

# **LINK Climate Change and Energy - Internal consensus statement**

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Sign-up at July 2016

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation  
Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland  
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group  
Bat Conservation Trust  
Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust  
Bumblebee Conservation Trust  
Butterfly Conservation Scotland  
Friends of the Earth Scotland  
Froglife  
Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust  
Marine Conservation Society  
National Trust for Scotland  
North East Mountain Trust  
Nourish Scotland  
Planning Democracy  
Plantlife Scotland  
Ramblers Scotland  
RSPB Scotland  
Royal Zoological Society of Scotland  
Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society  
Scottish Badgers  
Scottish Campaign for National Parks  
Scottish Countryside Rangers Association  
Scottish Wild Land Group  
Scottish Wildlife Trust  
Soil Association Scotland  
Trees for Life  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation  
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust  
Woodland Trust Scotland  
WWF Scotland

## **Preface**

LINK's over 35 member bodies represent a wide range of environmental interests, from tackling global issues of pollution to protecting the wildlife and landscapes of Scotland's land and seas, as well as promoting understanding, access and enjoyment.

While each body has its special areas of expertise, we share a concern for Scotland's precious natural environment on which people depend for their livelihoods and well-being; we all recognise the importance and urgency of tackling climate change, and the reality that this sometimes involves balancing different aspects of environmental concern in order to achieve the best overall outcome for all.

In coming together in this consensus on climate change and energy, LINK member bodies acknowledge the shared cause which we are striving collectively to address.

The internal consensus statement sets out the rationale for a broad agenda accepted by all signatory bodies. It concludes by bringing together a range of proposals from across the network, representing a coherent and mutually complementary suite of responses from LINK members to the global threat of climate change.

We aim to co-operate in pursuing/advocating this overall agenda, accepting that there may nevertheless be differences of view over specifics. These should of course be subject to healthy open debate, consistent with LINK's Operating Principles (see annex).

## **Background**

1 LINK's over 35 member bodies represent a wide range of environmental interests with the common goal of pursuing a more environmentally sustainable society. Our interests include:

- The protection of nature, natural systems, land and seascapes, and amenity;
- The responsibility to take action locally in the context of global challenges, for the sake of future generations as well as the present day;
- The over-riding need to live sustainably, within environmental limits; and
- Environmental justice – the fair treatment and participation of all people.

2 In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, humanity faces a critical phase in its relationship with nature. Current trends of consumption in industrialised societies already make this unsustainable, placing all civilisation in peril.

3 Climate change is a major threat to people and nature, urgently requiring global action.

4 As part of the industrialised world, Scotland has a clear responsibility<sup>1</sup> to be at the forefront of efforts to tackle climate change, showing leadership to help influence global efforts in this area. We see this as central to our understanding of climate justice.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'clear responsibility' implies that Scotland can and should do more than developing countries to conserve resources and decarbonise its energy supply.

5 Urgent action is required on many fronts if Scotland is to meet its responsibilities under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, and support the ambition of the Paris Agreement to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C.

6 A well-planned transformation to a low carbon Scotland could bring many benefits and help meet other government priorities, such as tackling fuel poverty and pollution, improving road safety, health and wellbeing, supporting green jobs and promoting technological innovation. At the same time, we must learn the lessons of the past and start planning now to ensure a just transition and redeployment for workers in carbon intensive industries.

7 Within this wide agenda, **action on energy** is a very high priority, because approximately 85% of current emissions are due to energy use. This statement therefore addresses **climate change and energy**<sup>2</sup>.

### **The challenge**

8 We must make a rapid transition to a low carbon Scotland. Every sector must contribute. This transition must include all aspects of energy production and use.

9 The Scottish Government has clearly stated its commitment to play its part, but more is needed in four respects:

- a **faster** pace of change to match the scale and urgency of the threat – averting the increasing risks and costs inherent in any delay;
- a **more sustainable, strategic and planned** pattern of energy developments – ensuring protection of the local environment for people and wildlife;
- a **fairer** transition – sharing the burdens and benefits of change, in Scotland and the world, for present and future generations; and
- a **more holistic** approach – fully integrating all energy dimensions (as discussed in the responses below).

### **Key responses**

10 Responses to this challenge will depend on political leadership, business and popular engagement, and appropriate financial investment.

Scotland's overall energy systems (including for electricity, heat and transport) should be developed to meet **four tests**:

- **Meet greenhouse gas emission targets** – upgraded to match the ambitions of the Paris Conference 2015 (a max 1.5°C rise);
- **Resilience** – secure supplies which take full account of production costs including 'externalities';
- **Protecting our wildlife, habitats, seas and landscapes** - managing the many impacts of energy systems on Scotland's environment; and
- **Equity** – fair sharing of the burdens and benefits of the low carbon transition, with arrangements to make energy affordable to all.

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<sup>2</sup> see LINK website for position on Climate Change and Land Use

11 The following proposed responses all contribute strongly to meeting these four tests:

- **Lighten the overall impact of our lifestyles** – tackling current unsustainable levels of consumption which are the primary driver of global environmental change.
  - Making more sustainable choices available and desirable;
  - More efficient use of resources, and reducing the energy used to produce and transport goods;
  - More walking and cycling, better public transport, less flying, shifting freight from road to rail; and
  - Less waste and more circular economy initiatives such as reuse and upcycling of materials.
- **Secure widespread participation** of individuals and communities:
  - Encouraging and helping people to choose routes to a low carbon future in their communities and for Scotland and making it happen; and
  - Sharing in the benefits of the low carbon transition; creating resilient communities with quality jobs, affordable warmth, and engaged citizens.
- **Reduce energy demand:**
  - Re-focusing energy policy on achieving the best use of energy rather than simply responding to demand;
  - Improving efficiency – this is very cost effective and the solutions are already available for buildings<sup>3</sup> and industry; and
  - Reducing demand would mean less pressure on the environment from energy developments.
- **Rapidly phase out the use of fossil hydrocarbons** for energy, urgently scaling down to zero:
  - Minimising the widespread negative impacts of all methods of production and extraction;
  - Prioritising uses of high social value<sup>4</sup> where no substitutes are available;
  - Conserving remaining stocks of fossil hydrocarbons for their many other uses (eg essential medicines, chemicals, plastics) well into the future; and
  - Maximising benefits in terms of improved infrastructure, jobs, and quality of life that can come with a low carbon economy.
- **Increase deployment** of appropriate renewable energy technologies:
  - Decarbonising the electricity sector by 2030<sup>5</sup>;
  - Creating local energy systems, with ownership by, participation of, and benefits to, local communities; and

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<sup>3</sup> Allowing for exceptions, for example for architectural heritage.

<sup>4</sup> Eg air ambulances

<sup>5</sup> In line with the existing Scottish Government targets and advice of UK Climate Change Committee

- Invest in research and development of a wide range of low carbon and environmentally friendly renewable technologies<sup>6</sup>.
- **More robust planning processes** – recognising that poor choices can seriously impact on the environment and social justice:
  - We should plan now for how best to meet Scotland’s energy needs over the long term, taking into account the full range of feasible low-carbon options and their likely impacts on environmental and other interests; and
  - Better strategic planning should guide development through a participative, co-ordinated process, with the aim of minimising adverse impacts and seeking opportunities to enhance environmental quality, avoiding delays, inefficiencies, and conflict in the future.
- **Leadership** is required from all sectors:
  - Government should take a much more explicit stance on decarbonising the economy, including active steps to redeploy assets (human, technological and financial) out of the fossil fuel sector, replace GDP with wellbeing as the prime measure of progress, and drive the change to a low carbon culture;
  - Business should adopt best practice in energy use, and work in partnership with employees and communities on sustainable energy solutions such as low carbon transport;
  - Communities should take a strong role in creating solutions that work for their area and interests in the transition to a low carbon future; and
  - The voluntary sector should demonstrate and promote best practice on carbon management within their organisations and engage with their members and supporters on the low carbon agenda.

**List names of LINK member organisations signing up to the internal consensus statement here.**

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<sup>6</sup> Eg such as heat pumps, solar panels, small scale sustainably sourced biomass, hydrogen fuel cells, electric vehicles, district heating, hydro, pump storage, wind and marine renewables

## **Proposals**

*This section illustrates the breadth of interests of LINK member bodies, offering some initial ideas of how the 'responses' set out above could be developed into more specific proposals to achieve the necessary changes. These proposals may be amended or added to over time. It supports the internal consensus statement, but is separate from it.*

**a) Encouraging and enabling low carbon lifestyles** through policies and infrastructure investments including:

- Promoting the 'circular economy' eg reusing products and materials continually<sup>7</sup> and local energy economies in order to help citizens make links between their own consumption and the wider energy system on which they depend;
- Reducing the *need* for travel, and other patterns of unsustainable consumption, and challenging the forces which drive their growth;
- making walking and cycling the easiest, cheapest and most convenient way to travel in cities and towns<sup>8 9</sup>;
- Using advice, incentives and regulation to encourage householders to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

**b) Engagement:** Individual and community involvement with the low carbon transition is essential to win a fair share of the benefits for their local area and secure wider public support for this agenda:

- Enhance opportunities for community ownership and involvement in energy solutions, and encourage developers to create shared-ownership opportunities;
- An increase of the current 500MW target of community and locally owned energy target to 1GW by 2020, and a further target of 2GW by 2030;<sup>10</sup>
- Financial support mechanisms including tax related benefits, should be used to create a level playing field for community and local energy projects;<sup>11,12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [Scottish Environment LINK's response to Making things last: Consultation on creating a more circular economy, 2015](#)

<sup>8</sup> through segregated cycle ways, walkways, integrated transport links, and progressive spatial planning

<sup>9</sup> Eg Spending 10% of all transport budget on active travel as proposed by Association of Directors of Public Health

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.communitypower.scot/news/up-targets/>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.communitypower.eu/images/Clientearth\\_report.pdf](http://www.communitypower.eu/images/Clientearth_report.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.communitypower.scot/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CommunityPowerScotlandOct2014Web.pdf>

- Enable small players to be able to participate in the market with a clear and stable regulatory framework;
- Make the grid accessible to community and local energy projects in a manner that is fair and transparent; and
- Continue support by the Scottish Government through community and locally owned energy targets and support mechanisms such as the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES).

**c) Take responsibility for Scotland’s whole carbon footprint:**

- The planned phasing out of fossil fuels, including production and export, with a just transition for workers;
- Increase emphasis on commitment to reduce consumption emissions as well as production emissions; and
- All investment and policy decisions should be informed by a full account of the upstream and downstream emissions that will be associated with these developments (‘lifecyle emissions’).

**d) Strategic planning for a low carbon Scotland – planning of energy systems should:**

- Take a holistic approach and include the diversity and balance of energy sources, and most efficient use of energy;
- Take into account new developments and emerging technologies, as well as repowering and retrofitting existing infrastructure;
- Set a long-term and consistent framework for public and private sector investment;
- Maximise the special potential of strategic spatial planning, informed by robust environmental assessment, to increase transparency, reduce uncertainties and steer developments towards the most appropriate sites on land and at sea, and minimise planning conflicts;
- Invest in research into baselines, impact assessments and effective mitigation to better inform options;
- Ensure and enable citizen participation in strategic and site specific planning as required under the Aarhus Convention<sup>13</sup>, including the right to access to justice where conflict arises, ideally through a specialist environmental court or tribunal<sup>14</sup>; and
- Introduce an equal right of appeal to improve decision making and increase public confidence in the planning system<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/sites/www.foe-scotland.org.uk/files/An%20Environmental%20Court%20or%20Tribunal%20for%20Scotland,%20FoES%20Policy%20Briefing,%20April%202015.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.scotlink.org/wp/files/documents/LINK-response-to-Independent-Planning-Review.pdf>

**e) Design a whole energy system transition** with renewable power generation supported by greater levels of demand side management, interconnection, storage and distributed generation, including:

- Reduce energy demand by at least 20% by 2030<sup>16</sup>;
- All homes<sup>17</sup> to be an Energy Performance Certificate rating of band 'C' or above by 2025, on the way to net zero carbon homes by 2050<sup>18</sup>;
- Deploy a diverse range of renewable technologies to meet at least 45% of total energy demand in 2030 and 100% by 2050<sup>19</sup>;
- 40% of heat and 15% of transport fuels should be sourced from renewables by 2030<sup>20</sup>;
- Develop smarter more flexible energy systems including energy storage and local energy systems that maximise the efficient use of renewable energy.

**f) Invest in the low carbon transition:** fundamentally shift current investment priorities towards a low carbon Scotland:

- Reorient all public sector investment decisions towards low carbon infrastructure<sup>21</sup>;
- Use fiscal levers to incentivise low carbon behaviours and gradually remove incentives that support high carbon activity as part of the just transition;
- Divest public sector investments in fossil fuels and redeploy in low carbon developments;
- Support research and development in low carbon industries for example through development agencies, awards, and grants.

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<sup>16</sup> From a 2010 baseline. *RICARDO –AEA Renewable energy in Scotland in 2030. Report forthcoming.*

<sup>17</sup> Allowing for exceptions due to technical or heritage concerns

<sup>18</sup> Existing Homes Alliance Scotland; Maximising the Minimum, WWF Scotland

<sup>19</sup> This could involve the further development of new renewable solutions such as geothermal heat, energy from waste water, solar paving, and hydrogen fuels.

<sup>20</sup> Ricardo-AEA

<sup>21</sup> Scotland's Way Ahead



## Annex

### Extract from LINK Operating Principles

#### 9 Consensus

LINK operates on the basis of consensus - 'signing' up to the area of common ground. An acknowledged vital function of LINK is developing consensus amongst members and with others. Consensus is invaluable as a lobbying tool, and the relative strength of collective LINK positions is hugely important in our advocacy to decision-makers.

Like any coalition, we rely, for public credibility, on an attitude of mutual respect and trust amongst our member bodies. So, for example, whilst some members may not necessarily support the belief or approach of all other members on given issues, the cohesion of LINK is acknowledged by dealing with these differences within the LINK forum, and by avoiding conspicuous public disagreements on key issues, as far as possible.

It's also vital that where members are signed up to a LINK position, they reflect to external audiences the actual extent and limits of that consensus; it is not appropriate for any member to imply that the collective consensus is wider, or goes further, than is the case. See also section 7 above.

Equally, the individual positions which members take in their own right should not be at odds with any LINK position to which they have also voluntarily signed up; no one benefits from divergences which can also undermine our reputation.

Where consensus has not been achieved or is not possible, mutual respect for members' divergent views remains equally important.

The role of the main Representative, and any representatives on task forces and subgroups, is pivotal in ensuring the desired coherence!

**9.1 Disputes between member bodies** There will be occasions where member bodies have profound differences of opinion, or see that in future the potential for conflict may arise, on issues to do with their or another member body's internal operations and which are not directly relevant in the context of taskforces / network meeting discussions. In these instances the LINK Board offers the following guidance and where necessary can act as 'honest broker'.

Explicitly seek talks with other protagonist(s) in time to seek a way through that does not culminate in division of view negatively presented in media. Diversity of views can be presented positively and it's in the sector's interests to show public and government that the sector knows how to handle differences maturely.

Identify a sub in your organisation who will be available also for dialogue/contact as the process moves forward and may heat up.

Let LINK Chair/Chief Officer know that the discussion/process is starting and what the differences in view are, in brief.

Avoid 'green on green' attacks, explore the differences, consider outcomes which are least damaging for the issues and for the sector's reputation.

If talks/contact make insufficient progress, break down or could be helped by facilitation, seek LINK board advice on facilitators and on handling the forward process including any media/public commentary.

Ensure that your organisation's main player (or their sub) remains in good communication with the other protagonist(s) even when views may be polarised (the more polarised, the more contact is likely to be important). Identify and use other envoys.

If and when planning media release / response to journalists around the issues, inform other protagonist(s) of your planned line of comment and proposed timing, with time to allow further discussions, and for other party/ies to have time to develop their own commentary / responses.

Keep the situation and relationships under review as part of the bigger picture of what the sector aims to do, and its wider reputation.

LINK Board will also keep such situations under review and keep in touch with those concerned given potential impacts on the trust on which the network relies