

News Release

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Methods and Processes of Government in devolved Scotland merit attention

Scottish Environment LINK today published a major report – **Governance Matters, *The Environment and Governance in Scotland*** – reviewing the environment movement’s experience of working with all branches of government since the 1999 re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament.

While welcoming the democratic progress made in Scotland since devolution, the report notes and offers criticism of serious limitations on citizen participation in government. Strong recommendations are made for debate on further reforms and improvements to the method and processes of government. These are addressed to the Scottish policy community in general – and include:

- a call for the Scottish Parliament to place a greater emphasis on scrutinising the executive branch and its agencies better;
- a call for the Scottish Government to overhaul and genuinely open-up its procedures for public consultations and stakeholders groups;
- suggested reforms to achieve proper access to environmental justice and a proposal to consider a specialist environmental court; and
- the revival of the idea of an open Civic Forum for wide-ranging public debate around the Parliament and the Government and their decisions.

As the report was published, Andy Myles, LINK’s Parliamentary Officer said:

“Constitutional matters may dominate the Scottish political landscape at present, but these bread-and-butter issues about how the methods of government do or do not deliver effective public participation are just as important.”

Ends

Contact details

For more information, please contact Andy Myles on 07834 485 760 (or on 0131 225 4345)

Editors’ Notes

(1) Scottish Environment LINK is the network for Scotland’s voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK has over 30 member organisations spanning interests across the natural environment and associated cultural heritage and supported by around 500,000 people. Further information on LINK is available at www.scotlink.org

(2) Governance Matters is published on the LINK website at – <http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/LINKReports/LINKGovernanceMatters.pdf>

(3) LINK is organising fringe meetings to discuss Governance Matters at all the Scottish party political conferences – beginning with a meeting on 21st October, 2011 in Inverness at the SNP Conference. The meeting will be addressed by Joan McAlpine MSP, Lloyd Austin of LINK and John Downie of SCVO.