

Note of the meeting of LINK's Economics Group held on 31 August 2017 at FoES office, Edinburgh

- 1. Attending:** Matthew Crichton (FoES) Convenor, Bruce Wilson (SWT), Vice-Convenor, Lloyd Austin (RSPB), David Downie (WWFS) by phone, Phoebe Cochrane (Climate Policy officer), Alice Walsh (Development officer).

Apologies: Denis Mollison (HWDT), Ric Lander (FoES), Daphne Vlastari (Advocacy Officer).

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were accepted.

Valuing Nature Statement This was endorsed by the members present. It will go to the Board with a request to let the Group know if there is anything more to be done in relation. **Action: Alice**

City region deal. SEPA will give an update on the Stirling deal at the LINK/SEPA meeting on 11 September. Bruce and Lloyd are attending.

Working with business. Matthew had tweaked Phoebe's draft of the meeting in March and circulated it to attendees (no comments) and then to this Group. It was agreed to flag to members via the bulletin, with a covering note from Matthew, and draw to the Board's attention.

Action: Matthew, Alice

Report to FPF and text for LINK webpages. Phoebe and Karen had updated the website as discussed.

National Performance Framework. ScotGov plans for it may be clearer after Tuesday's announcement of the Programme for Government. Daphne had taken over representation at the NPF stakeholder meetings and would report to this group. **Action: Daphne**

Investment. FoES had drafted a letter to Keith Brown (circulated) also signed by Common Weal and New Economics Foundation, including the need to integrate environmental imperatives into their proposal for a Scottish National Investment Bank. To be seen what results, there may be mention in Tuesday's Programme for Govt (**Note: there has been**) Depending on what comes forward there may be more to do ahead.

Speakers at Economics Group meetings. A good idea for future meetings.

SEPA: for the meeting on 11 September there is an item on the CE bill, to ask if SEPA would support a material consumption target.

SEPA international innovation panel steering group: LINK was asked to nominate a representative which came to this Group; Matthew has volunteered. The first meeting is on 16 September. The group will propose people for a virtual panel of international experts for SEPA to draw upon as part of its One Planet Living initiative. Matthew will brief Bruce and Lloyd about it before the 11 September and members to brief Matthew also. **Action: Matthew, EG members**

- 3. Economy Jobs and Fair Work Committee Inquiry into Economic Data** Daphne has asked for an the deadline. Phoebe would liaise with Daphne on the content. Lloyd suggested the Valuing Nature doc could be incorporated with previous work on this topic.

Action: Daphne, Phoebe (note – response was submitted 1 Sept).

- 4. Air Passenger Duty consultation.** In her Climate role for LINK Phoebe had offered to liaise with Mike Robinson and others on a response. LINK could challenge Govt's assumption they can afford to allow the extra emissions within the objectives of their climate plan. It was unclear if any LINK members were responding. David would check for WWFS, Matthew for

FoES. Phoebe was authorised to liaise with them (and SCCS) and respond on the Group's behalf. **Action: members, Phoebe**

- 5. Climate Change Bill: Just Transition Commission.** Phoebe was working on the LINK response, had circulated the draft to LINK groups and subgroups with a view to them checking over content, and add/amending to last section which is broad, where mainly legislative related asks can be suggested. There are sections in the response which addresses policy join up. We should not lose previous thinking wrt NPF, in particular, the briefing. Phoebe will check it is cross referenced.

SCCS and the Trades Unions have supported the proposal for a Just Transition Commission as one of the secondary 'asks' of the Climate Change Bill. It was agreed by those organisations present (RSPB, WWFS and SWT) that there was no objection to LINK referencing a JTC in its response; the concept of a Just Transition being a necessary means of achieving any environmental outcome which relies on changing current systems. It is an area where there can be common ground with trades unions. A commission (with the usual caveats) would be a big win for both sectors. FoES have checked it with the unions who have endorsed the proposal. Unison and PCS will include in their submissions on the Climate Bill. STUC and FoES have a meeting scheduled.

Consultation on Socio Economic Duty: Isobel Mercer (RSPB) had forwarded a draft response to this consultation which proposes that public bodies have a duty to assess things with a S-E filter. We could say that S-E issues have to have an environmental strand, have to include environmental goods and benefits too. Lloyd had concerns that the duty could be used against environmental public bodies like SEPA and SNH to reduce objections. Existing duties on biodiversity and climate change on all bodies have little impact, being caveated. Deadline is 12 September. It was agreed the Group were not sufficiently informed. Members would look at the RSPB draft and see what could be taken from it for a LINK response. Also see what comes out in relation in Tuesday's Programme for Govt. **Action: members.**

- 6. Shaping the 2nd round of application to FPF.** Deadline for submission is 30 October. Matthew updated on the application so far, first stage was framed around giving LINK capacity to make an input to the Circular Economy Bill, since there has been discussion of our niche and USP, and how to respond to comments from FPF trustees on its relevance to the economic debate at UK level. At UK level, from conversations with FoE and NEF in London it appears no one is doing anything other than the Ellen McArthur Foundation, which does not work on policy, and WRAP, a semi govt body. As in Scotland there is no NGO campaigning to end waste and adopt a CE, so we can point in a forward direction, and ask London based organisations to endorse our plans at 2nd stage. Approaches to EMF and ZWS have not been returned yet, Matthew will pursue. Discussions with FoE Europe show that the CE is a big deal in some countries, and at EU level. FoE Europe has done work and advocacy we can connect to. They ask why is Scotland legislating it is not the place where most of the powers reside in relation, though a country like Scotland having a serious crack at legislating for a CE would be a good example, and raise CE in prominence, a lot to draw on in respect of understanding the issues etc. SGov and ZWS have not said much on content. (Note: Bill was not mentioned in Programme for Govt). We should attend a [conference](#) on 27-28 September which will be discussing it. ZWS website has a lot about CE, including issues like metrics we think important. Without having these discussions we are no further

forward on what we would be doing with the capacity we are looking for, as cheerleaders or pushers of it. Not yet what we should be focussing on.

Lloyd's view was that SGov has no idea why they are doing it. It is in the manifesto so they will do it in the end. The Good Food Nation Bill was a similar case. Discussions are moving forward on that through the Scottish Food Coalition. There is potential for us to cheerlead the Bill. Politically it could be an important exercise in highlighting and that something should be done, even if it already can be done, or by someone outwith Scotland. We maintain our desire to seek a resource to influence the bill, cheerleading or otherwise.

Stage 1 bid had a parallel strands on case studies, working with others to help drive some action on the ground. This is a good way of getting to a parliamentary audience. Local and sectoral. And we need ZWS input. We could highlight the pros and cons of CE in terms of where it genuinely does reduce resource use and equally potential of issues where it is not the be all and end all of solving the environmental crisis. There are opportunities for us to get the concept beyond the initial one conceived by the former Cab Sec. We should link it to the NPF work and SDGs, connect it to what they funded us to do before. The SD hierarchy or doughnut are easier to work with, rather than the flat SDGs.

If they fund us by the time we get into the formation of the CE bill, we will have a well informed and well-armed NGO sector, on the one hand how the CE narrative has win wins for economy and environment, and on the other how to avoid the pitfalls of what it can't address. Waste energy and environmental impacts. The former Cab Sec liked the concept as you could get more traditional economic activity by investing in recycling plants, not the most advanced form of sustainable economic thinking. Make sure they don't limit it to recycling and litter reduction.

WWF UK has an economics hub, working with WRAP on water and carbon footprint. Same issues coming up. David will check if there is any discussion in WWF Scotland around the bill. If we got a few people to say it would be really interesting to see what we can do with a Bill in Scotland, WWF and WRAP could be asked to provide endorsement beyond Scotland. We need to demonstrate beyond Scotland connections. Useful exemplar for EU. We can answer that point now.

Overall purpose being a better Bill, funds need for LINK to have the capacity to advocate around key strands of the bill. We want to be in the debate, cheerleaders or otherwise, and lastly two things which would make it more concrete. Even if the bill comes to nothing we will have done some real work on the ground that can influence change. The weakness is that we have no one to do it. We would expect to do a range of case studies at geographical level such as island or glen level (not necessarily across a local authority area) and have a sectoral focus, and issue focus, eg plastics getting into the sea, environmental issue which covers more than one sector. Look to the case studies to have geographical spread and be delivered in a way that is attractive for MSPs to engage with, and links to Species Champions, using them in that way to focus the debate on things that matters.

What discussions to we need first. Definitely with ZWS, for advice. Halfway house. Put in some examples that we are sure can be delivered, and others that are ideas to explore further. Say these will be developed into a suite of ideas when we have the funding.

Could we reference the Good Food Nation bill? It is a model. The SFC is hard work and a long process and suffers from the same problems in that Govt doesn't know what it means and what it is for. People in the SFC want real things that require change. A lot of constant ongoing negotiations under the umbrella of what was agreed. These issues have to be addressed holistically but a lot of organisations are addressing individual elements. Govt timetable keeps slipping. Capacity of SFC is Bella Crowe and what members can do. The link to the GFN is the void that is to be filled, the opportunity for having something sensible in it. Need to be sure our bid is framed in terms of economics. We will be to identify the economic side of it, how business will be benefitting. Not to pitch a waste orientated proposal. Has to be topped and tailed by an alternative economic narrative. Problem is the CE is not driven by economics side of govt. if its not in speech on Tuesday we will have to reconsider (**Note: the Bill is not mentioned**).

We have a direction of travel. Need to pitch in economic terms. Need to seek to ensure it is integrated into the economic strategy. We have to see what Tuesday tells us. Assuming yes, key port of call is ZWS. Matthew will talk to John Molyneux. Also need a couple of examples for case studies.

Action: Matthew

David will find out what is happening in WWF around Scotland's Way Ahead, and inform the Group. **Action: David**

Next meeting, 23 October pm. (suits Matthew, Bruce, David, Phoebe, though not Lloyd).