

Note of Greener UK/Links 'devolution group' meeting (2nd May 2017)

Present

Daphne Vlastari (SEL) and Lloyd Austin (RSPB)
Karen Whitfield (WEL) and Sharon Thompson (RSPB)¹
Sean Kelly (NIEL) and Diane Ruddock (NT)²
Spencer Clubb (WCL)³
Amy Mount (Green Alliance)
Donal McCarthy (RSPB)

Summary of actions

- **Donal** to prepare and circulate revised terms of reference for adoption at the next group meeting.
- **Donal** to arrange dates for future meetings and circulate a call for agenda items in advance of each meeting.
- **Amy** to provide written updates on Greener UK activities prior to each meeting. **Each of the Link reps.** to also provide written updates on relevant issues in advance.
- **Amy** to communicate the key discussion points from each group meeting back to the Greener UK Board.
- **Amy** to circulate a paper outlining the work of the Greener UK 'scenarios' group on governance arrangements post-Brexit in advance of the next group meeting.

Background

The Greener UK Board indicated its support for the establishment of "*an informal devolution advisory group*" at the Board meeting in April so as to: **(i)** enable enhanced and regular communication between the Links and Greener UK on Brexit, devolution and the environment; **(ii)** provide constructive advice on devolution issues and positioning in different geographical and political contexts; and, **(iii)** develop joint positioning on post-Brexit four country co-operation to achieve optimal environmental outcomes across the UK.

Meeting note

The first meeting of the joint Greener UK/Links 'devolution group' took place on 2nd May, with nominated representatives from each of the country Link networks and the Greener UK Unit present. Lloyd Austin (RSPB Scotland) was appointed as chair of the group (to be reviewed in three months).

The main focus of the meeting was on the terms of reference for the group. The group took as the starting point for its discussions the three bullet points setting out the potential functions of the

¹ Liz Smith (WEL) will act as a substitute for Karen. Sharon will temporarily sit on the group until the new Woodland Trust (Wales) staff member can join. Thereafter, Sharon will act as a substitute.

² Colum Delaney (RSPB) will act as a substitute for Sean/Diane.

³ A second representative from WCL/England will be nominated in time to attend the next meeting of the group.

group as presented at the Greener UK Board meeting in April (see 'background' above). Based on these discussions, Donal has been tasked with preparing revised terms of reference for adoption at the next group meeting.

It was agreed that the group will meet monthly in the week preceding the monthly Greener UK Board meeting. A call for agenda items will be circulated in advance. Greener UK (via Amy) will provide a written update prior to each meeting, as will each of the country Links (via the relevant representative).

A core focus for the group will be to discuss (on a monthly basis) the written update outlining the work of Greener UK that is to be provided by Amy in advance of each group meeting. This should hopefully enable the group to add value to the work of Greener UK by providing timely, relevant, and constructive input/advice to the Board on issues of interest or concern (such as in relation to relevant papers or items on the agenda of the next Board meeting). Amy will be responsible for communicating the views of the group back to the Greener UK Board.

The group will not seek to review all Greener UK Board papers in advance of each Board meeting. However, it should be noted that this means there is a possible risk of the group being unsighted on Greener UK activities that could have potential (if previously unidentified) devolution implications. The Greener UK written update will hopefully provide line of sight to potential devolution issues. These arrangements will be kept under review and may need to evolve over time.

The group is also very happy to respond to any specific requests from the Greener UK Board for input on particular topics and/or to be consulted on an ad hoc basis (e.g. where there is a need to be reactive/react quickly to external events).

In relation to the activities of the pillars, it was suggested by the group that the pillars be encouraged by the Greener UK Board to reach out and engage with relevant devolved colleagues if they are not already doing so. For future meetings, Amy will provide a summary of relevant pillar activities as part of her monthly written update.

A particular question was raised regarding the work of the 'Great Repeal Bill' group and how to incorporate devolved perspectives into its activities given the uncertain implications of this key piece of legislation for the devolution settlements. It may be advisable for future meetings of this group to include an update on the GRB process as a standing agenda item, with the opportunity to provide feedback to the 'Great Repeal Bill' group where required.

A question was also raised regarding whether Greener UK is adequately represented on this group. At the Greener UK Board meeting in April, it was agreed that Martin Harper (RSPB) would lead on this group for the Board. Donal McCarthy (RSPB) or Stephen Hinchley (RSPB) will sit on this group on Martin's behalf.