

Action points from LINK SEPA meeting held on 4 May.

Present: David Sigsworth, Chair, Campbell Gemmell, Chief Executive, Dave Gorman, Head of Environmental Strategy Alan Farquhar, Manager, Environmental Partnerships Unit (Waste), Mark Aitken, Land Unit Manager
Helen Zealley, President, Dan Barlow, LINK trustee, WWF Scotland, Vicki Swales, LINK Sustainable Land Use task force, RSPB; Duncan McLaren, FoES; Maggie Keegan, LINK Planning task force, LINK Single Outcome Agreements task force, SWT; Alice Walsh, Development Officer

1. Purpose of meetings

We agreed that these high level meetings are useful for mutual understanding of policy and environmental objectives and should be a driver for further cooperation between relevant policy staff. Notes of the meetings would be action orientated.

Action: Alice Walsh, Dave Gorman

2. Issues arising from the last meeting

An update on last meeting covered:

Sustainable Economic Growth: SEPA's Better Regulation Agenda addresses this. We agreed it useful to have a more focussed meeting on this. The LINK Congress in November, provisionally on Environment and Law and may be a further opportunity to explore.

Action: SEPA lead Rob Morris, LINK office to liaise

SEPA's role in relation to championing sustainable development: We agreed that operational issues are covered by the better regulation agenda though there remains the question of overarching purpose.

Action: further discussion, Dave Gorman and LINK members via LINK office.

State of Environment Reporting: We agreed that a meeting would be useful to discuss further.

Action: meeting involving Dave Gorman and Martin Marsden, Duncan McLaren, Dan Barlow and other LINK members (LINK office)

Carbon accounting: Carolyn Varasi is leading, and members are welcome to liaise.

Waste: Kenny Boag leading for SEPA. Kim Fellows tenure helped move the debate on, a new sponsor has just started. We agreed the value of discussion to help the process over the next few months.

Action: Kenny Boag, Alan Reid, Dan Barlow, Duncan McLaren (and LINK office)

Flooding Bill: agreed to arrange a meeting. SEPA contacts are Les Watson, David Faichney. Lisa Webb at RSPB is the convenor of LINK's Freshwater task force.

Action: L Watson, L Webb (and LINK office)

Scottish Environment Week: Agreed it was of value to SEPA though financial constraints continue. LINK is also under financial pressure and requires additional funding for the event to be sustainable.

3. Single Outcome Agreements

LINK issues and SEPAs broadly corresponded and shared similar views of the task ahead. SEPA's comments on LINK report were that the need for longer term planning

is not so well featured, and that land use planning seems limited to historic environment. SEPA is profiling the range of its contacts with local authorities, and will be doing an analysis report, and can share this information with LINK. Both organisations are mindful that legal duties, though devolved, are ultimately the responsibility of national government. SEPA is designing a process for cascading national issues down which will be useful to councils.

Alan Farquhar leads for SEPA, Jo Green on Planning. LINK work is led by Elizabeth Leighton WWFS (eleighton@wwfscotland.org.uk). Ongoing liaison was agreed.

Looking wider there is opportunity to prepare the ground for the Environment Bill (mooted for 2011-12) An environment report and a coherent account of what is and is not working and what is needed would be useful, and there is scope for cooperation here.

Action point: Alan F and LINK SOA TF to liaise (and LINK office).

4. Land Use

There was broad agreement and similar concerns about getting some positive outcome from the first strategy; about its relation with the National Planning Framework and land use planning more generally and the urban /rural divide. Contaminated land, Peatlands and the Pack Inquiry were opportunities to show how a strategy can be helpful and we agreed to liaise further in the fairly short window to influence.

Action: Dave Gorman, Mark Aitken, Vicki Swales (and LINK office)

5. Climate change and energy.

LINK was keen to maximise opportunities SEPA has to take leadership. It was agreed that a workshop would be useful involving David Sigsworth, Campbell Gemmell and Dave Gorman, and LINK bodies on Climate task force (headed by Sam Gardner (sjgardner@wwfscotland.org.uk).

Action: Dave Gorman to liaise with Sam Gardner (and LINK office)

6. SEPA's forward Plans.

The Operation Plan, has 4 main drivers which are changing the way SEPA works; these are better regulation, better science, better skilled staff and better systems. The Plan would shortly be available on the website.

Summary of Liaison to be progressed

* indicates responsibility for instigating the meeting

Topic for discussion	SEPA contact (s)	LINK contact (s)	LINK office contact
SEG/BRA	Rob Morris	Duncan McLaren, Dan Barlow, +,	AW to facilitate. alice@scotlink.org
SEPA's role: championing SDev	Dave Gorman	DM, DB +	AW to facilitate
SoE reporting	Martin Marsden, DG	DM, DB+	AW to facilitate
Waste	Kenny Boag, Alan Reid	Duncan McLaren, Dan Barlow, dmclaren@foe-scotland.org.uk ;	AW for information

		dbarlow@wwfscotland.org.uk;	
Flooding Bill	David Faichney, Les Watson	Lisa Webb* (Freshwater TF) lisa.webb@rspb.org.uk	Susan Guest for information. susan@scotlink.org
SOAs	Alan Farquhar	Elizabeth Leighton* (SOAs TF) eleighton@wwfscotland.org.uk	Jen Anderson for information, jen@scotlink.org
SLUS	Dave Gorman, Mark Aitken	Vicki Swales* (SLUS TF) Vicki.Swales@rspb.org.uk	Kate MacColl for information, kate@scotlink.org
Climate change & energy workshop	David Sigsworth, Campbell Gemmell, Dave Gorman*	Sam Gardner (Climate TF); sjgardner@wwfscotland.org.uk	Kate MacColl for information, kate@scotlink.org
SEW liaison	Peter Finney	Andy Myles, Jen Anderson	(ongoing)

Note: As many of the topics are likely to involve the same people (from LINK bodies at any rate), hopefully we can gather several topics into one longer meeting.

Alice Walsh
11 May 2010.