

LINK CAMPAIGNS REVIEW MEETING

5 JULY 2007, NTS OFFICES, EDINBURGH

PRESENT

Group Members: Françoise van Buuren (FVB) (Chair), Anne McCall (AmcC), Calum Duncan (CD), Dan Barlow (DB), Ian McCall (ImcC), John Hollingsworth (JHo), Jonny Hughes (JH), Julia Harrison (JHa), Lloyd Austin (LWA), Nicola Golding (NG), Stuart Hay (SH), Susan Warren (SW)

Staff: Jen Anderson (JA), Ylva Haglund (YH), Jane Herbstritt (JCH) Adean Lutton (AL).

Apologies: Lang Banks, Fred Edwards, Andrew Fairburn, Helen McDade, Jess Pepper, Angus Yarwood

1. INTRODUCTION

Françoise van Buuren(FVB) welcomed everyone and summarised the campaigns held to date:

Two Holyrood, one UK and one European election campaigns since 2003 and two Planning Bill campaigns during 2005 and 2006.

The objectives were to raise the environment on the Scottish parliamentary agenda; demonstrate public support for policy and political change ; and influence decision makers through public opinion and pressure.

The tactics used were a collective message; mobilise the wider membership, a web-based call to action; maximum media coverage; hustings to quiz candidates; and challenging and critiquing political action and performance.

The overall general benefits are: policy asks are in the mainstream; politicians know 'everyone' is watching; gain support and respect from some MSPs; the number of individual actions has increased with each campaign; and a strengthening of trust between LINK member organisations.

2. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The purpose of the meeting was to review what worked well; to identify any lessons learnt from the previous campaigns; and to consider the best way forward for future LINK campaigns.

3. OVERVIEW AND BRAINSTORMING OF LINK CAMPAIGNS

What worked well

SH noted that the campaigns all looked well-managed and with slick processes and JA, CD, SW and IMcC agreed.

Public engagement

IMcC noted that the campaigns had an impact on the political agenda, but that the difficulties were finding messages which work for networks, and the lack of public engagement.

LWA noted that the political asks were achieved, but it was hard to quantify how much it was due solely to the LINK campaigns. He noted that political and public

engagement were different aspects and should be considered and measured separately, although they also had cross-links with one affecting the other.

NG suggested the middle ground – the ‘watching report’ - was worth exploring, and questioned whether LINK needed to demonstrate public support.

JA suggested the target audience of campaigns might be the ‘active/ environmentally aware’ general public rather than members of LINK organisations. FVB noted whether LINK would need to target the ‘quality’ members and not the general public.

LWA questioned how best to measure public support and whether LINK organisations should give much more emphasis to the number of members each represent.

AMcC questioned why we are trying to mobilise the public and noted that the environment is on the agenda without large numbers of people involved. In the planning campaign, 5,000 signatures was very good for such a dry subject. The meeting agreed that the clarity/simplicity of the issue/ask had been important.

NG noted that a campaign does not have to be focussed on the public; a campaign is simply a series of media/marketing tools. NG noted that more ‘groupings of interest’ was required.

DB noted that the messages are different for the politician and the public; that the extent of buy-in from organisations is unclear; and that the recent climate change 3% message was a clear one.

JCH noted that the Association of Community Councils have an engaged audience and may be worth considering as a partner in the future.

Campaigns Objectives/Asks

DB noted the element of compromise in the campaign asks as these have to be in line with those of the LINK organisations; and that there was pressure to deliver ‘own’ asks before those of the collective campaign. DB questioned whether there was enough in common to campaign collectively. DB suggested that future campaigns should focus on issues rather than simply elections.

NG agreed that the campaign asks were very technical and that single issues, such as planning, worked better. YH agreed that a single, simple message was best in terms of a campaigns officer delivering it. LWA concurred, and suggested that the lessons learnt from general elections could be applied to single issues. SH noted that the original purpose was to get the environment on to the political agenda, that is there now, although at times it is hard to pin down. He advised we keep things simple and consider the things we now want to happen.

DB noted that on broader issues, forward planning is essential in order for it to be included in the agenda of organisations and their senior management, as leadership by CEOs for the whole organisation is crucial to signatory involvement in the effort.

JA noted that LINK had been unclear on how tough we wished to be with politicians and should clarify this before campaigns. LWA felt LINK bodies always need to have good relationships with politicians as we would always want to be ‘in the tent’.

Campaigns Problems

JH noted that the original purpose of the campaigns was advocacy, and there were a number of difficulties:

- branding, in particular the relationship between the LINK brand and organisations' brands and the campaign 'everyone' brand, and the use for example of the green footprint, caused confusion
- resources including the staff time commitment by signatory organisations were limited
- diluted messages and conflict between organisations on messages
- audience - the budget was much too low for mass campaigns, and was more suited to a sub-set of politicians
- poor media coverage despite best efforts (again, partly a staff-time issue)

Media Coverage

NG noted that there were insufficient interesting stories to attract media interest. LWA noted that in the recent campaign, the journalists were focused on SNP-Labour issues and not on other or wider issues. JHo noted that having really interesting stories to generate media interest is vital, and also that as there are so many different issues in our campaigns it is difficult to identify any key aspects or stories.

JA asked if the campaigns budgets were larger, would they have had greater influence on the media. NG responded, yes, bigger budgets would have given more products or tools – more reports, bigger polls, more hard-hitting facts. However, there is a limit to how far we can influence what the media chooses to pursue.

Soft Stories

JHo stated that the recent campaign had hoped organisations would provide some good projects or stories. JHa agreed, that the campaigns needed more 'soft stories' that weren't time-bound, although also there was insufficient time in the campaign to find and run these stories.

Campaign Timing

FVB questioned why the campaigns were timed for the elections as there are so many other issues being aired then, and there is strong competition for media coverage. JHa suggested that it is best to let the issues determine the campaigns timing and not the political agenda.

Branding

JHo noted that there is only one LINK brand, and IMcC agreed by saying that LINK is an umbrella and that all of the organisations are LINK. NG noted that the 'everyone' brand was set up to overcome the problem of brand confusion. AMcC thought the 'everyone' brand, and the accumulation of brands were confusing.

Campaign Positives

JH noted the 'everyone grid' brought areas together well and gives additionality; and that facilitation, such as the parliamentary hustings, was good. SH agreed and said that there were other ways of signing up other organisations to the campaigns.

LWA agreed with JH's positives, and noted that the advocacy and policy work was very successful. He suggested that policy work such as meetings, manifesto-influencing, joint documents, partnership agreements and hustings should use a campaigning approach.

AMcC noted that the process of agreeing asks helps organisations define their own asks.

4. ROUND-UP OF THE BRAINSTORMING

FVB summarised the discussions as follows:

- single, clearer messages
- carefully defining target audiences
- using new audiences
- clarity on whether campaigns should mobilise the public, as opposed to others, and if so, why
- focus on issues and not on election timetables
- plans set in the context of resources available and awareness of competition/jostling for attention
- synergy and additionality are LINK's strengths. Importance of LINK co-ordination.

SH noted that members of the LINK member organisations pay their subscriptions for these organisations to undertake campaigning for them, and do not necessarily want to be active campaigners.

NG and LWA noted the value of the LINK manifesto and working together. LWA noted the value of working with other networks.

LINK 2020 Project

LWA summarised contact on behalf of LINK by Simon Pepper with other networks (Scottish Executive, SDC, SSN, NIDOS, SCC) about scope for joint work focussed around changing mass behaviour in relation to issues such as climate change, and the relevance of his work to these campaigning discussions. The meeting noted that politicians, policy-makers and some businesses are moving ahead of both NGOs and the general public at this stage, but government does not (yet) feel it has the public support to actually make the kind of changes needed.

The meeting noted the lack of leadership (one sector waits for another to move first); the potential of a wide partnership of stakeholders in society working together; the importance of simplicity and integrity in messages; the need for action at all levels; the challenges of going green; the role which legislation can play; the importance of setting out convincing benefits (and not simply individual conscience).

Possible LINK roles in this process were discussed: facilitating discussion about joined-up action in this short window of opportunity; helping to get all hands on deck; adding value; identifying hypocrisy; campaigning for positives and for what is socially unacceptable in order to achieve these. A 'make it easy' campaign could target different audiences with different messages.

NG noted that it is important to involve the Executive, and JA drew attention to the list of stakeholders being approached by Simon for LINK. FVB noted that this is a window of opportunity for environmental issues.

5. LOOKING FORWARD TO FUTURE LINK CAMPAIGNS

FVB asked the meeting to consider whether LINK members wish to campaign together in the future; what would the objectives and main messages be; and who would be the target audiences.

Future Campaigns

JHa noted the problem of pulling any future campaign together.

NG noted the future campaigns could focus on the partnership between individuals and Government action

IMcC noted that there were large resources already going into behaviour change.

SW suggested that LINK's role might be to address the Government's hypocrisy. JA noted that hypocrisy is present in individual and business too and asked whether LINK should be engaging with business on behaviour change.

JH noted that the general public get media messages all the time, that there are other campaigns groups and that the messages are complex.

LWA suggested whether the LINK campaign should be for a wider/joint campaign with other organisations on behaviour change.

JA suggested that the common ground was behaviour change, and not an audience and not an issue.

JH asserted that the SCC were already doing the LINK campaign.

LWA and JA responded that a LINK campaign may not be required, but rather stakeholder discussions on behaviour change in relation to many issues. JA also questioned whether LINK might want to focus just on politicians.

Barriers to Behaviour Change

DB noted that an awareness raising campaign would not be required, and suggested we ask how LINK can influence the barriers to change. IMcC agreed, noting that some barriers are very real and asked whether LINK could identify the barriers and tackle some of them for example through education. SH thought that this was 'dangerous territory' and that LINK staff and member organisations should do this and give examples. CD thought we needed to establish a benchmark of members' work, for example with volunteers, and the current levels of engagement.

FVB noted that public opinion is the key, and at this time politicians are using it, perhaps in part conveniently for them, as a blockage. FVB suggested that any campaign should try to harness the 'I will if you will' attitude which, in the general public, is a strong motivator. CD noted that the public perception of any government acting as a 'nanny state' is strong, and asserted that public resistance is a barrier.

Legislation Overcomes Barriers

FVB noted that an effective answer to public resistance is legislation – making aspects of behaviour change mandatory, past examples include seat belts and smoking in public places. IMcC noted that legislation is very important because there is evidence that public behaviour does change. DB noted that this is an ideal time and asked how could LINK make legislation more progressive. NG suggested LINK can support non-popular legislation.

Engaging with Business

JHa suggested that any campaign should position LINK more in the public eye, and suggested if LINK had support from a PLC, then this would provide the

resources to do it. NG noted that companies such as M&S create green markets; JH countered that this was driven by economic opportunity, which is just another form of consumerism. JH noted that however LINK could engage with business, as there are a range of tangible things LINK could do and as it would focus the campaign.

Engaging with Individuals

AMcC suggested that any campaign message would be sold better if put on an individual basis, and that messages which work are based on personal benefit. JH suggested that the overall campaign message could be to ask Government to make it easier for people to change. LWA suggested that the underlying message should be to make things more enjoyable. CD agreed that environmentally correct choices can make you feel happier. JCH asked whether a campaign could make certain things socially unacceptable. DB noted that in the past LINK has missed some good opportunities to influence public behaviour change such as the plastic bag levy. FVB noted that working on policy in small ways may be sufficient.

6. FUTURE OBJECTIVES

Continued Advocacy

FVB summarised that LINK's strengths were advocacy, influencing and task forces' work, and its weakness was their inability to mobilise its own membership. FVB asked the meeting to consider the next steps – what and how – processes and mechanisms. LWA confirmed this and said that the network's objective was to keep the advocacy happening and to keep the processes going. JHa noted that LINK does not have a public affairs task force although such a forum could be valuable in building capacity within the network.

Target Audience

YH suggested not entirely dismissing reaching out to the public; SW agreed saying, who else is going to ask for the things which LINK asks for? SH affirmed that both sides [LINK and LINK member organisations] should work on the asks. JA suggested to focus on the 'whens' and not on the 'ifs' and 'hows', and that any campaign should reach out to the public when required. FVB countered that with small budgets LINK should focus on the key influencers; JH countered this that small budgets required different/other methods such as articles. SW noted that the planning campaign was on a small budget; AMcC added that it had involved much distilling of information within the TF previously. JH noted that this was more a mini-campaign and that behaviour/culture change is much bigger.

LWA asked who are the opinion formers, not decision makers nor policy makers, – possibly business leaders, and that direct advocacy should be to the opinion formers, for example, through using the media 'beyond the news'. AMcC noted that NGOs had routes into communities.

Campaign Levels

NG noted that there could be a campaign on two levels: large scale and community. AMcC countered that any campaign would be time limited and depends on everyone doing their bit and this raised the problem of staff time/resources. LWA suggested two levels - specific issue(s) or all signatories. SH asked whether there is some way of LINK supporting non-signatories AMcC noted that 'everyone' tried to do this, but the problem was that it was someone else's timetable and issues. FVB countered that it was a question of deciding on the issue(s).

Campaign Issues and Stop Climate Chaos (SCC)

IMcC noted that a single issue was much easier to sign up to.

NG noted that depending on the issue(s) there would be different types of work and time frames – wider issues required a longer term and more networking, meetings and seminars. LWA noted that the outcome does not have to be the audience.

NG noted that public opinion is a very strong tool in any campaign, and supported broad work, and valued looking at the big thing. SH noted that this is similar to SCC work which is outward facing, and that LINK should be different to SCC. DB responded that, whilst SCC is an ally of LINK, its role is mainly awareness raising, and LINK is much more than that.

Other Groups

DB asserted that LINK needs to be bold, open to new ideas and to take risks. The environment is on the agenda of politicians and business, and LINK needs to be ahead of the game otherwise it may become marginalised. LINK needs to explore new ideas and risks, and it would be a missed opportunity not to.

CD concurred – LINK's vision for 2020 is a change of behaviour. This is a broad principle and requires links with other groups. CD asked how far have we linked to the social sector and suggested that we need to do this more. JH, CD, FVB agreed that LINK has a role in facilitating discussions with wider audiences. FVB asked the meeting whether LINK should provide leadership. IMcC agreed that LINK needs to be part of the process and be a facilitator.

LWA noted that the issues at stake related to various aspects of the environment and not just climate change. DB noted that LINK's role could be to show the shallowness of the environment on others' agendas. NG suggested the approach should be as a solutions provider and not just protest. DB and SH added that LINK needs to be ahead of the curve, the gap in positions had now closed and LINK needs to be more radical. CD added that the focus should be on quality of life and not just consumer issues. LWA agreed, it is more well-being, and that LINK should turn the academics of issues into a campaign.

FVB summarised the discussions as:

- leading on solutions and actions to solve problems
- need to have a shared voice
- focus on LINK's strengths of facilitation

FVB asked the meeting to consider what actually makes a difference – for example, working with business or with the media?

Next Steps

JH suggested that the Government should make it easier for the general public; that LINK should champion the public and encourage the right behaviour. JA suggested maintaining dialogue with the Executive. DB responded that there are more complex reasons for public behaviour and making things easier was only one part of it. DB suggested that LINK should seek opportunities to look ahead; CD suggested that LINK steps back and takes a wider view.

AMcC responded that in stepping back each member has its own agendas and we need to identify how to collaborate; also the LINK 2020 vision was even wider and the 'everyone' mechanisms may not work. AMcC noted that forging relationships allows LINK to have a core voice. JH asked what are the resource and staff implications. DB suggested that Simon Pepper could do the scoping and a Campaigns Review Group could coordinate.

LWA noted that operationally this is what LINK does and that the campaign for behaviour change should be: brought into the core of the task force work programme, especially advocacy and parliamentary work; targeted at other NGOs; and engaging with the public should be put on hold.

FVB asked the meeting to consider:

- what collective campaigning
- how to scope it out
- what effective mechanisms.

The meeting agreed there is a strong role for LINK with continued campaigning, although with greater analysis of what/who/where and how.

We accepted that 'everyone' campaigning has been challenging, and that we should consider contributing to the behaviour change agenda in other ways. We should no longer do election campaigns per se, although we should bear in mind the role of elections in terms of messaging opportunities on particular issues. The original 'everyone' campaign objectives had been achieved and LINK should work collectively on a bigger campaign of leading the agenda, perhaps focussing on solutions.

We agreed that LINK should continue with everyday advocacy (for example, via task forces) and manifesto work and with 'mini' campaigns such as TPRA, bringing the advocacy part of our campaigns into our parliamentary work. Forging relationships with others is also crucial in being taken seriously.

Otherwise we agreed we should put broad campaigning on hold until the consultations by Simon Pepper with other networks which is looking at potential for a joint work programme on behaviour change, has reported. And at that stage we should be clear about the scope of a larger campaign given the public barrier to government moving forward.

Meantime, we agreed a separate analysis of barriers and opportunities, and our role in relation, would be useful.

SW suggested that public barriers should be documented; SH added that LINK could work out the other barriers. NG suggested exploring whether it is changing behaviour or opinion. IMcC added that we should clarify the differences between behaviour and opinion. JA suggested that LINK needs to consider more whether it is going to challenge, carry difficult issues and is prepared to say something outrageous. SH asked what would be LINK's vision; JA wondered if this would be the point where public are ahead and are calling for change.

LWA suggested that the budget for the campaigns review and LINK 2020 should be combined and the two strands brought together. He thought exploration of these issues could be the theme for day 1 of congress, and day 2 could be reaching decisions.

Scope of the Next Steps

FVB asked the meeting to scope the next steps – what are the opportunities available and which are the most effective mechanisms.

JH suggested having an over-arching ask as a network, and supporting this via task forces and mini campaigns, with TF/Board/Parliamentary Forum dialogue on higher-level initiatives, and seeking advice from honorary fellows on even higher-level action. JHa suggested setting up a media task force or forum like SEFF with external speakers, sharing experience. SH suggested looking on the horizon for any cross-cutting issues. JH noted that the marine bill was enabling legislation with policies added as required and this meant that the 'eggs were not all in the

one basket'. The meeting wondered if governance was an issue – where there is good legislation, not being implemented, with obvious implications; with administrative law poor in Scotland, would challenges be useful; and the potential for a common cause with other networks on this.

FVB summarised that the next steps were to identify:

- barriers to change opinion and behaviour

- who are our opinion formers and who will resist/challenge any change target audience(s)

- mechanisms available to us (and costs)

- key messages including those that may be unpopular

- over-arching vision for our role and outcomes that we want

- process for LINK to deliver that vision in terms of opportunities and timing

and asked the meeting to consider the processes required for LINK to deliver this and whether external support would be required.

The meeting agreed that we have the internal expertise on the issues, but that expert facilitation of the next discussion would be valuable; also that this should involve task force convenors and CEOs as well as some of those present, FVB asked for suggestions of people who have previously worked with LINK in this capacity and can lead the next stage.

We agreed that after Simon Pepper's final report has been received, and before congress in November, the facilitated meeting should be held to consider the above set of issues and draft options which can be further discussed at congress. Simon's interim report would be circulated to members and convenors shortly.

SW suggested a flowchart of processes would be useful.

JHa suggested that the evaluation report on the Holyrood campaign be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

Closing Comments

There was a brief discussion appraising election hustings led by LWA. We agreed that hustings should be continued: they are a great way of building capacity internally, and offer candidates/politicians and voters opportunities to meet on the issues that matter.

The meeting also agreed that we should do more work on our own manifesto in terms of its size and language.

The meeting gave a vote of thanks to Ylva and the whole Campaign Delivery Team for the Holyrood campaign.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to Françoise for chairing this discussion and helping us to move forward.