

## **SNH – what to cut and what to prioritise, and working differently with NGOs.**

### **Financials:**

Ian Jardine requested views at meeting on 1 September 2011. He expects a 20-25% reduction over 3 years, best to be expected is a 5% reduction year on year, on top of 11% reductions already made. Roughly in line with other SEARS organisations.

Some givens: increased work on Marine, so there will be heavier cuts elsewhere. Staffing - no compulsory redundancies yet.

Discussed: preventative spend argument to draw out, also contradictory spend to counteract other drivers.

At the meeting RD put the case in terms of implementation or losing expertise.

Approach suggested by LINK is to identify: What is the statutory requirement and what are the things SNH can do that will make other things happen. Action for LINK.

Example: production of brochures & leaflets, which IJ said are going straight to web. Lloyd pointed out that the time spent in producing even the web versions could be better spent elsewhere.

Nature of Scotland publication – used to communicate to land managers, owners and occupiers of SSSIs. Urged SNH to drop it. SNH suggested it may be a victim of budget cuts in future.

Link suggested that raising public awareness can be more cheaply and effectively done by partnerships with NGOs and others. NGOs have memberships hence links to communities. NGOs can provide leadership and delivery at lower costs. This is one area of work where NGOs and SNH could work more productively together.

**Access legislation follow through:** What specifically should SNH be doing? Not doing quite a lot: no back up for local access forums, Local authorities not taking cases to court. AB says more pressure needed on local government minister. IJ said Gov considers job done, little interest. Funding for access deliver was for 6 years only, parallel with dropping support of ranger services.

Link suggested SNH should drop its work on long distance routes (a tourism enterprise?). Area officers could at least arbitrate/comment where spurious nature conservation reasons given by access deniers.

SNH put more effort into SRDP for access measures?

Use membership orgs like RAS, MCoFS to reach public. NGOs don't have the resources to monitor effectiveness of delivery. Can work with SNH to identify good practice and promote to other areas.

**Landscape:** from John Mayhew's meeting with staff a week previously seems that a lot of good work is going on.

SNH welcomes observations on how much to focus on renewable energy applications – means other things won't get done. Some sense that objections are futile.

Production of facts base by SNH is useful

Use tools of NEA, TEEB to promote positive values.

SNH comment on financial drivers?

SNH influence VisitScotland promotional budget/outputs?

### **Biodiversity:**

Challenge to make rest of public sector deliver biodiversity strategy. The refreshed strategy needs to get more delivery from other spending routes, SSRDP, RBMPs etc. Link asked how they could help. IJ indicated maintaining contact with Roddy to take forward the following:

- Toolkit of NEA and TEEB now available.
- Clarify what SNH is doing and what contributions NGOs can make.
- Combine forces to agree messages in explaining successes and benefits.
- Agree structures. Nothing like last time where gov participants were too junior to influence or change anything.
- Top level group ideally chaired by Minister
- (NPF indicators – likely to drive SNH work programme.)
- SNH role to say loud and clear where duty is not met and identify perverse actions/drivers.
- Work with NGOs who can back up with evidence and some data.
- Useful work on Cosla guidance on reporting and indicators for SOAs. Reporting does not apply to some parts of central gov.
- Meet NGOs to agree language, messages, structures.