

This letter is sent by email only: deborah@scotlink.org



Deborah Long
Chief Executive
Scottish Environment LINK
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12 June 2026

Dear Deborah,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June. Please take this response as coming on behalf of John Mason and Sir Andrew Cahn (who have seen your incoming letter and are both copied into this response) as well as myself.

Thank you for the important work you lead through Scottish Environment Link. This is deeply valued by the RSPB and, as you set out in your letter, we know RSPB capacity has played an important role in its development and delivery over past years. The same is true for the other Links across the UK – you may be aware that I have recently taken on the Chair role at Wildlife and Countryside Link in England. We do appreciate and understand the deep relationship that exists between the RSPB Scotland team and Scottish Environment Link and this has been clearly communicated to us by colleagues within the RSPB too. Like you, we also appreciate the opportunity you see to make forward steps on the agenda in Scotland and the role you see for RSPB in helping with this in the future.

I would like to give you a little of the rationale for the change proposals we are now consulting on with all RSPB employees.

Like every other charity and business at the moment, we are facing an extremely challenging economic backdrop, and we must tackle it head on if we are to continue delivering our mission in the long term. I'm sure I don't have to tell you that the pressures facing nature and the charities working to protect it are intensifying. Thanks to our brilliant members and supporters at the RSPB our income has continued to grow, but simply not fast enough to keep up with recently rising costs – these have increased from around £150 million in 2021/22 to around £185 million today.

We need people to deliver our work for nature. Staffing is our largest cost, and we also face ongoing external pressures in this area: alongside general inflation and the 6.7% rise in the National Living Wage for 2026, recent increases in employer National Insurance contributions have added around £2 million to our annual wage bill. That's why the RSPB is now looking at how we operate – simplifying our structures and reducing our costs, so more of our resources flow directly to saving species and restoring landscapes, both on our nature reserves and beyond.

Because we are now in the legal consultation period with employees, we are not able to comment on specific proposals or share these with you as you have requested, although we can say that having recently completed a review of our nature reserve operations, we don't

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The RSPB is part of BirdLife International, a network of passionate organisations, working together to save nature across the world.

Patron: His Majesty The King **President:** Dr Amir Khan **Chief Executive:** Beccy Speight

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anticipate making further changes to this area of our work. We are committed to meaningful consultation, minimising compulsory redundancies wherever possible, and supporting our dedicated and talented teams through this process. These proposed changes will ensure the RSPB remains resilient, responsive, and ambitious for nature – ready to protect birds and wildlife when they need us most, long into the future.

I should emphasise that these are proposals at present and I am certain we will make some changes to them on the back of the ongoing consultation process. Once we have completed this consultation period and have arrived at our final outcomes, I will make sure that these are shared with you for your consideration and planning. This is likely to be in a few months' time.

Thank you for taking the time to send your views – we will definitely consider these as we move forward to arriving at our final outcomes. Thank you too, as always, for our important joint working relationship – it is hugely valued.

Yours sincerely,



Beccy Speight
RSPB Chief Executive

cc Sir Andrew Cahn, Chair of RSPB Council
John Mason, Chair of RSPB Scotland Advisory Committee/Trustee

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