



Minutes of LINK Board Meeting, 20 August 2015, Falkland Centre for Stewardship

PRESENT

Trustees - Helen Todd (Chair), Simon Jones (Vice Chair), Tim Ambrose (Treasurer), Charles Dundas, Sam Gardner, Beryl Leatherland, Paul Walton, Ian Findlay, Craig Macadam

Staff – Jen Anderson, Alice Walsh, Andy Myles, Nick Underdown, Esther Brooker, Phoebe Cochrane, Karen Paterson, Lisa Webb

In attendance – Graeme Reekie, consultant (until lunchtime)

1 APOLOGIES

Received from Mike Robinson and Mandy Orr (Trustees), Ross Finnie (President)

2 STRATEGIC REVIEW

The meeting heard a report from consultant Graeme Reekie (participating for this item only) on the member survey part of the ongoing strategic review process. There had been a strong response representing a good spread of LINK's internal stakeholders (members, TF Convenors, Trustees, Fellows and Staff) and demonstrating a high level of engaged-ness. LINK's role as a collective forum, taking action and as a conduit to decision makers was clearly valued. The work of staff and Board in supporting this was much appreciated. **The Board' consideration of key themes emerging are reported at Appendix 1 where the network's discussion of these on 27 August is also reported.**

3 MINUTES OF THE APRIL MEETING

The draft minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4 MATTERS ARISING & REPORTS-BACK

4.2.1 Staffing review

Jen reported on discussions with staff and Board, opportunities taken via core staff recruitment (2 in the spring, 1 ahead) to address a number of the issues which had prompted this review. She planned to complete and report on the review by September, when recruitment for the Advocacy Officer (this would be a full-time post) would also go live.

4.2.2 Narrative

The Board revisited whether and how LINK could develop an overarching narrative about the key role which the environment plays in people's lives and the economy; as attempts had demonstrated, this was by no means straightforward and any narrative produced would need constant revisiting,. In view of that morning's discussion about the importance of targeting the 'voice of environment more, it was agreed to await feedback from the external survey Graeme

Reekie was to carry out and to explore the thinking further in discussion our President 'designate', too. **Action: review October and via President contact**

4.2.3 Strategic Liaison

The circulated paper reported on liaison with SG (Minister, officials), SNH and SEPT. It was agreed LINK to continue to schedule the annual meetings with Chair and CEO of SEPA, noting that the next meeting would be with new incumbents at SEPA in both of these roles and agreeing various items for the agenda and the value of liaising with RAFTS. **Action: Alice**

The meeting felt LINK lacked capacity to prioritise other liaison noting that various TFs were engaging with the policy community and relationship-building would be part of the discussion with the President 'designate'. **Action: Discuss post October Board and with President 'designate'**

LINK staff had met SLE policy staff earlier and advised that a closer relationship with SLE's leaders was unlikely just now given their hostility to LINK's positions on various issues. Meantime, NFUS had set up a farmed environment forum, which included LINK, and though not consistently using the forum to take soundings across the community, it was a step in direction of better dialogue.

Communication with the Links continued, with roughly quarterly Directors' telecalls and a further discussion planned for Chairs and Directors around an MOU for joint working.

4.2.4 President Contact Group

Through email discussion the Board had considered the Search group's recommendations, following interviews, and had agreed to offer the position to Joyce McMillan. Joyce wished a further discussion before finally confirming though was willing in principle to take the role on from November. Given her busy diary, the expectation was that she would not engage as much as previous incumbents in LINK internal discussion, and a contact group would plan strategic use of her time in relation to main aims, meeting regularly to brief her. Helen and Sam offered to be part of this new group and the meeting nominated Lloyd Austin. CO and Advocacy Officer would be involved too. **Action: Jen to arrange meeting with Joyce**

4.2.5 LINK 2016 AGM

Honorary Fellowship - The meeting discussed the President Search group's proposal to broaden criteria for Hon Fellowship to include individuals who have relevant interests and experience with whom LINK could usefully work. This proposal fitted LINK's current constitutional remit also noting it would not relegate Fellows meeting the original criteria so much as open the category up for use for identified purposes with people who will be known anyway to the network. Whilst a widening would expand the number of Fellows the size of the grouping was not considered to be a challenge, esp. for a network organisation. The meeting agreed to take the recommendation to the AGM and with it the proposal to invite as Fellows the three other individuals recently interviewed for the role of President. The meeting went on to endorse the proposal to propose as Fellows, four individuals who had been involved in the network and made significant contributions, but who had left or were leaving, namely: Kevin Dunion, Andrew Fairbairn, Jonathan Wordsworth and Ross Finnie. **Action: Staff to include these three proposals in AGM papers**

As an opportunity for Fellows who might wish closer engagement in discussion of network direction, it was agreed to hold an annual meeting on the afternoon of SE Week receptions (a number of Fellows attend these), where LINK's direction of travel could be outlined and thinking on this discussed. **Action: Staff to take forward for S E Festival 2016**

4.2.6 Office bearers, and vacancies for trustees

A vote of thanks was made to Simon Jones, Vice Chair over the last year and a Trustee for the last 3 years. Simon would leave SWT in September for the post of Director of Conservation & Visitor Services with LLTNPA and he had decided to stand down from the LINK Board at the same time.

Helen reported conversations with several trustees about the office of Vice Chair; Charles Dundas had confirmed willingness to take this on and had WTS' support. Helen and Tim were willing to continue in the roles of Chair and Treasurer, respectively. The meeting thanked these three trustees and agreed to nominate them to members as such to members at the AGM.

Simon's resignation created a vacancy for an elected Trustee. Beryl and Ian were due to stand down by rotation; both remained eligible and were willing to stand again. A call for nominations would circulate. The meeting was sorry to hear of Mandy Orr's decision to retire but understood her thinking. Mandy was a co-opted trustee.

The Board reviewed the skills audit to inform the call for nominations. Taking Mandy's decision into account, trustees foresaw a gap developing in fundraising & marketing and relationship-building which accompanies that. In relation, the meeting noted the lawyer's advice that in constitutional terms Mike Robinson should seek election rather than continue to be co-opted; Mike had been co-opted over a number of years, also for his skills and experience in the funding and marketing field. The Board agreed to check with Mike whether he was comfortable about the greater time commitment he would need to make to attend more Board meetings, if putting his name forward for election. Potential players within the membership were also considered, to whom approaches could be made. No further skills gaps were noted; though IT was flagged Jen advised that between in-staff knowledge and support from Shackleton, LINK was comfortably looked after. **Actions: Jen to Mike Robinson, circulate call to members. Helen to contact relevant members**

4.2.7 Member contact

Jen had reported on a recent meeting with HWDT reps and proposals emerging, including:

Training for members on conflict resolution – The meeting approved a proposal for LINK to fund a training workshop for TF players currently at the sharp end of advocacy. The need to clarify whether this should be in conflict resolution or negotiations was noted. **Action: Jen to take forward**

LINK Congress on the west as a roadshow about what LINK offers - The meeting advised at this stage such a meeting should happen at Marine TF level. **Action: Calum Duncan**

Assisting remoter members' engagement in TFs – The meeting supported a proposal to assist remotely based members in pursuit of funding to support in-person attendance in LINK meetings. Rather than commit to assisting members financially to attend meetings, the Board preferred to see use of skype and exploration of other IT facilities which could help these bodies to take active part in TFs. **Action: Staff to coordinate fundraising discussion with these members for this purpose**

4.2.8 Business Supporters

The previous meeting had noted Mandy's advice around the BS scheme. Trustees had then signed off a process of: initial checking by staff of any companies suggested or applying; ideas then presented to the Board for comment; proposals then flagged with members for feedback (2 weeks). If no concerns were raised by members the Board would make final decisions: where concerns were raised by members that would trigger further more detailed research. The meeting had been

asked for its views on a number of companies. Trustees did not reach agreement and it was agreed that a subgroup should be responsible for the 1st of the two Board 'steps' in the above process. Sam, Craig and Beryl agreed to be part of the group. **Action: Staff to liaise with Subgroup**

5 STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-15 REPORT

Various points in the circulated paper had been addressed in the course of the day's discussions.

5.1 TFs' solidity on key issues

The Board noted that issues on which TF members are not in agreement but which are important to TF collective strategy sometimes lack enough bottoming out in advance of collective advocacy, and can thus weaken case and credibility. The Board agreed that LINK needs to know and be explicit about what these are, what potential they may have to frustrate overall TF aims, that Convenors should see a role of 'rolling sleeves up' to ensure conversations and should be encouraged to bring issues to Trustees where resolution is not achieved at TF level. **Action: Inform Convenors and take forward in the new strategy**

5.2 Legal strategy

The issue had been deferred from April Board discussion of the political strategy report. The proposal was that as it becomes less costly and problematic to access justice in environmental matters, attention might profitably be turned to finding mechanisms for members to seek out, prioritise and test areas of legislation where concerns have been identified as to the legality of the way the law is being implemented. The Board was asked if it wished to begin discussion of such a mechanism. Trustees agreed that in doing so we would give a message to Government that we all need a better understanding of the law and of how to use it effectively and asked Andy to take the next step of looking to set up a meeting between relevant players to establish whether there is willingness to work together within an organisation with this kind of remit. **Action: Andy to invite relevant players (including FoES, Scottish legal practitioners and academics, and Client Earth) to meet with LINK in October**

6. OTHER GOVERNANCE ISSUES

6.1 Risk reviewed

The register had been reviewed by staff and circulated with a status update. Jen reported that she and Karen would work further on this, numbering and prioritising risk. Ian proposed that the Board consider the register more regularly to assess how level of risk might be changing and make it work for LINK. **Actions: Staff to bring revised register to the January meeting**

6.2 LINK Policies reviewed

Karen had coordinated revision and extension of LINK's policies and these had been circulated for comment and / or approval, with the overall task divided among trustees. The meeting thanked Karen for good work and Trustees agreed to respond to the review within the next fortnight. **Action: Trustees to respond to Karen by mid-September**

6.3 Finance & fundraising,

Outturn & forecast - Helen reminded trustees of the first quarter's budget outturn and revised forecast for the year, which had circulated in July; there were no questions about these and Tim confirmed that LINK's finances remained healthy.

Fundraising update - Alice spoke to the circulated update on fundraising. The meeting noted that the additional time she had been investing in core fundraising had stopped recently given the healthy state of LINK's reserves. Focus in the coming few months would be around renewing the core relationship with SG and SNH, with guidance to TFs which were actively fundraising.

Fundraising possibilities, role of SEFF, strategic plans for use of LINK voice - There was brief consideration of the option of crowdfunding for TF projects, though this would need major investment of time and would be looking to individuals, rather than to organisations where LINK tended to rely given its networking nature. The meeting heard that funders were not turning LINK down on the basis of poor 'wow factor': the bigger challenges were the strong competition for funding, and being able to convince of the need for better cost recovery. SEFF's relationship to LINK fundraising was discussed: traditionally the Forum was for the benefit of members' fundraisers rather than a mechanism to help LINK's fundraising effort. Should SEFF be made more aware of LINK and what LINK is doing for members' aspirations? The meeting wondered whether the strategic deployment of the LINK voice (discussed in the morning session) would help to address the funding dilemma, and the question of which TFs merit staff or expert fundraising support, as well as naturally informing 'wow' factor more. **Action: FSG to consider further**

FSG membership The Board agreed to await AGM outcomes and effort to recruit fundraising expertise there, before confirming FSG membership. **Action: Review post AGM**

Subscription reduction for joiners reviewed: Policy on a 'new joiner' or 'returning member' subscription rate was reviewed (this had been set at one-third reduction in the joining year). Trustees supported the FSG's proposal to increase that reduction to 50% in the joining year. They advised this should not apply to returning members, which could be expected to understand what LINK offers via membership. **Action: Revise policy and amend website advice**

Investment policy reviewed WRT. LINK's practice of holding reserves in bank accounts in institutions with ethical standards, Tim reported the Funding Subgroup view that bank interest is traditionally low, during recession years even lower. FSG felt that part of LINK's overall fundraising strategy is to help LINK towards hard-fought-for growth and wondered if we should hold a half or a third of reserves (that part which the organisation expects to hold for 5 years) in a spread of equity investments offering access to funds if needed. The meeting gave brief initial thoughts: trustees were unsure given LINK's focus on ethical investment, felt this linked to issues with Business Supportership, suggested that a substantive paper exploring the issues and linked to an ethical policy was needed to inform. Would any investment only relate to our Unrestricted Reserves, or should LINK seek permission of funders which provide Restricted funds, to permit us to extend our duty (ie., re UR funds) to invest their monies in the most appropriate options. Would a 3-5 year Bond deliver benefit? **Action: FSG to bring paper to January Board??**

7 NEXT BOARD MEETING

Thursday 22 October 2015, Perth

LINK Strategic Review 2015

Two discussions with Graeme Reekie, Consultant, of themes emerging from member survey

1 Board level discussion 20 August

LINK as Collaborator or Critic:

Members were happy with strong voice and objectives though there was some questioning of what the voice should say. Trustees agreed it will remain important that LINK is neither always one nor always the other, but a constant mixture of these two things – usually or often determined by TFs in relation to their work; the network observes internal rules for which of these LINK is to be, on which occasions, and why that role is necessary then. We will continue to need to be ready to be strong/robust over longish timeframes.

There will always be a balance between unity and diversity of view in LINK across the range of issues: perhaps there could be a better understanding across the network of both of these as aims, with different approaches to representing both? Members tend to flag where they are unhappy and this is part of what being a network entails.

What is the USP of the collective voice? The role of LINK with members, facilitating and supporting them to come up with key messages and helping them in the delivery – with the essence being the members and not the environmental message (as per the early Chairman Drennan Watson's 'bus' analogy for LINK). Members are central to LINK's operations – the bus has no purpose if the choir isn't assembled and wanting to use it. Where the 'voice' is needed, it must be developed via the members, with LINK's role as supporting them to provide it. The 'customer' is the environment and the primary purpose of LINK (provision of forum) has to have impact on outside world as result. Is learning and sharing through the forum provided less important than that? Would members generally cost the benefits of LINK to them in terms of environmental outcomes – ie, in terms of being part of a forum which gets them somewhere in relation to their environmental outcome goals. So, role is helping members to look at environmental outcomes and how to achieve these (better) together.

Network and/or Organisation; Determining Priorities & Making decisions:

Members, aware of the expansion of aspiration, wished to see more prioritisation, assisted by the Board, and supported to do this at TF level. They preferred not to see further growth at the core (ie the staff complement) though were keen if possible to secure more staff resource.

The meeting agreed that LINK has to be a more careful blend of member-led democracy (choosing what it will work on, and how) and an organisation requiring to set firm direction and parameters which it can competently resource (so containing aspiration within clearer parameters, via prioritisation and assessment of available member and central resources). We must pin more down than we have traditionally managed to do in this respect, be bolder. Will mean we need to identify where some things must be stopped, and will probably necessitate more time in planning (ie meetings) than currently, bringing together policy leads and trustees to contribute to that decision making about appropriate limits and priorities. Board role in is to be involved in decisions about

how the vehicle is used, informed by those who use it – perhaps offering options, encouraging discussion – but ultimately involved in the final decisions around this. Did this relate to synergy of 3 strategic objectives and movement from left to right as the stages on a journey – with the network sustaining the voice and helping members to achieve the goal of a sustainable Scotland? At any rate the strategy needs to clarify what we are and when, in these respects, which decisions are for the network, and which for trustees.

Bringing together to be together and bringing together to act together are different roles: how could we achieve better focus around overall messaging of the strong type, with correspondingly less focus on messaging about areas where members are less comfortable? Is the range of the LINK voice the challenging factor for us as well as external audiences? Should we instead focus on strategic boldness on selected issues, being responsive to timescales around these? Improving our efficiency, with a Board role in determining how to make that voice strategic, well timed and politically responsive/sensitive? With an aim of raising something up the agenda, and selecting with Board advice from TFs' measurable objectives issues which would get network-wide support and contribute well to LINK strategic aims. That kind of process would influence where and when staff resource should be applied to TFs. And would also guard against new 'priorities' bubbling up from TFs.

Even the Chair and CO do not know everything going on in LINK now, and that is another argument in favour of fewer, sharper focusses. The Board needs to be on top of what is afoot within the network and in LINK's name, so needs to know how big the set of focusses is, which it can remain abreast of.

With this in mind we agreed it would make better sense in future to put strategic planning first and Congress the day after, in future.

LINK is a valued network for its influence where the modest spend on staff-team helps bring about that effectiveness: there is a risk to that degree of influence if we don't succeed in limiting aspiration and focussing down on priorities. Process for decision making needs to reflect size of staff with flexibility build in to capitalise on opportunities too, and in acknowledgement of our organic approaches. 'Coralling' should avoid our losing the strengths of the network!

Task Forces:

Supported model for TFs (marine and economics) much admired. There is a preference for staff-supported than self-supporting (the reality for most). Most respondents not keen to see limits set on numbers of TFs operating though one-third respondents would support limits. While task-and-finish approaches help in theory, this is not the reality. The Board could require TFs to do annual report-cum-appraisal to justify staff resources and keep an eye on the strategic question of what is the role of these groupings. Flexibility about the types of staff roles needed by and available to TFs will continue to be important.

Meeting noted a couple of larger members' cost-benefit analyses of their engagement in LINK TFs. SWT in MTF saw their investment being on the verge of a net loss in terms of outcomes they wanted. RSPB saw their staff engagement in TFs as a net return, with the majority delivering successes over time despite the time commitment and some inevitable frustration along the way, and more valuable than the organisation's internal, UK-level discussions. Feedback to the survey indicated that smaller members relied on the collective work to get 'bang for buck'; participation while time-consuming gives access to policy and collaborative advocacy which is net a benefit.

Members need to continue to make self-interested assessment of whether their time investment in LINK is delivering what they are after.

Important that we look ahead at how we want our voice to be perceived as LINK (the face or the line taken, on TV) – improving how we get there and thus getting more buy-in from the network. Making outputs as worth sharing publicly as possible with knotty issues bottomed out fully beforehand, so that our ‘line’ is as robust as it possibly can be.

The importance TF and network meetings for members’ staff and for personal development was noted. WRT situations where a LINK view on an issue is sought or expected by external audiences LINK will continue to have to be clear that we do not have capacity or desire to have views on everything.

As regards decision-making discussions at *Network or Organisation* above, should there be training for TF convenors in use of time – to make TF meetings as productive as possible in relation to the various remits LINK has to expect of them?

And to what extent could we ensure better follow-through from meetings such as Congress and Networking? Sometimes the follow-through happens slowly, sometimes more swiftly; if there is no capacity or interest later, certain actions will not happen.

Other points:

The meeting then discussed our intentions regarding the external survey which Graeme would be carrying out later in the autumn, before reporting to the October Board, and beginning on a draft strategy for 2016-19.

JA/LINK/17.9.15

2 Network level discussion 27 August

Graeme explained his role working with staff and board on the new strategic plan. This session was to update on the members survey, take soundings and inform the survey with external stakeholders. He outlined the process and key findings. A good spread of people had replied, with medium and large organisations well represented, and a good show from smaller MBs too.

Value continues to be in coming together, purposefully. TFs are one of the key routes to LINK’s success. What is valued is that enough other people are there. Discussion covered whether there was confirmation bias, and should past members have been interviewed. JMT and MCofS were mentioned and their reasons for leaving discussed (meetings had been held with both and letters exchanged).

The external survey will build on these findings. What do we need to find out from external stakeholders? Interesting to ask if sector is seen as fighting amongst themselves in Scotland.

Responses were from those most involved with LINK. The wider membership might not take same view. Two HFs and 2 smaller orgs felt the questions were more appropriate for those who knew LINK better than them, so Graeme took comments by email. Staff are much appreciated. Though better resourced than other TFs, Calum was convenor before dedicated staffing in 2007, noting having extra capacity creates more work, support of core staff has helped the TF get to where it is.

Looking at WCL where policy officers support working groups, other TFs could do with that. It's a measure of respect that people have for LINK to invest in the TFs. Graeme felt people like the model of having a resource attached. Sarah noted that on WCL, though there are staff helping each group, they don't facilitate, and ambition is for them to do more of that. Graeme feels secretariat support is what is desired in Scotland.

MB priorities: land use at top covered reform and land use, greater consideration of landscape, fundamental to many MB concerns. Graeme felt we need a conversation of what we do with this input, his personal view is this is a sounding, and mirrored what we do fairly well.

For the next plan two issues are important. One, the extent of LINK as collaborator or critic, particularly of government, finding the right balance; the other is having more clarity about priorities and decision making, LINK being an organisation in its own right, with limited resources; and a network, where the job of trustees is difficult, with no authority over members who themselves are the biggest resource, eg If we do A do we stop doing B, which is up to members, not LINK. This is flagged each year and more is added.

Sarah noted that WCL may seem to be growing, internally staff may not feel they are part of an organisation, may feel almost too aligned to TFs, crossing two cultures, there is a need to feel like an organisation internally, the brand of link is important to us internally, as well as externally to see value of collective voice. Andy noted is about voice and diversity, one of our jobs is to get MBs to sing in choir, to a hymn sheet, using the diversity to advantage.

Diarmid felt that Scottish government understands what LINK means and the collegiate approach it takes. Resource issue is important, where MBs vote with feet and leading MBs leave, a TF can roll along in name only. Matthew felt tension is between trying to shoehorn an organisation like LINK into a company structure, imposed from outside by funding needs. The network can operate without a strategy, if resources don't allow. Still needs clarity about who makes decision, eg on the 'narrative' process.

Graeme had asked TFs if members are comfortable for growth at centre to serve them better. The reply was Yes to more support, No to growth at the centre. If there is no limit on numbers of TFs, is it up to trustees to allocate resources to some? Jen noted that when LINK was young, members of the TF were the power and did the work, staff helped, but strategy and drafting etc was done by the MBs. Now LINK was drifting from that model with various TFs wanting help which did not seem to be available through TF members. There is a limit to how this can be sustained. Worth thinking if TFs really need staff support, or working out what can be delivered by MBs at TF level.

If the value of collective action is greater, there is an implication about how much people put in to LINK. MBs may also want to collaborate where LINK cannot help, then it gets into further second order questions about how LINK operates, which need to be worked through to get to bigger answers. Maybe that MBs wanting more LINK support is a reflection on the squeeze on their resources. No right or wrong, issue is lack of resources to do TF ambitions, in absence of getting more staff for MBs. Marine TF funding history was discussed. Also useful to look at size spread of MBs on a TF. One of purposes of LINK is that burdens are spread and smaller MBs helped. Economics and Governance TFs resulted from strategic discussion which none could tackle individually. Sue noted that on Planning and ERA, PD valued the support and strength of other members for the message, no plan to ask for LINK support, PD will put in their resources for that. Strategic opportunism describes how we have got where we are now, eg for Marine TF a perfect

storm of opportunity, a unique set of circumstances not replicable. Task is to make decisions about how decisions are made. Not to lose what people value about shared purpose. No intention to change anything, just how it helps members to prioritise and focus.

Pete commented that Nourish gets a lot out of LINK, though it is not the main thing Nourish does. Others have put more in, LINK matters more to them: does the strategy point to disquiet? Helen gave the history, the strategy review every 3 years and this time want it to be very short, clear and focussed. These issues are not new, need regular airing. We cannot assume it all happens organically, need to make sure we are doing the right things with scarce resources. Issues lately about robustness, collaborator or critic, members leaving, the impact of that, what are the relationship building activities that need to go on, more and more the prioritising problem. The board does not have authority over wider resources, which is challenging.

Diarmid asked about WCL's strategy 2015-19, what we can usefully take from it. WCL has a wider spread of MBs. Sarah joined staff in April, and would not have, if there was no strategy. Director Elaine King worked on WCL's strategy with the board, it is a really important way of working now, becoming empowering for staff who work with the groups, can guide how groups function, putting the questions about what to do with all their resources.

John Thomson noted LINK is not entirely owned by MBs as gets funding from elsewhere. Check it is happy with terms of funding, can it continue to secure it. If getting public money, what are the implications and requirements? Always a strategic decision. Meeting noted LINK manages public funding at a level which allows the network its independent voice and also puts strong reliance on membership funding. Its public funding is low in relation to that for other networks/intermediaries. The requirement to report drives the reporting needed from TFs to some extent.

Matthew asked whether there is an environmental 'narrative' (as previously discussed in network meetings), if LINK is going to represent views of the sector what is the process of formulating that narrative, what it is you say and when. Is it about MBs learning from each other in relation to changing contexts, eg economics issues, social justice issues, a set of functions about how we learn from each other, how our narrative is able to be heard, and influencing the outside. We have to learn more about SJ, and the process there is very important. It can be either explicit or not, it is all right if not, can be sum of processes we agree to do. There are MBs who won't have SJ on their agenda, and may not want to consider it.

Denis noted costs benefits, positive side for small organisations LINK enables them to achieve more, access to bigger discussions, huge benefits there. On other hand, cost of belonging is not just subscription, its time invested. If you are giving up half a policy officer, may achieve more not in LINK.

Lloyd, adding to these points, was interested that collective action came out highly. While often most visible to external stakeholders, and the thing that gets measured as progress, in previous strategies information exchange and discussion were high. Benefit in keeping those traditional aspects up: even if you decide as a member not to take collective action, you have learnt something, or done something in a different or better way as a result. There is value of a network that in some areas does not take collective action; sometimes that is to be decided by having the discussion. Not always the thing to aim for, other aspects are still very important.