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Nicole Paterson, CEO and Lisa Tennant, Chair  
SEPA

22 August 2025

**Subject:** follow up to our meeting on Monday 11 August 2025

Dear Nicole and Lisa

Thank you for your time on Monday 11 August 2025. It was good to meet you both and find out about SEPA priorities and ambition to 2030.

We looked, prior to our meeting, at SEPA's corporate plan and annual operating plan and recognised very clearly the five corporate aims you've identified. We discussed leadership at a time of crisis, given the state of Scotland's environment, the nature, climate and pollution crises, and the drivers of change and Scotland's response in mitigation and adaptation. While there are many areas where the work of LINK members and SEPA overlap, we discussed the role of landscape approaches to nature based solutions, specifically natural flood management and the role of planning, stakeholder action, effective legislation and effective use of public funding through, for example, agricultural subsidies.

We discussed the need to maximise the opportunities to make progress urgently given the short timescale left and the increasing impact of unpredictable changes, and the 'new normal'.

It is clear that many of the priorities we see at LINK for urgent action at scale, fall across SEPA and wider agency action. For example, we discussed the proposed pilot projects in the Dee and South Esk as we all look forward to the work NatureScot is coordinating on landscape scale projects and reflecting 'the art of the possible', as well as the potential for nature networks, Rural Land Use Partnerships and stakeholder engagement. Your work seemed very well advanced and we would be very interested to see your plans for stakeholder engagement, who they are and the outcomes you are looking for. It may overlap with some of the asks we have pulled together for the election and future Government plans. LINK will be launching our election manifesto in September and we can see a role for further discussion with SEPA around many of the issues we are already raising within Parliament ahead of the election. You should have received an invitation to our launch already.

You made it very clear that SEPA's priorities are to deliver your corporate and statutory responsibilities, using the new teams moving forward. We will set up a meeting with Nathan Critchlow-Watton and David Harley, as you suggested, to focus on approaches to RBMP4 (on which



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we will have a new report coming out shortly), water environment policy framework development, and pumped storage hydro schemes. We hope to be able to get a date in the diaries soon for that. We will be in touch with them directly and via Scot Mathieson.

We also agreed it would be helpful to us all to meet up again in February / March 2026, at which point, both our corporate plans will be nearer 2030 and the targets Scotland has in 2030, as well as looking forward to a new parliamentary session with new parties and urgencies. We will be in touch with Laura to get dates in diaries now while they are relatively empty.

In the meantime, we look forward to picking up our relationship with SEPA, as together we work towards a healthier environment for Scotland and future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Long, CEO Scottish Environment LINK

and Craig Macadam, Convenor of LINK's Freshwater Group and co-Director of Buglife.



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