

Resisting the squeeze

Joint Links Conference, 22-23 October, 2014

Conference Report & Annexes



Plenary: Environmental working in devolved British Isles context

Welcome

Jen Anderson, SEL CO, welcomed everyone to the conference, the fifth in a series of biennial events which had started in 2006, and outlined the programme for the following two days, including plenary discussions, workshops, social networking, evening quiz, and finally site visits.

Helen Todd, Acting Chair for SEL, opened the plenary. Helen observed that the Links had been increasingly focussed on their country administrations for much of their work in the last ten years and more. Recognising this, and aware that their concerns also crossed boundaries in the UK and beyond, the Links had held these conferences to keep tabs on each other's experiences, approaches, successes and on the different developing administrations' arrangements for environmental governance. Prior to 2006, the Links secretariats and often chairs had met at least once a year, sometimes attached to another event such as meetings with the JNCC; and that had allowed for a similar kind of exchange of ideas. Throughout the last 27 years, the Links had also networked at secretariat level. And on issues such as biodiversity, marine and agriculture there had been cross-border liaison, and sometimes joint effort to promote issues which are UK wide to administrations in each country. Helen hoped delegates would find the Glasgow discussions constructive

Presentations

Presentations by the four Links then looked at: structures of the Links and the way each operates; at environmental networking in the increasingly devolved UK context; the 4 Links' successes; making maximum impact on all administrations incl. English government; at being effective together in Europe; and at being ready for the challenges ahead.

Wildlife & Countryside Link - See Elaine King's presentation at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/gincanz0ts1706t/WCL%20joint%20Links%20Oct14.ppt?dl=0>

Scottish Environment LINK - See Andy Myles' presentation at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ubero60wyne4iay/Outline%20of%20how%20SEL%20works.docx?dl=0>

Northern Ireland Environment Link - See Craig McGuicken's presentation at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/gy9zhlnyf25dupw/NIEL%20presentation%20at%20JL.pptx?dl=0>

Wales Environment Link - See Sue Evans' presentation at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/jo1t7o8hjey2rjx/Presentation%20handout%202014%20influencing%20public%20policy%20in%20Wales.doc?dl=0>

Topics then selected for discussion were:

1. Europe – it always comes up in discussion, but we never nail it why?
2. Sharing resources, such as in-house training.
3. Branding – do we need a joint Links brand? (We haven't over 8 years of marine)
4. Unpack the ingredients of a successful joint campaign – Marine
5. Be clear about differences between work we do in terms of whether this is government- or public-facing
6. Mechanics of making our voices heard – are collective responses counted as a single response, diluting impact? The official government approach to this is worth some investigation
7. How taskforces work and what makes some work well and others not
8. How to build capacity in Link(s)
9. Mechanics of deciding what joint working areas might be.
10. How to be more proactive and less bounded by consultations / being co-opted.
11. Governance and the need to understand the structure of government agencies.

Many of these were discussed in this open session and the following summarises the thinking.

Europe

- WCL - Noted that EEB membership has been considered too expensive.
- SEL – Member of EEB for some years. Advocacy staff attend EEB on SEL's behalf.
- NIEL don't have direct involvement in Brussels though are interested in improving links.
- Example from NI where less resource intensive options exist through influencing the advisory bodies, 'Committee of Regions'.
- Europe not a devolved area, so logical to have a joint Links European 'campaign'.
- EEB have working groups with which the Links could engage if they were members. Travel costs are covered by EEB.
- European Habitats Forum is another way to engage with Brussels. The Brussels based NGOs tend to engage through this forum.
- Could use 'Refit process' (review of Birds and Habitats Directives beginning winter 2014) as a pilot of working together. Noted that it requires significant capacity to deal with the European process.
- SEL also has a potential role to develop member's capacity to enable them to engage with Europe. Do the other Links?
- Noted that large NGOs, such as RSPB, WWFI, FoEI and others, engage with Brussels and this has been hugely productive.
- Could agree a shared Links position, outward facing, that can be used to mobilise the public.

Collaborative experiences: Marine

- Funding position very fortuitous. Funders approached WCL in 2006 with desire to support marine work across the UK; WCL then liaised with the other Links; the funders have since provided consistent funding enabling continuity of dedicated Links marine staff in all four countries of the UK.
- There were policy opportunities and the Links already had active marine working groups and taskforces in each country, so were well placed to respond.

- Also, the leaders of the marine taskforces in each county have had high levels of skills and experience.
- The federal approach of the project has been one of its strengths, with each country having distinct areas of work and different arrangements, two pieces of legislation (Westminster Marine and Coastal Access Act *and* Marine Scotland Act) but maintaining coordination and information sharing between countries. It has not required joint branding and so far has been effective in all four countries.
- We have also managed to set the agenda in the marine campaign, rather than being buffeted by agendas of others.
- Conversations with funding community vital to find out what their next area of priority might be.

Agriculture/food

- Agricultural taskforces have produced joint papers and had the will to work together, but without dedicated staff; to some extent have run out of capacity, also very jaded by direction of sector.
- Agreement that it is time to shift focus, with less time spent on CAP and more on creating a vision beyond CAP.
- People are interested in food but, generally, not in agriculture. Food involves consumption as well as production. Own the food security agenda : there can be no food security without environmental security.
- Noted that a switch of focus to more of a food agenda could benefit the environment as well offer scope for joint Links working, with the different countries having distinct areas of progress which could be shared and built on. And focussing more than currently on people and what they care about.
- WCL planning to replicate Blueprint for Water model with a lens on food.

Effective working

- Need to continue to respond to consultations, but be more efficient so as to preserve capacity for proactive upstream initiative. Need to include advocacy with consultations.
- Suggestion: consultation responses should be drafted by Members rather than Links staff? Role for volunteers amongst our working groups and task forces.
- Noted SEL does 6-monthly political strategy reports, used to identify priorities. This could be done at a joint Links level.
- We need to consider the balance between being 'responsible' and not very effective versus being more of an irritant in hard-skinned political contexts. Also need to understand sophisticated nature of government strategies eg around taking on board consultation responses.
- Also need to understand Government processes better and be aware of 'pinch points'. Pre-consultation process is very important. Secondment to Government agencies would be very fruitful.
- General appetite to move towards a more agenda setting approach

Workshops – See Annexe 1 for full reports-back per workshop

Workshops considered various topics on which summary reports are given below, with full reports-back on each, available at Annexe 1 of this conference report.

Round 1 of the Workshops

Economic Growth

Felt need to reconcile economic and environment 'development'.
Need to substitute to the word 'growth' for 'development'
For the terminology, there are different levels of understanding and should not be discarded.
Need to engage with the terminology in order to get wider engagement
LINK could bring coherence to the narrative and play a good role in marshalling the narrative.

Marine

What works well within LINK is that this project is funded.
What needs to be done is to formalise the decision making process

Land use and Planning

It is important and useful to discuss as Joint Links
Admiration and envy of how far Scotland has gotten in this area
Common principles and weakness identified within the Joint Links
Joint Taskforce meetings to bring together land use forum and join up discussions, this will be followed up with UK-wide session.

Biodiversity

More gains for biodiversity if sector goes back to what we do well i.e. public outreach and delivering the story.
Not making best use of our communication – we have a great product, we're just not selling it

Round 2 of the Workshops

Economic Growth

Fluent about challenge
Collective knowledge, insight and ideas
Example of positive impact and change
Key change is better political traction and local levels
Role of communications and outreach from local to national levels
Joint Links contribution on environmental bit – championing human wellbeing

Marine

Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Map out what's going on already
Prioritize key descriptors
Pre-empt consultation – Joint Links publication of key concerns and hold them to account for the next 5 years

Land use and Planning

Ownership interests verse common interest

Privileges ab/used

Land Stewardship

Community Engagement

Overlap planning

Seize opportunities

Regulation and development

Deregulation and removing of red tape

Advocacy Issues: Shape message, use right language, right targets, engage with business

Not get bogged down in details

Biodiversity

Stripped down and no money

Growing shift to ecosystem services than biodiversity

Prepare links and communication with Joint Links

Right type of conservation funded – Joint Links funded?

Understanding needs and not depending on government lists.

Conference closing remarks and acknowledgements

Messages emerging from the conference as a whole:

- Links may be able to help prioritise the collective work of members, more
- Sustaining pieces of work over years is important to ensure the goal is achieved; this may need to be balanced with aspiration to identify and address 'next challenge'
- Balancing effective consultation response, with proactive upstream agenda-setting, matters; be smarter, realistic about governments' interpretation of consultation response, and strategic about how resource is dedicated; on key issues engage early (pre-consultation)
- Identify where there exists a common narrative for the four Links – a hymnsheet from which each Link can then sing in relation to its own political administration and own geographical and cultural reality
- Links need to take more tangible steps towards being a strong voice within the EU – share membership of EEB? Secretariats consider funding opportunities for possible EU officer for the Joint Links?
- Be mindful of all the reasons why marine project has worked so well: has been consistently funded; sustained; concerns were shared across 4 countries; effort was timely; genuinely federal approach; consistent joint communications and cross-partner coordination to ensure understanding across the UK of the issues and of where there is a UK position to be built.
- More jointly coordinated engagement would be useful on non-devolved issues. Develop on the successes of this approach in other areas of joint work (eg EU Directives 'Refit'; Food agenda could be critical in engaging public/supporters)
- And to trial joint work (on the marine basis), collaborate on EC Refit of the Nature Directives – starting with meeting in London on 11 November
- Review that effort in spring 2015, at Chairs & CEOs level and consider joint Links strategy for the future there, also reviewing name ('Joint Links'), logo and branding
- Develop links with the ENGO network in Republic of Ireland

Thanks were recorded to:

- Delegates from the four Links in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales for travelling to the conference and taking part
- All who gave presentations, facilitated workshop and provided reports back
- WWF UK for their grant support towards the Joint Links liaison process
- The Beardmore Hotel and Staff
- Helen Todd, Acting Chair SEL, for her very good chairing of the proceedings
- SEL's staff team for planning and hosting, and Nick Underdown for very enjoyable Quiz

Annexe 1

Workshops reports-back, as provided by Reporters

WORKSHOPS ON THEME - CAN WE RECONCILE ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT?

Workshop Group 1

Facilitator Bruce Wilson; Reporter Sheila Wren

1. Overview

1.1 The view of the group was that environmental enhancement was possible, but alongside sustainable economic *development* rather than growth.

2. Introduction

2.1 To stimulate discussion and identify some of the challenges group members in teams of 2 were asked to say what their understanding was of various economic and environmental 'buzzwords' (see table overleaf). There were different levels of understanding about what the terms meant but general agreement that all were a subset of 'sustainable development' (*'meeting today's needs without impacting on tomorrow'*) and useful tools if applied appropriately.

3. Discussion

3.1 The group discussed what successful sustainable development would look like and what the strategic role of the Link organisations might be in achieving it.

3.2 The following themes emerged:

3.2.1 'Success' would mean there was no further need for Link organisations because their campaign issues would have been mainstreamed. However, whilst this might be achievable within the UK, global challenges to the environment were likely to remain.

3.2.2 Within the Link membership some organisations were 'issue specific' whereas others took a more global posture. This presented organisational challenges that needed to be managed.

3.2.3 Link activity to support sustainable development could operate on 2 broad fronts/levels: (1) encouraging individual corporates to 'do good things' and (2) advocating a fundamentally different economic approach.

3.2.4 Within an overall 'sustainable development' narrative, environmental evidence and argument needed to be marshalled alongside legal and fiscal drivers.

3.2.5 Individual Link members have different interests and points of emphasis but all could contribute to a holistic approach to advocacy. Members, or groups of members might lead on specific issues, or at certain levels. Link's role could be in marshalling/co-ordinating them - bringing coherence to the 'green blob'.

3.2.6 Politicians were not the only targets for advocacy. Ideally business, wider society and the public should be mobilised to press for change.

3.2.7 The role of the Links was to be visionary and to challenge and educate.

4. Key Conclusion

4.1 Strong support for a joint Links vision and narrative on sustainable development.

Table accompanying Economics Workshop 1

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT <i>'Meeting today's needs without impacting on tomorrow'</i>	
Term	Understanding of the meaning/issue
De-coupling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderately understood. - Achieving a separation between growth and economic impact. - Ambition needs to be much greater than is currently the case. Discussion on question of whether we should reject 'growth' altogether led to agreement that 'development' was a better term.
Natural capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well understood. - A human construct that is a means of placing a value on nature. - Not everyone likes it because not everything nature provides can be valued in £ terms; however it should not be dismissed as it is <u>a</u> way of explaining nature to business and keeping it on the agenda of policy makers.
Corporate social responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well understood. - Opinion divided about whether this was just 'greenwash', an attempt to show a corporation has green credentials etc, or whether it was a means of influencing/changing corporate attitudes, and for NGOs to benefit financially.
Green tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well understood. - Taxes on pollution, waste, carbon etc. - Can be tokenistic but over time cld encourage behaviour change.
Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderately well understood. - Landowners paid not to undertake activities that might undermine ecosystem services, or to manage land in eco-friendly ways. - Good in theory but commercial companies tend to be risk averse. Main example so far are via environmental agencies.
Circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moderately well understood. - An economy in which consumption is controlled and there is no waste
Financialisation, externality, ecosystem services, biodiversity offsetting, green public procurement	Not discussed due to tie constraints

Workshop Group 2

Facilitator Ben McCarthy; Reporter Kathy Wormald

Discussion points

Must make wider indicators - currently only GDP and that is not a true indicator examples that even an environmental disaster can result in an increase in GDP.

Must engage with people - people are still very clear about the reasons for the economic crisis and even during the crisis GDP continues to rise.

Traction is based in the mobilisation of people.

Must define what is good economic growth?

Most actions are short-term and these can be positive but it is crucial that there are actions that will have a long-term impact. The short-term will mobilise people.

A good campaign to join could be the reduction of VAT on repairs to existing buildings - this fits into the place making agenda as well.

A communications strategy is needed to motivate people so that they will demand change.

The National Health is a good model of unsustainability.

The challenge is translating support into influencing the political landscape.

More local threats are more palatable. They are immediately relevant to everyone.

How to translate this local action to national and ultimately international.

Green Quantitative Easing.

People do care about wildlife and natural environment even though they may not care about sustainability, or may not want to take part in the sustainability debate. On the other hand decision makers talk about sustainability but do not consider the environment.

Green New Deal.

The best message is the human well-being message - what is good for people? Not necessarily money. Human wellbeing will resonate with both rural and urban agenda.

Build an alliance with others discussing the same matters. LINKS part is the environmental element with others involved in the discussion bringing the other elements.

WORKSHOPS ON THEME - THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Workshop Group 1

Facilitator Sarah Dolman; Reporter Clare Reed

Aims of Workshop:

1. Understand history of Joint Links marine & delivery so far
2. Provide country updates (including future work)
3. Discussion: What we are doing well and what are the ways in which we can improve Joint Links marine working?

1. History of Joint Links marine work (John Sadler)

Funding: In run up to MaCCA legislation, funding was secured from Esmee Fairbairn for marine officer posts. Funding put forward within the UK Administrations to provide additional support for country level advocacy. This provided one Link post in England, 2-3 posts in NI, Scotland and Wales, and several regional Wildlife Trust marine officer positions.

MPAs: The 2013 marine Joint Links workshop (Folly Farm) focussed on the need to undertake a study of ECN to identify what was needed to complete the MPA network. £23,780 of MPA FF money was secured to commission this piece of work to a consultant. The ECN project now requires an infographic to support engagement/advocacy work on this. The remaining MPA FF money (approximately £3000) can be used to fund this work.

MSFD: Joint Links have worked most closely on the EU MSFD in run up to Defra consultations (e.g. targets and indicators, monitoring programmes). Joint Links have also had co-ordinated meetings with Defra to discuss concerns.

Joint Links secretariat: in January 2014, following a successful bid from the John Ellerman Foundation, a proportion of John Sadler's time is now used to facilitate Joint Links work. The process in which Joint Link working is agreed is usually at an annual meeting between the Link Chairs. John's time is then used to help co-ordinate and facilitate this work.

Coming up: The Joint Links marine meeting is in London in November 2014 this year with a focus on MSFD and how the Joint Links campaign for the achievement of GES. There is potential to jointly prepare a position statement on 4-5 measures that the Links jointly want UK Governments to implement, in advance of their likely unambitious proposals for the Programme of Measures Consultation (Jan-March 2015).

2. Country Updates (including future work)

Please see Annexe 3 to this conference report for country updates on marine work.

3. Discussion: What we are doing well and what are the ways in which we can improve Joint Link working?

Successes of Joint Links marine working together:

- Acquiring funding for a Joint Links marine Secretariat means greater capacity for John to facilitate and coordinate joint work identified by Chairs
- Joint Link responses to MSFD consultations provides 'one voice' for the eNGO sector in demonstrating what Links feel is needed (e.g. monitoring, measures) to achieve GES in UK waters

- The ECN report has filled an important knowledge gap. Albeit there are caveats to this piece of work, it is still a useful tool to highlight our collective view on achieving completion of the network in the UK
- Funding – working Jointly on a campaign or on a piece of research allows us to more easily tap into funding streams for project delivery
- Knowledge sharing – getting updates from others on policy progress in the different UK Administrations, and using the experiences of others (e.g. in the marine planning process) to understand potential barriers to progress

Ways in which we can improve Joint Link marine working:

- The process for decision-making of Joint Links work needs reinvigorating
- Communication between the Link Chairs could be more frequent (e.g. quarterly)
- Chairs should identify a deputy who has decision-making powers to vote in their absence
- Maintain a yearly face to face meeting for all Link marine working group members
- Ensure there is a formal process to providing feedback from meetings
- Actively review the Joint Link e-mail list to ensure all members are receiving relevant information and not having to rely on forwarding

Going forward participants identified the need to work on a document that sets out the above. John Sadler is to provide a summary of this meeting to the Joint Links annual marine meeting in London on 5th November.

Workshop Group 2

Facilitator John Sadler; Reporter Esther Brooker

John Sadler (Wildlife and Countryside LINK) began session 2 with a short summary of the 1st session, for the benefit of delegates who had attended a different workshop.

Clare Reed (Wales Environment LINK) gave an overview of a WEL commissioned project on how marine planning can help to deliver GES of UK waters by 2020 under MSFD (see MSP-GES concept proposal at Annexe 3).

The Welsh Government is committed to a National Marine Plan by 2015. However, they only have 3 dedicated staff members available nationally, which means there are capacity pressures. The Welsh NMP is still at an evidence gathering stage to inform Sustainability Appraisal. WEL seek to get messages on priority to the Welsh Government early, but highlighting and seeking clarification on issues such as how development of policies will support delivery of MSFD. Through this project, WEL hope to produce tangible recommendations for the Welsh Government on how policies can help support descriptor targets. These recommendations may also feed into the Joint Links MSFD Programmes of Measures consultation response in early 2015.

Discussion on the potential for this to become a Joint Links project was invited. Knowledge sharing and expertise of the other Links is desired by WEL – though this has not been formally approved for Joint Links work – and it is relevant at a UK scale.

Planning leads for RSPB and WSWT are already involved, so it's already almost a Joint Links project. The proposal has gone to tender and a consultancy firm has been identified. The project report/output will be:

1. A literature review
2. A review of UK MSFD descriptors and targets – which can be advanced through marine planning [matrix approach?]
3. Recommendations on how marine planning can support a network of effective MPAs
4. A review of existing and emerging plans around the UK
5. Provide [innovative and creative] recommendations to feed these into future advocacy work

Timescale – intended by the end of the year – first draft by 3rd week of November. Will be chance for the Links to feed back or provide comments in the joint process.

Group discussion – main points

- Is this project just fitting in with government and ‘doing someone else’s job for them’? Would it be done otherwise? Suggestion that given Welsh Government capacity restrictions, probably not.
- How do WEL want to capture other Links’ feedback? Seeking to draw on experiences of others with National Marine Plans (e.g. how well is ecosystem approach use? How robustness is the SA? How did it consider MSFD?)
- What could some of the other outputs of this be? – Shared campaign approach? This is important to get buy-in from Joint Links time and experience.
- Planning at/across the boundaries on a UK scale – these recommendations could be quite relevant to that.
- Are we in too much of a policy bubble? How do we communicate planning policies/MSFD descriptors to the public? Can we ‘burst the bubble’?
- How much is understood about the Celtic Seas Partnership? This project is similar to a case-study concept that would be relevant to CSP. Worth looking at where the gaps are in CSP to identify where work is needed at a Joint Links level.
- Comment that a potential Joint Links project (as per agenda for Joint Links meeting on 5th) only covering certain descriptors, how will that contribute to overall GES? Other Links members already do a large amount of project work on some descriptors (e.g. MCS on marine litter).
- Need to make sure all colleagues have a good overview across the NGO MSFD projects – is there a need to add more projects or just about making what we are already doing work better? Are we making the progress we think we need?
- Are the descriptors the best way to go? Feeling is that standardised data collection is a big gap. Noise – UK only has a responsibility to analyse noise levels, not the actual impacts of UWN – can we find ways to address this? Don’t necessarily need to think within the framework all the time – need to think outside the box sometimes.
- Can we go through descriptors and account for what is going on already for some of them and use that to identify the gaps?
- Do we need to stick our necks out and define GES and work back from that? Should we look at descriptors, identify our biggest concerns and see what we think is working.
- Seas at Risk report (circulated by John Sadler) gives EU level recommendations. Can we produce something that supports this document, fills the gaps and makes UK level recommendations?
- What is the public expression of what we’re trying to do in policy terms? Media output? Messaging behind government’s progress on the MSFD. Can’t judge whether failure is

likely until actual 2020, but can paint the picture/tell the story that the government are heading for failure if they don't change something.

What are our Joint Links recommendations/areas of discussion for 5th November (Joint Links Meeting)?

- Overview of what is already going on [for MSFD] and what is working/not working? [Organogram?]
- Do we want to cover all descriptors or just some? We have to aspirational but realistic, as government is not going to be able to do everything anyway (budget cuts etc).
- Bigger question – can we campaign for budgets to be changed (more for MSFD)? Can we strengthen government's outlook on the descriptors in a European context.
- Potential outputs:
 - Seas at Risk – find out more/get a summary
 - Organogram
 - Pre-emptive letter with what we want before consultation
 - Consultation response

WORKSHOPS ON THEME – LAND USE STRATEGIES FOR PEOPLE, LAND, SPECIES & LANDSCAPE, AND PLANNING FOR PEOPLE & THE ENVIRONMENT

Workshop Group 1

Facilitator: Charles Dundas, Reporter: Raol Matamoros

1. Key challenges

a. Countries are at different stages in their country policies. On Land Use, Scotland already has a Land Use Strategy (LUS) and is developing a Second LUS to be launched in 2015, Northern Ireland like the idea of one but have not developed one yet, and the current English political administration don't seem to like the idea of any sort of strategic planning.

b. On general Planning policy Scotland is now onto the Third of its National Planning Frameworks which identify key national developments, and includes both the Central Scotland Green Network and discussion of a National Ecological Network. In Wales they have just launched a Planning Bill to introduce a national development framework. This might also be an opportunity to share SEL's experiences and what they have learned through its operation.

c. One theme seems to be the existence of a much more "helpful" political will in Scotland to improve the national planning system.

d. Each Link need to be more engaged with Government prior to the launch of consultations in order to influence these before they are introduced.

e. Most Links lack funding and capacity to have a joined strategy and coordinate actions and share experiences – regular working group Chairs and Link secretariat meetings will help with process in the same way that the regular Link Chairs meetings aim to.

f. A legal framework is useful but this need both an action plan for delivery and some sort of sanctions if that delivery fails. The point was made that the Scottish Government have enshrined their climate change targets in law, yet have missed those targets for four years in a row, and yet no sanction has been placed upon them. Equally, the Scottish Land Use Strategy lays out some key principles, but does little more in terms of practical or strategic decision making.

g. Is it best to form a Land Use Strategy from the top down? It was suggested that Northern Ireland's wide and varied land ownership pattern would not accept this, but also a wholly bottom up technique whereby all stakeholders are given a blank sheet and asked "what do you want a LUS to look like" does not resolve incompatible conflicts.

h. We need to put aside the issues that we disagree and concentrate on the communalities, as sometimes it is difficult to reach consensus on certain topics (i.e. fracking/energy)

2. Opportunities

a. It might be helpful to have a united strategic model to influence Land Use with a set of overarching principles – similar to those in the first Scottish LUS - and more detailed campaign plans for each country.

- b. The strategic plan might include a Link's Vision of what we would like to see in Land Use planning.
- c. With a strategic framework planned, the Links might be able to obtain further funding from members as they might be able to see the value of a coordinated effort and how Link goals are aligned with their strategy.
- d. The ongoing debate about land ownership in Scotland offers another opportunity to influence land use discussions.

3. Good outcome

- a. As mentioned above a coordinated plan of action to tackle LUP within Link with a long term vision and a task force to carry out the work by a joint Link coordinator with sustainable funding for a period of time (i.e. 3 years)
- b. SEL are hosting an internal cross-task force meeting on Land Use in December to bring together agriculture and forestry etc... and ensure that SEL has a united vision for how Scotland's land can best be strategically managed. Other Links would be welcome to observe how that meeting operates.

Workshop Group 2

Facilitator Andy Myles, Reporter Beryl Leatherland

1. Key Challenges

Scotland has both a Land Use Strategy [LUS] and a recent revision of planning policy [SPP]. The LUS background was described together with SEL's involvement. It is law in the Climate Change Act and sits alongside the SPP. However, our documents are initial steps and although they contain good ambitions they have to be delivered. For example the LUS should be used to inform the agricultural subsidy system and other matters. Some problems are associated with the traditional culture around and patterns of land use and management in Scotland. As a result of the Referendum and the current deliberations about devolved powers and constitutional matters, SEL has contributed to the Smith Commission.

Northern Ireland: There is no LUS as yet but a TF is working on it. This will bring in community planning, involving councillors. The system will be revised to have 11 councils instead of the existing larger number [>20]. The new councils will be mostly rural other than Belfast and Londonderry. Belfast has a [controversial] green map which may go to judicial review. There is a contrast with Scotland where community planning is involved only with service provision such as National Health Boards, and involvement of NGOs is not welcome. In Scotland there is the Community Empowerment Act, which includes local food growing for instance, but is very top down and local authorities have little power.

England: There is no devolved decision making, the main themes currently involve concerns with removing red tape, streamlining and speeding up the planning process. The Small Business Bill is seeking a target for removing red tape. There are tensions between localism and government intervention. There is no spatial planning. Irreplaceable landscapes could be built on and are not adequately protected.

All acknowledged

- the difficulties of getting desirable features into policy
- our concerns with reducing regulation to facilitate development. An example of this is the review of the European Commission Nature Directives, and a feeling that this will be used as a vehicle to reduce regulation rather than one for enhancement.

In order to make things better environmentally and argue our case positively, thought has to be given to the language we use. A case in point is the persistent use of the term SEG and its definition, as used by the agencies SEPA and SNH in contravention of their prime remits and there is a basis for pursuing this via the courts which is supported by the environmental lawyers who have been consulted.

In Scotland there is a whole range of issues around shooting estates: deer matters including population size and impacts of deer on the environment, primacy of economics including land ownership issues, advantages are not fed into the local economy in a helpful way, and the public perceptions of these processes.

2. Advocacy

To be effective, our ideas and evidence need to be communicated in suitable language. The public interest needs to be defined and the common good decided. This is one outcome of the land reform bill process in Scotland in that these matters are now uppermost in thinking. There is a window to achieve something good in Scotland now and this should be seized and used to address the responsibilities of land ownership and all that entails including using seen privileges non-abusively.

In England it is still very much the case that an Englishman's home is his castle, while in Scotland there is a strong interest in land use and stewardship, maybe reinforced by the access legislation.

In Northern Ireland the Crown Estate is influential, and there is a Coastal Communities Fund.

There is a strong feeling that the Crown estate should be used for common good.

All tended to feel that there are problems of silo-isation of governments [not to mention Links too] and this is a mentality that needs to be addressed in order to tackle the big picture.

Addressing constitutional issues helps to focus the mind and is fundamental to the debate.

A written constitution has advantages not least in helping inform public expectations.

There is an important issue around education and keeping the public informed and engaged.

Effective /different/novel ways of doing this should be identified eg using car accident data to enlighten the public on deer numbers; "fuzzy lines" and "shaggy landscapes" in the Lake District. It is important to shape our messages appropriately and to use suitable language, and to choose the right targets for advocacy. In the latter case, it could be that in some circumstances approaching the NFU and not the agriculture minister might be the best tactic. Links members need to engage with businesses and other bodies of interest in order to establish rapport and commitment, rather than allowing them to merely pay lip service to engaging with advocacy. In the islands and remote communities there are issues not merely around land ownership but also around land use; encouraging repopulation in order to introduce people back into landscapes, crofters' rights, community buy outs and so on.

The erosion of Natural Capital has to be guarded against in the pursuit of economic growth. It would be useful in this context to consider the Atlas of Productivity.

3. Cross Border Issues

We are all part of the EU [at the moment] and there are issues there; in addition NI has its own border issues with the Republic. In all this we recognise that there are differences but also common concerns. An example could be overgrazing, but the principles of how problems are dealt with could be varied to suit circumstances, one size doesn't fit all. It is important to encourage different land use while also addressing the natural heritage and biodiversity. We mustn't get bogged down in detail but we need to flesh out the principles and fundamentals. Consideration of strategies such as food production and the sustainable cities initiative might enable us to reach new audiences, as might working with supermarkets on food supply.

4. Good Outcomes

Successful outcomes could be that the public become more engaged in debating the issues and more knowledgeable about them. It was suggested that another good outcome would be if the whole food debate became more effective including around quantity and quality issues.

WORKSHOPS ON THEME - OPPORTUNITIES FOR UK BIODIVERSITY GAINS

Workshop Group 1

Facilitator Paul Walton; Reporter Paul de Zylva

The group discussed:

- The dominance of the 'ecosystems services' agenda and as a target outcome in itself
- This potentially removes / obscures the direct delivery of nature conservation and action for the natural environment
- The 'moral pleading' needed for the natural environment irrespective of new trends such as natural capital valuation and ecosystem services

The group identified possible tasks to

- See whether there is a job to do to tease out whether the 'ecosystem services' agenda is delivering on biodiversity directly or if it is just a 'designer service'
- If there is an opportunity to better convey how nature conservation action delivers in ways people can see directly and in relatively short time frames whereas 'ecosystem services' are harder to see (until they fail such as with flooding related to poor soil, land or river management) but they can be delivered *without* biodiversity gain e.g. technical SUDS fixes

The group also thought there is huge scope to

- Follow through on the 'State of Nature' report by a) Pinpointing the drivers of decline and b) Responding to those drivers with a better articulation of what actually works and delivers for nature (i.e. we have great examples of effective, rapid and relatively low cost solutions) and c) then helping the State of Nature work to intersect with the U NEA and ecosystems analysis.

The group identified that the crunch issue is

- That the public gives a damn if and when it can see / get tangible things in tangible timeframes

The group felt that this means

- Finding better ways to mainstream nature, not just ecosystems, with more and better examples of the tangible delivery of nature for peoples' local/wider (natural) environment
- Helping people see nature more as relevant to them and their area for example by having 'species champions', 'credible celebs', and more examples of nature working for people in various ways

Workshop Group 2

Facilitator Frances Winder; Reporter Craig Macadam

Spent some time considering the conclusions of the fellow workshop before pulling out key messages as follows.

Biodiversity is slipping down the agenda in countries, for example Northern Ireland strategy still not finalised despite NI biodiversity facing increasing challenges from intensification of chicken and dairy production. Loss of lead partners and action plans seen as a big problem as it has resulted in a lack of focus for the whole process.

It is often very difficult to gain funding. Funding that is available often has little link to biodiversity. Funding needs to be better focused - role for Joint LINKS here to influence UK funders to target their grants to the real biodiversity needs rather than relying on government lists.

Do ecosystem services provide the hook to obtain funding? Recent research at University of East Anglia into relationship between gains in ecosystem services and gains/losses in biodiversity might be useful. It would be useful to have shared communications across the LINKS on ecosystem services and biodiversity.

Could we learn from business and their response to climate change, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions?

Annexe 2

Country updates on marine project work

WEL MARINE WORKING GROUP

- In 2014 we increased existing capacity in MWG by securing 3 more years of Esmee Fairburn money to fund 2 posts. New additions to the team: Clare Reed - Marine Policy Officer (hosted by MCS), Scott Fryer – Campaigns and Advocacy Officer (hosted by Wildlife Trust Wales). An additional member, Whale and Dolphin Conservation has also recently joined the Marine Working Group.
- **Campaigns and Advocacy** – 4 new Ministers for Natural Resources in 9 months, has made WEL marine advocacy tricky! MWG's additional capacity has meant we are increasing engagement with Assembly Members (AMs), particularly those on the Environment & Sustainability Committee. MWG is holding a Cross-Party Group for Biodiversity lunch meeting at the end of November to discuss marine policy in Wales.
- **Potential new Acts** - the Wales Planning Bill, Environment Bill and Future Generations Bill all hold implications for the sustainable management of marine resources in Wales so we are engaging with the wider WEL network to ensure that our concerns and recommendations are voiced.
- **MPAs** – Welsh Government (WG) recently designated 3 SPA extensions to support seabirds breeding at Welsh colonies. Further work is still needed to understand what is needed to complete an ECN of MPAs in Wales – still no word on MCZs! JNCC ECN work may not provide answers. Management of existing sites: Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have LIFE funding to develop N2K Programme for Wales, this includes prioritizing restoration of features to favourable condition – MWG will be discussing this work with NRW in November.
- **Marine Planning** – WG committed to National Marine Plan by the end of 2015. MWG currently responding to the draft Strategic Scoping Exercise (evidence base), Visions and Objectives, and will be responding to the draft National Plan and SA next year. MWG have undertaken proactive work looking at how the Ecosystem Approach can be applied to MSP to guide discussions with WG and NRW – meeting with both shortly to discuss our recommendations.
- **MSFD** – Undertaking proactive work to look at how MSP can contribute to the delivery of GES. This work has been contracted out to a consultancy and due to be completed by January 2015 ahead of the Defra PoMs consultation. Also undertaking work to look at what additional measures WG can implement to support the achievement of GES in Welsh waters.
- **Fisheries** – Continue to advocate sustainable use of fisheries resources with WG and Welsh fishing sector through responding to consultations and attending Inshore Fisheries Group meetings. Aspiration in Wales to double aquaculture output so need to ensure this is done sustainably. Continue to monitor implications for implementation of CFP reform in Wales closely.

NORTHERN IRELAND MARINE TASK FORCE:

- **Marine Protection:** The next step in the MCZ process here in NI (as of Oct 14) is in finalizing the boundaries from the proposed Areas of Search. All designations are to be in place by Dec 2016. 9 Areas of Search are being considered – 6 proposals from DoE and 3 third party proposals. The NIMTF has proposed 3 areas based on the ECN study - 2 of which overlap with DoE proposals and an additional area in SE Down for mud habitat. DoE, DARD and the fishing industry are working to identify an area of mud habitat within the Irish Sea for designation. Boundaries were to be announced in Aug 2014 but are now expected by the end of November. A full stakeholder workshop is due March 2015. There is now likely to be a 2nd Tranche. Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough are disputed waters and these proposals are likely to be delayed due to the collaboration required with RoI. Management Plans will now not be published until after designation in 2016. The Strangford Lough management plan which was to be finalized in late 2014, has now been sidelined and will be published with the others post designation, (Note: Strangford was designated as N.I.'s first MCZ with the Marine Act in Sept 2013).
- **MSP:** The NI Marine Plan Sustainability Appraisal is expected to be released for public consultation early 2015. There are 3 new tidal facilities proposed for Northern Ireland in the next 5 years: Fair Head (200 turbines), Torr Head (200 turbines) and Strangford Narrows (removal of SeaGen 1 and replacement with 20 new sub-surface turbines).
- **Fisheries:** DARD and DoE are currently proposing to amend the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 and the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967 to 'modernise fisheries enforcement powers and aquaculture licensing'. These amendments will bring NI Fisheries Policy in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act along with inland fisheries aspects under WFD and EU Services Directive. The proposals are currently out for public consultation (responses due by 10th Nov) but this is only for the principles of the bill. A draft bill will not be publicly consulted on before being presented to the Assembly. The NIMTF (and the ARD Committee) have raised concerns about this. The process, by the admission of DARD, is being rushed to avoid infraction.

SEL MARINE TASK FORCE:

Scottish MPA advocacy/campaigning:

30 MPAs recently designated (17 inshore, 13 offshore)

- imminent consultation on fisheries management for 16 inshore MPAs (some nature conservation MPAs, some SACs). This is crucial stage in 'business-end' of the MPA project – planned campaign work to push for most progressive management possible (Nov-Jan).
- future development of management for offshore sites via RACs (anticipated Spring 2015? wip)

- future campaigning anticipated to secure progression of 4 outstanding 'Search Locations' into MPAs to improve ecological coherence of Scottish unit of network (Spring 2015)

Marine planning:

- Continued high-level engagement with development of National Marine Plan – draft due to be laid before ScotParl in December. Key issues: oil and gas policy, aquaculture growth objectives, failure to embed ecosystem-led planning. Member-led advocacy planned, to push amendments to those priority areas, although Plan increasingly fixed until next review cycle (5 years)
- Proactive engagement with development of regional marine planning partnerships
- MTF planning/hosting a small stakeholder event(workshop) for planners/govt/not-the-usual stakeholders in February to outline positive agenda for how marine planning can deliver enhancement of Scotland's marine environment

Sectoral engagement:

- Continuing to engage with inshore fisheries, marine renewables, aquaculture. Major developments for offshore wind progressing. For sectoral renewables strategy (particularly offshore wind), individual members (WDC, RSPB, WWF) leading on engagement.

Project work:

- Deepened engagement with academic community via coordinated input into the MASTS' Making the Most of Masters project
- Planned collaboration with key players in the marine tourism industry to promote MPAs as part of tourism strategy (wip – promising progress, but subject to continued buy-in, funding, capacity)
- Marine component of Scottish Environment Week at Scottish Parliament.

Current and future consultations:

- Fisheries Management options for Inshore MPAs
- Scottish King Scallop fishery
- Scottish Marine Tourism Strategy

Other recent consultations <http://www.scotlink.org/workareas/marine/#tabs-2>

Anticipated input into future joint links work:

- ECN project (infographic)
- MSFD work (tbc)

Wildlife and Countryside Link work:

- **MPA Designations:** We are expecting a public consultation on a second tranche of MCZs early in the New Year. We are expecting 37 sites will be consulted on. In August, WCL took the Minister George Eustice on an MCZ site visit to the Isles of Scilly. We have also arranged meetings with Marine officials from Defra, Natural England and JNCC to discuss the designation and management of MPAs.
- **Marine Charter Campaign:** WCL have organised a Parliamentary Reception on 19 November to highlight the cross-party support for the swift designation of a representative and well managed ecologically coherent network of MPAs in UK seas by 2016. More than 120 MPs and Peers have now signed Link's Charter and the full list can be viewed here: <http://www.wcl.org.uk/marinecharter.asp>

- **ECN:** WCL coordinated a Joint Links steering group which commissioned an assessment of UK ecological coherence earlier this year. The report has now been published and a pdf can be downloaded here: http://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/ECN_MPA_report_for_Joint_Links.pdf The Joint Links are now considering producing a series of infographics to highlight some of the key findings of the report.
- **MSFD:** WCL coordinated a Joint Links response to the consultation on MSFD Monitoring Programmes earlier this year. We have organised a Joint Links meeting in London in November to discuss the upcoming Programmes of Measures consultation and discuss the possibility of prioritising Joint Links work on a number of key MSFD indicators.
- **Marine Planning:** WCL continues to get involved in the regional Marine planning process in England through representation on the Marine management Organisations' Stakeholder Focus Group and Sustainability Appraisal Advisory Group.

Annexe 3

MSP-GES Concept Note

Referred to in the report-back on the 2nd marine workshop earlier in this conference report

Project Title:

'How Marine Planning can help to deliver Good Environmental Status (GES) of the UK's marine waters by 2020 under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive'

Project Aim:

To assess the extent to which Marine Planning can be used as an effective tool within the UK's Programme of Measures to support delivery of GES of UK waters by 2020.

Project Background:

The EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) has been developed with the ultimate aim of maintaining biodiversity through conserving marine ecosystems and seeking to address the collective pressures of human activities that have an impact on the marine environment. The Directive requires Member States to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of Europe's Seas by 2020 at the latest.

Under the MSFD, Member States must adopt an ecosystem-based approach to the management of human activities, ensuring the sustainable use of marine goods and services. The Descriptors, targets and indicators under the Directive effectively provide a framework for implementing this ecosystem-based approach, as they address both the "state" of the marine environment and the "pressures" upon it. The Directive highlights in particular the need for the establishment of spatial protection measures (in particular Marine Protected Areas) to achieve GES.

As a requirement of the UK Marine Acts, the UK and its Devolved Administrations are currently developing National and Regional Marine Plans within their jurisdictional waters to guide the future management and development of their marine areas. The recently adopted EU Maritime Spatial Planning Directive requires the UK to apply an ecosystem-based approach in planning the use of marine space (Article 5), as defined in the MSFD.

Marine Plans, if developed using an ecosystem-based approach, can progress targets towards GES by supporting conservation measures (such as MPAs) and by addressing wider human pressures. This includes supporting the effective management of MPAs, safeguarding areas known to be ecologically sensitive but not protected, and by managing and reducing human pressures. In doing so, Marine Plan policies should guide licensing decisions to ensure that marine and coastal activities are developed and managed sustainably, addressing and minimizing cumulative impacts on the natural environment at a strategic plan level.

Need for this Project:

We are currently entering a critical time for marine management in the UK marine area; the UK and its Devolved Administrations are developing Marine Plans to inform future development of their marine waters, and collectively the UK is developing a Programme of Measures, to be operational by 2016, that will be used to deliver Good Environmental Status of UK waters by 2020 at the latest.

With both Marine Plans and MSFD measures under development, there is recognition that Marine Planning will play an important role in supporting the delivery of Good Environmental Status, and it is highly likely that Marine Planning will be identified as a measure in the UK Governments' forthcoming consultation on measures in early 2015.

It is unclear, however, how Marine Plans can proactively support the delivery of GES at a strategic level, including contributing to the effectiveness of the MPA network, given the way in which plan policies have been developed to date. So far, Marine Plan development in the UK has prioritized the growth of maritime sectors. By comparison, while many of the environmental goals of England's first Marine Plans (the East Inshore & Offshore region) were grand in their aspirations, there was very little prescription within the policies as to how best these goals could be achieved and little evidence that environmental considerations were used to inform sectoral policies. In many cases, these environmental considerations have been deferred altogether to project-level assessments.

This project seeks to understand how Marine Planning can proactively contribute towards achieving targets for MSFD Descriptors and support effective management of the UK Marine Protected Area network. With reference to existing and developing plans, the project also seeks to look at ways in which Marine Plans in the UK might be strengthened to further support delivery of GES and provide tangible recommendations for planning authorities and decision-makers.

Timescale for this Project:

Ideally, this project would be completed by the end of 2014 to inform the advocacy work of LINK members when providing advice to Government and Statutory Agencies, ahead of the Defra Consultation on the UK Programme of Measures in early 2015.

Annexe 4

Delegates to the Joint Links Glasgow Conference, 2014

Tim Ambrose	Cairngorms Campaign/North East Mountain Trust	SEL
Jen Anderson	Chief Officer	SEL
Victoria Banks Price	Woodland Trust	WCL
Kenneth Bodles	Ulster Wildlife Trust	NIEL
Esther Brooker	Marine Policy Officer	SEL
Patrick Casement	Chair	NIEL
Phoebe Cochrane	Sustainable Economics Policy Officer	SEL
Matthew Crighton	Friends of the Earth Scotland	SEL
Rea Cris	Advocacy Officer	SEL
Paul de Zylva	Friends of the Earth	WCL
Sarah Dolman	Whale Dolphin Conservation	SEL
Calum Duncan	Marine Conservation Society	SEL
Charles Dundas	Woodland Trust Scotland	SEL
Sonja Eisfeld-Pierantonio	Whale Dolphin Conservation	WCL
Maria Ellis	Information and Office Coordinator	WCL
Sue Evans	Director	WEL
Ross Finnie	President	SEL
Sarah Gregerson	Client Earth	WCL
Austin Heron	Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens	NIEL
Simon Jones	Scottish Wildlife Trust	SEL
Stephen Jones	Climate NI	NIEL
Sean Kelly	Policy Officer	NIEL
Sandra Kilpatrick	Finance and Office Manager	NIEL
Elaine King	Director	WCL
Alex Kinninmonth	Scottish Wildlife Trust	SEL
Jeff Knott	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	SEL
Beryl Leatherland	Scottish Wild Land Group	SEL
Ben McCarthy	Plantlife	WCL
Craig McGuicken	Chief Executive	NIEL
Morwenna Mckenzie	Policy & Campaigns Coordinator	WCL
Craig Macadam	Buglife	SEL
Raul Matamoros	Policy & Campaigns Coordinator	WCL
Andy Myles	Advocacy Manager	SEL
Clare Reed	Marine Conservation Society	WEL
Pete Ritchie	Nourish Scotland	SEL
John Sadler	Marine Policy and Campaigns Coordinator	WCL
Sam Tedcastle	WWF Scotland	SEL
Helen Todd	Chair (represents Ramblers Scotland)	SEL
Nick Underdown	Marine Policy & Engagement Officer	SEL
Alice Walsh	Development Officer	SEL
Paul Walton	RSPB Scotland	SEL
Karen Whitfield	Policy Coordinator	WEL
Pauline Whittley	Carrickfergus Community Cultivators	NIEL
Bruce Wilson	Scottish Wildlife Trust	SEL
Frances Winder	Woodland Trust	WCL
Kathy Wormald	Froglife	SEL
Sheila Wren	John Muir Trust	SEL
Anne Youngman	Bat Conservation Trust	SEL
Jonathan Wordsworth	Archaeology Scotland	SEL