

## Notes & Actions from Strategic Planning Discussion in Dunblane on 19 November 2010

### Chair's Welcome, Board Reports

Funding DL outlined Board intentions for a funding response team which would review LINK services as its funding became tighter; news from all three core funders was awaited over the next few months.

eNGo environmental performance DL outlined Board plan to survey how members were addressing environmental performance, what obstacles they faced and whether support was desired. Hugh Green to contact Reps soon; an internal report would go to the January Board. **Action: Reps to identify their carbon contact to Hugh**

### SNH relationships with ENGOs

Andrew Thin had addressed Congress (18/11) indicating empathy with the voluntary sector and outlining his concern to ensure public support for difficult political decisions. In discussion with Simon Pepper (SNH Board) the meeting now explored the status of the relationship between SNH, LINK and members, first welcoming the positive change signalled by Simon's appointment to the Board. Strong concern was voiced that Andrew Thin's 'rapprochement' was not matched in his consistent tactic of getting close to government, playing down intrinsic value of environment and disdaining partnership with eNGOs; also at the division which had developed between SNH's high-level positioning and Agency work at operational level; the meeting hoped Andrew was aware that relationships between SNH staff, LINK task forces and individual eNGOs were doing well. What the sector expected was staunch defence of natural heritage / environment / sustainable development where Government and other interests might be 'trampling'. There was anger that Andrew had failed to acknowledge the importance of eNGO advocacy (in comparison to that of SNH) over recent years and, whilst the meeting agreed LINK should work with him to restore SNH's brand they hoped for his acknowledgement of these points.

Conclusions were:

- On this basis to move forward with the aim of achieving mutual respect and genuine partnership working for shared goals
- To develop 6-monthly Chair level SNH-LINK meetings to raise/explore concerns – hopefully as mutually honest, forthright and respectful exchanges - differentiating where issues-led, director-level meetings are instead required. If SNH is feeling exposed, please pick up the phone
- To ensure agendas for Chair-level exchanges are appropriate to improving mutual respect and understanding of respective roles – ie issues which all face that affect promotion of environment in society
- Individual eNGOs encouraged to work through Simon to improve strategic relationships with SNH (for a few, more meetings won't bring additional benefit as there is good contact already)

Additional points

- Clarification of respective roles of Agency and eNGO network worth exploring at Chair-level meetings as a topic in own right
- LINK in similar place with SEPA and should flag lack of champion for environment; legitimate to raise concern with both Agencies that management of environment is not correct; scope for a joint meeting with both agencies further down the road
- Further explanation requested of SNH decision to object less

- Network effort to engage the public noted (everyone campaigns 03-07); individual member action also; scope to think further
- Trend for SNH to consider is that of civil servants giving presentations to conferences rather than Agency players
- Bodies with recreation remit would value return of 'SNH-NGO Liaison'
- Turnover of SNH Board and Environment Minister are opportunities to nominate
- What had prompted and happened to the 'third sector consultation'

Simon thanked LINK for the discussion. He noted both the anger and resentment and the desire to move on. He invited members and LINK to keep him posted if they did not get responses they expected from SNH and to send him their annual reports. He offered to visit any member organisations interested. DL thanked Simon and hoped progress would be made.

### Successes and Lessons of the last 12 months

CD review of LINK's year - shown; copies to be circulated to main reps. **Action: Staff**

Climate - Recognising value of letting others lead (SCCS), engaging with other coalitions without compromising own positions, identifying what LINK can usefully pursue in tandem. Recognising LINK can contribute across the board in relation to the SG's adaptation framework and sectoral action plans, putting ourselves on SG's radar for this, securing (hopefully) place on stakeholder group. Must look at geo-political impacts too.

Biodiversity - Achieving wider appreciation that climate change and biodiversity are sides of a coin. Upping peatland game via IUCN project partnership and gaining recognition of mitigation potential of peatland restoration. Proactively engaging despite bureaucratic constipation during Year of Biodiversity, in SNH report card, ecosystem health indicators working group, own seminar with LBAP officers, resigning from BRIG group, inputting to WANE bill development. In future must present biodiversity as part of other issues – change of mission for BioTF is likely.

SLUS – getting this on the agenda via amendment to Climate Bill, remaining on front foot, pressing for wide scope (SG Draft falls short), running effective conference with main stakeholders ahead SG consultation, alerting RAE Committee to issues (will they pursue?), being referenced, raising awareness. Currently no outcome process in sight and will need more effort, even if that doesn't achieve all our goals. Lessons are that we should have tried for a meeting with more senior civil servants earlier on, probed fundamental tension between LUS and planning. With funding ahead threatened is ecosystem services a tactic to consider?

Silos – we are still challenged by silo-ism in the way in which government operates; our TFs are a form of silos which we may need to challenge internally.

Planning – Scottish Planning Policy review engagement avoiding complete fait accompli in pleasing the business lobby; lobbied officials and politicians on SD; achieved damage limitation. Learned anew the power of officials and 'silo empire builders'. SPP is otherwise not all bad and we made progress re forestry section. Concerns over Public local inquiries / need for / costs of / management of/ etc.

Agriculture - focus has been at both EU level and on domestic implementation; inputted to EU Committee work on Pack and had some impact; leaked version of EC communication indicates mixed results, all depends on post 2013 budget. Defra is getting our messages and whilst Pack recommends status quo, EU decision will draw on UK (not Scottish only) input, though this will not be of benefit to us in relation to agri-environment. Inputted to SRDP though future will be heavily influenced by budget; official analysis afoot for which more pressure is needed; 'public benefit' likely to be hit hard; there is time to influence up to Feb 2011.

Marine – robust marine renewables position with good sign-up which can be extended. TF got what it wanted of legislation assisted by Trusts funding, MPA Officers and political/parliamentary support of various LINK players. Pursued coalitions of support for various issues successfully. Note unpredictability of RAE committee members. Challenges ahead given general view that marine ecosystem is not as damaged as MTF feel it is (ie more so than terrestrial ecosystem). MTF will work on climate and integrated coastal zone management, in conjunction with relevant members/TFs.

SOA – TF succeeded in identifying what environmental/SD musts need to be in the SOAs; wide member input helped to create this baseline; close working with SNH on development of environmental indicators at national level; audit of SOAs now completed; seminar with various government players planned for Feb 2011; remains important for LINK to engage with LAs despite capacity issues – we can be strategic about our input.

Landscape – thanks to TF lobbying within Scottish Landscape Forum saw Landscape Charter published this autumn; this is damage limitation, though as good as we can have with a Government not interested in landscape, and Charter forms basis for further effort. Lessons are that Government doesn't yet get it and that TF leadership pays off. TF bringing in other sectors (greenspace, built environment, tourism, farmers). TF's hill tracks work led by MCoS successful, briefing MSPs on issues and contexts.

SEW – 2010 Week was fraught organisationally, though members did great work delivering very good seminars. Lessons: continue to use Week to 'lobby light', plan much earlier, use poorly attended Thurs eve session to end the Week on a bang (planned pub quiz in 2011).

**SWOT analysis of next 18 months /**

## SWOT analysis of next 18 months

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
The focussed task forces	Own silo-ism re strategic thinking eg on GDP	Cross-cutting approaches / Integration via more efficient regulation by SEPA	Silos/Government inertia/status quo despite evidence
Staff expertise	Budget cuts, loss of grants, loss of experienced staff	Government offloading tasks / Opportunity for radical visions	Budget cuts / Disappearance of Euro/ Cuts to our grants
Strong voice as collective / independence	Engaging in overarching transformative stuff (eg, economics, behaviour change)	New Scottish Administration / Legislative implementation	New Scottish Administration (re-education needed)
Forum and ethos / Good ideas / 'thought leaders' / Friendship	Many members lacking time to respond/engage	More partnerships because of recession	
No. & diversity of Member orgs	Capacity to engage at local level re SOA, Development Plans, etc	Local Authorities	LAs / CoSLA /
Alliances we make externally	Loss of membership as people choose between charities	Scope for innovative solutions delivering multi objectives	Dumping of Govt responsibilities
Management of LINK	Knowing when to stop/say no/prioritisation issues	Reviews for efficiency / Scope for innovative funding models & new cost effective approaches	Loss of key LA & Agencies staff and of ambition on non statutory duties and legal obligations
Policy based on robust science/ spread of policy and science staff	TF workload	Alternatives to GDP	Disconnect between levels of government in terms of EU/UK/Scottish drivers
Half million membership	Divisions over energy policy / not always in agreement	Influencing silent majority	Public attitudes ahead / Silent majority - influence or caution?
LINK brand is respected	Where LINK brand stands in public perception	Awareness raising, volunteers	More unemployed people
Commitment and persistence	Relationship with statutory agencies breaking down	Improving relationships with statutory agencies	
		Scottish Forestry Bill / Land Use Strategy	Disposal of estate/ forest policy

## Priorities for LINK work to Spring 2012

Priority	Mechanism	Forum	Timescale	Resources
Sustainable Scotland	Summarise essence of TEEB for LINK, engage with TEEB / promote TEEB thinking across our areas including marine Building on and complementing economics work already done/being done (by members, SNH, Carnegie, etc) identify appropriate experts to inform us, develop action plan which includes holding workshop with external economist, developing understanding of why GDP prevails, improving our communications into this debate Explore scope for joint conference with SNH	BTF, CATF - TEEB TF? LINK generally	Carnegie report due Jan 2011 Assess report and evaluate own skills post Jan 2011	JMT, FoES, SWT, RSPB, RZSS, Plantlife expressed interest initially Support with workshop coordination
Sustainable Land Use	Pursue a reasonable 1 <sup>st</sup> SLUS (due March 2011) Reassess that after 2011 elections determining how to influence delivery and development of 2 <sup>nd</sup> strategy. Focus on indicative spatial planning and national marine plan, environmental indicators, services which identify appropriate land for different uses, potentially links with land ownership issues. Develop TF work plan drawing on other TFs inc PTF, LTF, ATF, MTF. Joint ATF/SLUTF briefings to influence 2013 negotiations	Existing SLU TF + ATF + DTF + FWTF + other TFs	1 <sup>st</sup> strategy ready March Reassess Summer 2011 Develop spatially indicative ideology for late 2011 Link our developing proposals with our CAP aims for 2013	Staff support for: - parliamentary advocacy - media work - engaging wider membership at strategic points  Existing SLUTF membership commitment assumed
Planning	PTF will draft a plan to include - Continued policy work How Planning Act is working Potential critique of approach being taken to development (using renewables as case study) and options for more sustainable approach (requires discussion with SNH) Engagement with MTF over national marine plan Assessing SNH's position/guidelines on casework Reviewing how SEA is falling out	PTF + MTF on policy work + LTF	Ongoing Spring 200 for Scottish marine plan Pre/post Scottish elections for general stuff Post SEPA review for SEA	Resources required and members committing to take part, to be confirmed in PTF plan
Local Government	(Publish LINK audit & hold seminar with others) Prepare for 2011 and 2012 elections with LINK manifesto asks & other work Reassess what is needed/possible for us once approach of new Administration is clear	SOATF  SOATF / Board - tbc	(Audit, Seminar Jan & Feb 2011) Scottish election work to May 2011 ? local election work from June 2011	SOA TF  TBC

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Energy	<p>TFs to review own positions/need for development</p> <p>Other general energy focuses identified were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep promoting conservation/demand reduction</li> <li>- Consider biomass in the round</li> <li>- Costly local inquiries / budget planning</li> <li>- Is there scope for a piece of work assessing what Scotland wants to (as opposed to can) produce?</li> </ul> <p>Renewables focusses identified were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- linking with SNH</li> <li>- highlighting system failures (see Planning above)</li> <li>- tensions in LINK</li> <li>- community benefits</li> </ul>	<p>Energy generally: MTF, ATF, LTF, CATF</p> <p>Renewable energy – PTF, MTF, LTF</p>	<p>MTF position - in 12 months</p> <p>TFs review positions – asap</p> <p>Other work - tbc</p>	<p>Renewables – Marine staff and TF, SWT, APRS, MCoS, Soil Assocn</p> <p>Energy generally - JMT, RSPB, WWFS and MTF members</p>
Scrutiny of legislation (holding Govt to account)	<p>Manifesto sub section in draft</p> <p>LINK paper on governance to be drafted for lobbying purposes pre elections (for consultation over winter)</p> <p>Lobbying / building into policy work / Shift coming – be ahead of the wave</p>	<p>LINK Board lead</p> <p>Cross-TF approach</p> <p>With wider society incl BEFS, SCVO</p>	Ongoing	Lloyd Austin & Andy Myles to coordinate the process
Watching brief: Access to Justice	<p>FoES funded project and open enquiry relate</p> <p>LINK will keep eye on pulse</p> <p>If campaign opportunity emerges all members will be consulted about possible action</p>	LWA, DMcL, ABM to coordinate	Ongoing	LWA, DMcL, ABM to coordinate and keep members informed of opportunities
Watching brief: networking with civic Scotland	<p>To advocate outdoor / real world learning via Manifesto and other routes</p> <p>Elections and budget and SD work with SCVO &amp; BEFS &amp; others</p>	Real World Learning / SD Education Policy Officers Network	Ongoing	
Watching brief: Public attitudes	Workshops (internal) re our potential role in behaviour change and other cross cutting issues			

### Reports & weblinks

Learning lessons from large-scale developments. 2004. <http://www.rogercrofts.net/files/newfiles/wwflessonslargedevelopments.pdf>

The economics of ecosystems and biodiversity - <http://teebweb.org/>

Sustainability communications <http://www.futerra.co.uk/home>

LINK/JA/Dec 2010