Strategic implications of member and stakeholder engagements

When we meet on 22nd October, we will have limited time to discuss and learn from the three recent reports (Member & Stakeholder Surveys; Stakeholder Interviews).

The purpose of this paper is therefore to help trustees focus on what the reports might mean for the next LINK Strategy. The discussions that follow need to help inform us all about the Strategy's potential structure and content.

Each section is in two parts: a short summary of what we know from (or are being asked by) the three reports, followed by bulleted statements inviting decisions about the new Strategy.

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1. Determining priorities, making decisions

LINK's strengths continue to be in bringing people together purposefully; facilitating responsive, collaborative processes to create – and use – a strong collective voice for the environment.

- To build on these strengths, LINK *will revisit the means by which decisions and priorities are determined* – as an organisation and as a network. This process will be proportionate, working with a clear aim in mind – continuing to sharpen LINK's focus.

- To focus limited resources and prioritise sharable, 'ownable' outputs, there will be a strategic aspect to *selecting the themes and priorities that can be supported by LINK staff and resources.*

- To help with this, aspects of corporate decision making will be clarified, e.g. identifying the kinds of decisions to be taken by the Board and those which should be made by the network.

- LINK will improve systems for following-up on actions and decisions from network meetings, congress (etc.?).

2. Collaborator or critic?

The major success of LINK's previous Strategy was its influence on policy and legislation. Some members and third sector stakeholders would welcome LINK being more challenging. Scottish Government representatives accept this, as long as it done in the right way and context.

- LINK's next strategy may be judged by the extent to which it supports effective *implementation* of legislation. Link will 'push' its work on Environmental Governance further – raising its profile and upping the ante on policy makers and others.

- LINK will continue to collaborate closely with government, as this is the most effective way to exert influence. However LINK will also continue to support effective advocacy by eNGOs.

3. LINK's voice

The nature of cooperation is to find compromise and consensus. Members and stakeholders recognise this and don't always need LINK to be of one voice.

- LINK will continue to support collaborative processes, confident that diversity has its place in promoting mature debate, informing policies and representing different voices.

4. Connecting to wider policy and issues

LINK has worked to connect environmental issues to other social agendas where there is a common interest, social justice, housing, poverty, transport etc. Its next strategy will re-emphasise its role in connecting people, organisations and strategies:

- LINK will continue to connect environmental issues to other social agendas, making their relevance to people and policy clearer.

- LINK will continue to connect members together.

- LINK will connect across different policy teams in government.

- LINK will connect with organisations with shared interests on an issue-by-issue basis.

5. Offering leadership, sharing solutions

Stakeholders are looking to LINK for positive visions of - and solutions for - the future.

- LINK will do more to challenge the perception that it is 'anti-development'.

- This can include developing a set of core values or presenting a positive vision of what LINK is 'for'.

6. Task Forces

Task Forces are one of the most valued and valuable ways for LINK members to come together and make a difference. Having a clear focus gets things done.

- LINK will establish a means to periodically review the nature and purpose of each Task Force, encouraging actionable objectives

- LINK will explore how it can avoid the fragmentation of issues that can come about through specialisation, i.e. finding ways to connect issues, members and stakeholders to the 'bigger picture'.

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