for the Group going forward

(a) Immediate priorities:

Revise NPF briefing, develop advocacy plan and promote

Develop content for Polden-Puckham application via Nov meeting of a few players
Explore other identified funders' criteria and extent of their likely interest in our priorities
Follow up the November conference outcomes
Draft project reports for website and FP

(b) Priority areas from early 2017 onward:

We will give thought to a new project built round the priorities below, to take to relevant funders:

NPF - Reflect on impact our NPF advocacy has made; if positive impact seen, we will work to get thinking embedded; alternatively, consider how to encourage Scotland to retain important aspects of the thinking; it has declined in importance for more recent Ministers; it will not be our top priority though we will want to keep an eye on where thinking is going in relation.

Circular economy – the Scottish debate promotes industry as opposed to reducing resource use indicating limited grasp of what concept can do for Scotland. Real commitment to the concept could be demonstrated if SG simply used existing powers. Levers to demonstrate that the real scope of the concept? Encourage statements to quote back in budget scrutiny, infrastructure debate, procurement decisions where unsustainable use is being promoted? Whilst June economy debate made no reference there seems to be some political commitment behind CE so it is worth our understanding what we would want of a Bill, by arranging a workshop in preparation for our inputting to early thinking and consultation around this legislation.

New economics – Following up the November conference, to reflect how we can contribute to / take forward a new approach to economics for Scotland, including promoting 'beyond GDP' thinking, getting Carnegie Beyond Growth understood by big players, among other. Very speculative context in which Brexit will be prompting more conventional views, though that in itself presents opportunity to make a case (with others) for the need for change/new thinking.

Scottish investment bank & projects ready to benefit in context of climate change – Recent signs of SNP interest in thinking promoted previously by FoES, Common Weal and NEF given the 'more public investment' message being heard in relation to Brexit. Ministerial interest is likely and this thinking could be worth developing in coming years. So far the focus has been on legal and practical aspects of establishing an SIB rather than on its spend, where WWFS work relates. Worth addressing lack of serious investment projects for Scotland relating to the RPP3, with worked-up proposals which make them obvious targets for available investment. We would need to develop own capacity to enter debate around investment and funding. RPP aspects would be covered by SCCS.

Action: in the short term, press for Growth Commission to focus on type of growth which supports climate action, sustainability and the RPP

4.4 Funding bids

Agreed:

- We are facing strong possibility of a gap in funded activity between the current project and work on a new project
- Need to clarify by research and discussion with identified funders as to whether they would support any of the areas of focus at 4.3 above and in what ways, and whether they are interested in ideas/thinking which 'goes beyond the box': our 3-year outcomes have not been as visible as a funder might wish
- Should develop specific, tangible deliverables relating to these areas, and matching relevant funders' criteria. Respond to funders' need for specific outputs such as events, reports, proposals (eg. proposals for Scottish investment bonds, rather than to challenge ScotGovt in more diffuse ways; or influencing CE debate to impact society as a whole). Prioritise high-profile outputs to show additionality / things we could not do on normal resource levels. Maintain sense of opportunities/hooks for a general ankle-biting/challenging of Government.
- Short term we can link to the Climate Bill, RPP3 and environment - Make case for time-limited resource to tie environmental imperatives to economic drivers to promote sustainable low-carbon economy. Clarify how this would complement activities of SCCS. Focus on promotion of key asks and drawing in of investment companies via spring party

conferences. Noted: this complement Ric's work; Climate Change Bill is a good locus. A potential Polden-Puckham bid.

Actions: PC set up Nov meeting to develop content/asks to promote, involve WWFS. PC, MC and AW develop bid on that basis. Economics Group meets December to sign off bid and take stock. PC & AW research other funders in relation to priorities.

5. AOB

5.1 Budget scrutiny - Agreed that we would ideally be active but other commitments account for available capacity on the Group. Can input strategic messages via SCVO commentary.

Action: DV input key messages to SCVO

Note: LINK Governance Group subsequently agreed to coordinate with LINK Groups to provide evidence in response to a call focussed specifically on how funding levels for various relevant Agencies affects delivery of their remits.

6. Dates of future meetings

November meeting of a few around policy content/asks (as basis for PP bid)

November meeting for PC, MC and AW to develop bid

December meeting of the Group

Action: PC to Doodle dates