**Note of the Land Use meeting note held on 13 September 2018 at the Quaker Meeting House, Edinburgh**.

**Attending:** John Thompson APRS/SCNP Chairing the meeting;
Katriona Carmichael, Susie Turpie, John Brownlee, Simon Cuthbert-Kerr, David Barnes, (Scottish Govt)
Sally Thomas, SNH
Hamish Trench, Land Commission
Pete Ritchie, Nourish Scotland
Anna Brand, RSPB
Vicki Swales, RSPB
Sheila George, WWF Scotland
Alan McDonnell, Trees for Life
Beryl Leatherland, Scottish Wild Land Group
Charles Dundas, Woodland Trust Scotland
Chris Spray, University of Dundee
Pip Tabor, Southern Uplands Partnership
Joan Mitchell, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere
Ed Forest, ditto
Luke Comins, Tweed Forum
Derek Robeson, Tweed Forum
Eleanor Kay, Scottish Land & Estates
Anne Gray, Heather Trust
Diarmid Hearns, NTS
Scott Leatham, SWT
Alice Walsh, Scottish Environment LINK

Apologies: Helen Todd Ramblers Scotland.

**Welcome and overview** – John Thomson.

John welcomed everyone and started with some historical perspective on this latest stage in integrated land management, which has been pursued for generations. He outlined the format today, of presentations followed by group discussion, key issues relating to the practicalities, which will guide the targeting of future support of the land use sector. The topic reflects much recent thinking, land ownership, ecosystem services, natural capital – the topics of the day.

People have debated what is wanted from the countryside for generations. Chris Smout put it as the struggle between *use* and *delight*. That still applies. The definition of what is use and delight may have shifted over the years. We now we have a broader interpretation of both use and delights. Nevertheless it is a useful way of thinking. The question is how do we achieve what we want. What goals and priorities we should have and how to stimulate the people owning and managing the land. Since the 1960s there has been talk about the countryside, the post-war situation, establishment of the Countryside Commission for Scotland, pointing at something very like a LUS or an integrated land use strategy. We joined the Common Market; it arose in documents, eg CCS report on popular mountain areas, and in SNH’s vision for the future of the countryside, which articulated it thematically and spatially in Scotland’s [Natural Heritage Futures](https://www.nature.scot/natural-heritage-futures-overview) in 2001. These reports are all still worth a look. Then the drive to reform the CAP, loosening the ties between support and production. It was the Climate Change legislation which incorporated the requirement for a Land Use Strategy into law. Though linked to the climate agenda, it was always clear the scope was to go well beyond that. It was about optimising the multiple benefits that an integrated approach could deliver, and about maximising productivity of Scotland’s land.

LINK bodies have always been very supportive, produced a [document](http://www.scotlink.org/files/publication/LINKReports/LINKHowCanWeGetBestfromLand.pdf), setting out some ideas and examples. And although we have been critical of some aspects of it, overall we have greatly welcomed the Land Use Strategy and in particular the principles set out in it. Thanks to Sally Thomas who was responsible for it then. The key test is whether the principles and approaches can be effected on the ground. We were disappointed at what followed. The two pilots were a positive, if half-hearted start. It was clear that within Government it was viewed as an environmental initiative, with very little buy-in from the agriculture side. That attitude infected the wider farming community, although there was some enthusiasm amongst officers of NFUS. We feared that if it was not the requirement to update it every so often it would wither on the vine. The second version of the LUS bore out these fears.

We have been getting despondent, though we felt it was even more relevant than ever. CAP reform is creeping towards the view of desired outputs, and it is relevant to the land reform review. The Land Commission initiative has brought to the fore what benefits landowners are expected to deliver for wider society. More recently, borne out in discussion with Andrew Thin as incoming Chair, he took us back to the debate about the productivity of the land, and the role of the Commission in taking that forward, not just in the traditional agriculture sense, much broader than that. There are all sorts of questions about how to define it. Post Brexit it is in sharp focus. If we are going to have more freedom, what should incentives be trying to achieve. In the LINK documents, and in our [response](http://www.scotlink.org/public-documents/link-response-to-the-recent-consultation-stability-and-simplicity/) to the Stability and Simplicity consultation, we made it clear we envisage a system where you can collaboratively identify shared goals at a regional scale. It is vital it brings together the national goal, top down and local views, knowledge and priorities from the bottom up.

If it works it could be less centralised with a better consumer focus, those who pay for the incentive regime. That is where we have a shared interest. There is a danger the resources will be slashed, maybe not immediately. The only way these resources can remain is to convince the public it is getting value for money. Encouraged by an article in the Farmers Weekly about the Swiss regime, which is based on public engagement; what the public wants is tested out and implemented. We can do as well as that or better. It has to be participatory, as the pilots were intended to be. That means not just consulting, it is more about engagement and participation. It brings it in line with Government’s wider ambitions for community empowerment. It can be seen as flowing with the tide, but it is quite a difficult concept.

 **Scene Setting:** Katriona Carmichael, Deputy Director, Environmental Quality, Scottish Government.

Katriona welcomed these efforts to engage, is joined today by several colleagues variously involved in other land use areas. There are three teams in the Directorate, one supports relations with public bodies; second is the Brexit team for coordination of work on environmental and agriculture policy, and linking with marine and others to prepare for March 2019. There is an integrated team being set up, charged with leading long-term policy development and connected to that is the next phase of the LUS. She is new to it, so pleased to be invited for a discussion, and that extending it met with support. With so much experience in the room, we need to use the learning and ask good questions, for after the initial Brexit period is out of the way.

Hoping that David Barnes could join the meeting (he was delayed until midday). She would talk about the policy development approach over the next 3 years, and building on the learning of the two previous pilots.

Scottish Government remains committed to the objectives and principles of the Land Use Strategy. Using the tagline: getting the best use of our land. Getting best use, fair forms of decision making, and best outcomes, how do we get better data and evidence into decision making. The second LUS was published June 2016. There is progress in some areas, including through SNH’s Ecosystem Services approach, the Natural Capital Asset index, the Forestry Strategy, and the Land Reform agenda – the land rights and responsibilities statement; creation of the Scottish Land Commission. The latter has a specific role in improving the accountability of decision making. While a lot has been done, the timing of the Referendum vote has been interesting, requires taking stock. Several proposals, more pilots, what is the shape of that work, when opportunities and drivers have shifted with Brexit. A new team is being set up (will hear more of that from D Barnes). She closed with thoughts about the questions it raises:

**Outcomes**: how do we get the best use of our land outside of CAP and maintain high environmental standards and keep people on the land. What does that mean for models?

**Balancing objectives**: what approaches should we be thinking of, while supporting private rights and multiple level decision making?

**Traction**: what opportunities should we be taking though these wider reforms. Not just regional partnerships, the Planning bill and next National Planning Framework, the Forestry Strategy. What are the opportunities to make sure we are getting the link ups between them to get more traction?

She was keen to listen, hear expertise and experience, and think practically, particularly for the next 2/3 years.

**Scottish Land Commission** - purpose and current priorities. Hamish Trench, CEO

The Land Rights and Responsibilities statement sets out a clear and ambitious narrative, and one of the ways these play out is in land use decisions. The SLC’s strategic plan, [Making more of Scotland’s Land](https://landcommission.gov.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Scottish-Land-Commission-Strategic-Plan-2018-21-ENGLISH.pdf), sets out a three-way focus. Productivity, diversity, and accountability.

Productivity includes the social value; use and delight in the widest sense.

Diversity is not just of ownership but of benefits.

Accountability - the LUS has a key role to play for democratic decision making. No doubt we need some sort of framework, raises questions of scale and integration. Some decisions are legitimate for a single landowner, or at national scale. Most are probably better at more regional or local scale. That is the space the LUS can fill. What does this look like?

The wider context. Community empowerment is a huge agenda coming forward. Leading to locality plans. The Planning Bill and its concept of local place plans; Regional Economic Strategies, and City Deals. All have their mechanisms, and there are still a large amount of other things outside of these. Are we looking at a parallel system for the LUS, or to use the LUS for it? Several narratives are coming together, from agriculture and land reform. The job is to capture and capitalise on it. Do we see the LUS as something that is parallel, or how do we connect it in to ensure it has influence? The LUS seems central to getting more accountability into land use decision making.

**Future Rural policy, including farm support – direction of travel (including relationship to LUS objectives & principles, potential of pilots etc).** This was David Barnes’ slot but he was delayed.
He was asked to give a factual update on where things are at in terms of land management and decision making; Katriona was aware LINK had fed into the recent consultation; one of the propositions in it is to create space for thinking differently about support going forward. What would we do practically, what sort of things could we be putting into place?

John Brownlee: The policy context over the next 2 years is to keep things ticking over. From 2021 we can start tweaking and piloting for what comes next. What could we be usefully piloting? What do the public actually value? Such a survey was a recommendation of the Agriculture Champions. They will be taking that forward.

Anne Gray, on the Scottish Forum for Natural Capital’s Land Management Group, was charged with mentioning it at this meeting. It has run a few pilots. There is talk of doing more, there is potential synergy with further LUS pilots. Bear in mind there is another group there, and it makes sense to do things in concert.

Pete Richie, Nourish Scotland and leader of LINK’s Food & Farming Subgroup said that the prospect of another two years of business as usual seems like an unnecessary delay. There are surely enough resources to get something started before the end of this year. He was really encouraged by the integration planned and flagged that LINK has already done a survey to find out what people value, and can share it. It is very clear that engaging the public is not about surveying. It has to be informed dialogue, or it will not give us what we need, a deliberative democracy approach. Discussion followed on the options available depending what kind of Brexit ensues, and he urged discussion with Brussels meantime to free up some small resource for identifying the way ahead.

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and local Biodiversity Action Plans. Andy Tharme flagged update of the Scottish Boarders LBAP. Based on the themes of the SBS, they used the information from the Borders LUS Pilot to identify a set of priority actions, these will become embedded as supplementary guidance in the planning process. Its now out for formal consultation on the Council’s [website](https://scotborders.citizenspace.com/) until 30 November, views very welcome. It was based on the ecosystem approach. They have been promoting it with partnerships, trying to follow up these top-down and bottom-up approaches, and hope it will be adopted.

John Thomson flagged the danger of losing supplementary planning guidance in the Planning Bill, a loss of these types of connections.

**Group discussions**. Each group to deal with two topics.

**Land Use decision making: What approaches might be taken to support delivery of multiple outcomes from land while respecting private rights and multi-level decision-making.**

On the Borders pilot the ‘honest brokership’ of the Tweed Forum was key, working with the Borders Council, though not led by it. There were interesting tensions and robust discussions about doing things differently there, rather than employing the methodologies as for planning etc. Aberdeenshire did not have the same buy in.

Are there other possible analogies? Suggestions were the Firths Partnerships, where there was systematic effort to set these up all round the country. Can we learn from the marine planning process too? Accept it has to take time and build up trust.

Chris Spray’s experience in Wales and his analysis of why it is working out there so well - from Wales being well behind Scotland they have now leapfrogged ahead. Key elements include: the strategic direction and approach to implementation are embedded in active legislation; excellent cross-stakeholder engagement; scientific support; regional level; Pilots; accountability to Public Boards, Minister led; emerging plans and measures; delivery on the ground – building on the success of past Welsh environment schemes for RDP support.

In Scotland, we do not have an overarching shared high-level vision of what we are trying to achieve, as is now embedded in Wales. The Moorland Forum want to write a vision for the uplands, to contribute to the discussion.

Role of the Welsh legal duty: the Environment Act was very much debated there. It was both top down and bottom up, for delivery. High level direction setting is really important. Recommend getting someone up from Wales. They learned a lot from Scotland in the LUS pilots. Every policy leader was interviewed about what they were trying to do, the process was not threatening and was inclusive. Three Welsh bills were created roughly at the same time; the Future Generations, Planning and Environment. Civil servants are moved more frequently between posts than is the case here.

Is the Welsh vision significantly better, or are they more joined up? It is more embedded into everything, requires them to engage in conflicts and there are some big ones. At structure level, creating Natural Resources Wales has been difficult and fraught. Is tricky, but how else do you get the breadth and non-silo approach. They took our best ideas and jumped ahead of us. Not all plain sailing, as still struggling at farm level in Wales.

Interesting parallel in economics, centre for regional economic growth, integration and decisions at a more regional scale. Can we learn from that approach?

Important what happens at national level, and what is required there, and what is the role at regional level, and then at very local delivery level. Getting some ideas of who does what would be good. Dislike of top down. There is a role for the high level shared vision.

How to empower people at the local level? Contribution part is key. Starting point is that land should be making a contribution to national objectives. Leaves the grassroots to make the decision of how to deliver it, how you tease out the multiple benefits. That’s what Ministers are trying to take in their approach. From within SGovt, see devolving decision-making down to local level and creating the framework, we are pushing at open door. Lots in the Programme for Government. It needs people here to push it. John B and Katriona C are trying to join up and make these links internally.

The high level objectives. We have it right to a certain extent. The National Performance Framework that feed in to the Sustainable Development Goals. We don’t necessarily always see the filtering process. There needs to be always a reaching back to that vision. We have already broadly decided what the outcomes are.

Political will and leadership. Accountability and how you demonstrate it. How are the Welsh doing it? There are local boards to whom the process is accountable. You apply to be on one. They have it right. Politically it is easier for us to learn from Wales than elsewhere.

Wales did have a very strong agri-environment tradition, their schemes were very successful. Lot of engagement.

There are regional forestry forums in every region of Scotland. Most local authorities have an environmental forum attached to their community planning partnerships. There may be blocks to build on, rather than re-inventing, though to get beyond delivery of specific services, and step it up to the right level would require political push. There is a danger if councils are asked to do it, as they will just see how it helps them deliver what they need to do anyway. Problem of silos, and defence of patches.

When Richard Lochhead launched the LUS in Aberdeenshire, he made the point that where do we as a nation want to put things (not just windfarms!) on the 84k sq kilometres of Scotland. That had a good simplicity of purpose.

In the Borders, the LUS did not answer the question of where to put things. It looked at the impacts of climate change, and the needs for flood management, etc, and what drops off. Wales does not have climate change as a driver.

**Group discussion – table 1
What opportunities can we take through current reforms. Future Progress**

The Borders process could not be replicated as everywhere else lacks an equivalent of Tweed Forum. Borders had a lot of advantages, one council, a large area, and fitted the catchment.

Need some form of regional framework and then use the bodies that happen to exist. In England, the catchment-based approach had different scales. There doesn’t need to be a single blueprint.

We can learn from the process the Borders went through, the ecosystem approach, need a pretty solid framework. The fact it worked is a relief. How do you use the other forums. Its key to create something out of what already exists.

Is there an exercise to see what is out there? The problem is that they were all set up for different reasons, and for the voluntary NGO ones they are struggling to exist. They need resourcing. It would be interesting to map them. There are physical as well as functional gaps. The Borders could not get local businesses and Scottish Water on board. They need a good reason for it.

Other pilots include a Forestry Commission one in the south of Scotland, Ettrick Valley with forestry as the prime driver. The two National Parks; LL&T on its rural development framework and CNPA looking at connections to development planning. NPs have a requirement to produce a partnership plan.

We are at a point where we have change in so many different areas. The LUS is seen as quite separate to agriculture. The Champions report saw the need for more regional approach. When you bring agriculture and forestry in, that adds up to a lot of Scotland’s land.

Wrt the previous days UK Agriculture Bill, how much will apply to Scotland or how we will mirror it, remains to be seen. There will be massive change. The end of single farm payments. It is very clear what will be supported. If farmers cannot get their business to stack up economically they will have to buy into this agenda, so it feels like an opportunity.

Can we go ahead with some pilot? National Trust is doing something with their tenant farmers. There are a few models. Is Scotland ready to do it?

Comes back to Scottish Government’s long term plan, you need that signalling that testing needs to start happening, Pete Ritchie’s earlier point, and as in LINK’s consultation response to [*Stability and Simplicity*](http://www.scotlink.org/public-documents/link-response-to-the-recent-consultation-stability-and-simplicity/)*,* as much as we carry on to keep ourselves above water, we can give those signals, allow experimentation, engagement with neighbours. For this we need to identify some resource.

Collective proposal to try something in this area. The pilots show approaches. Tweed Forum is keen to progress with theirs and others are keen to start. LINK has put some suggestions in its response, a study to put some of those systems in place, takes years to institutionalise, starting to do it is a ‘no regrets’ endeavour.

We need to do it regardless of the other contexts. The vision has been the same for a long time.

Anything we can do to move it forward is good, don’t lose the opportunity. LFASS payments, a certain thing, what is going to replace them, within that context, payment for ecosystem services. Direct payments are likely to be a backstop measure to specific areas. Champions report suggests the general direction of travel.

On the planning front, the new National Planning Framework should be an opportunity. And the forestry strategy, should not be one as such, can we influence it so it evolves into a wider land use strategy, rather than just for trees? We need to build capacity from the ground up. The Forestry Strategy is seen as supporting the centralised industry. Would need to be developed and financially supported to generate a different mindset for the longer run.

Significance of Regional Economic partnerships? If taking a sectoral approach, the tendency is towards large scale processing, and for local value adding you need local infrastructure. On agriculture the thinking is for the large scale industry. We need to think of strengthening localities, rather than eg supplying supermarkets with product. High nature value tends to be in areas of lower intensity. Community ownership has a role, though the approach lacks a strategic direction. It does not extend towards regional level; there is something in there to encourage communities to see themselves as part of a bigger region.

Danger that when public bodies are concerned it brings pressure to bear, and how to deal with trade offs and conflicts. Where do you do the reconciliation? There are too many strategies, the LUS should be the overarching one.

The Environment Act? Has potential to have the governance model. Currently Scotland’s Acts are too enabling, rather than directing - it leaves everything to the discretion of Ministers.

**Group discussion – table 2**

**Data**

* Issues include quality, accessibility, availability and coordination of future collection
* There are only around 12 really useful, good quality data sets – Tweed Forum know which ones.  Clear action for Scottish Government is to make these available now as a foundation for local authorities to start regional land use mapping, establishing a baseline during the transition period and allowing gaps to be identified and addressed.
* Data are all rural – real gap in urban datasets
* Need good quality data at all scales, from national and regional to identify priorities and down to field level for delivery

**Delivery of multiple outcomes**

* Need to speak to people on the ground and find out what it means for them
* Current advisory service not set up for this
* No encouragement to look at a farm as a whole or link individual farms to wider catchment priorities.  This requires effective facilitation from individuals/organisations with oversight of whole catchment and understanding of broad range of land use themes.  Trust and relationships with facilitators are built up over time, sometimes years.
* Landscape key and use consideration in Highland, which depends heavily on tourism and health/wellbeing values.
* Pilots made some real progress on identifying multiple benefits and facilitating conversations – they should be funded to finish what they started
* Delivery depends on combination of incentives, advice, regulation and market drivers
* Can’t ignore urban – urban sprawl is having impacts on agricultural land but need stronger link between planning and LUS to address this
* Need to broker a conversation between urban and rural communities

**Group discussion- table 3.**

**Data**

* Woodland planning opportunity to bring together local authority planning and ecological planning, incentivised by forestry grants.
* Is this always win/win – may be losers too if funding is targeted.
* LUS could influence grant-giving more generally. If it is policy, SG can make operative.
* Data is mixed. Good availability and level of detail for natural heritage, but poor for economic activity (for reasons of business anonymity) and culture (national surveys with small sample sizes).
* Too much focus on rural land use in the LUS?
* To engage people, data needs to be more interactive. Scenario modelling, visualising the likely effects of different options.
* Flooding risk also engages people, makes them look upstream (literally) and think bigger.
* Scottish Natural Heritage habitat map is published, but uplands data is insufficient
* SE Web has some 10 national datasets.
* Mapping is relatively affordable.
* There is a wide range of economic activities in rural areas, not only farming and forestry, but data doesn’t always capture this (data anonymity as above), thought Scottish Government’s research in support of the National Advisors review did show how most rural employment was not directly dependent on primary industries.
* Wales – new legislation has leapfrogged Scotland.

**Plenary Session**

Strongly emerged that it requires a degree of political impetus, to be serious about the process. The example of Wales, where the new legislation allowed them to work with what we have done in Scotland and progress well beyond us.

A good advisory service is absolutely key. There is a huge opportunity to get facilitators out there to bridge the gap between a regional LUS, and what individual landowners want and can do to follow it, which is where the advice kicks in.

There is a need for a high level and long term plan for the sector as a whole, for land use as a whole, then once it is place, we can see the contribution it makes to the higher vision, and for the local level to see where they fit in/deliver.

Point of political direction and political vision is to create the space where the forums and partnerships out there already can deliver it.

Learn lessons from the pilot, get Borders and Aberdeen finished, and roll them out across Scotland. And while not prescribing the partnerships, can certainly set them out. Can put us in a great place to crack on, if Govt found the money to get them started. Link between rural aspirations and national targets.

Important point is that it is not realistic to have an all singing and dancing strategy, can find ways of reconciling what will be conflicting national strategies and turn them into something workable at the delivery stage.

Conversation at one table was about connecting urban and rural communities. It could be really valuable for those who benefit from what happens in rural areas to talk with those who deliver them.

**Data and Tools feedback.**

Began by addressing some issues of quality and access to data, how future data are collected, where they sit, and how to fit them all together. Only a handful are in a format that can be used. Can they be made more available, quickly, within two years? About where it is held, how accessible it is, and getting it out there.

LUS would be a great platform for it, for regional and local decisions.

Question for Chris about how far did the availability of quality data drive the end framework? Did some get left out because of lack of data? Once data was in place it moved on quickly. In the Borders there are whole datasets unavailable, none on the social and cultural ecosystem services. Also could not get business and Scottish Water involved. So very difficult.

Need to identify gaps, and then identify a plan for how to fill it.

We have a lot to learn from Wales. Tackled loads of issues, and have great legislation. Recommend we get a representative to come up and talk to us.

We can learn lots from pilots, but also from other parts of the UK.

Bring data alive. Flooding got people together urban and rural.

Data is a key part of the Borders tool.

**Future progress and opportunities to take – feedback session**

Gaining traction through other initiatives.

Much discussion of the planning system and practicality or otherwise of trying to bolt something on to it. There are places where the planning system has greater potential, forward plan rather than regional aspects. Regulatory or guidance, staged process. National Planning Framework, and lots of the amendments are about mapping for housing, energy.

There is no point in getting people around tables and having no point of application in relation to the planning process. If there is no point where it has influence as a status, and a requirement to use it, the LUS will always sit alongside and not be integrated.

We are about to have a forestry one which will be looked at from sectoral perspective of the industry. And an agriculture one that operates in isolation. That’s why the LUS can provide this brokerage, so that sectoral strategies have something bigger to link into. otherwise we will be in the same place.

For the next 2 years, can still make progress, alongside what needs to be done, we can still do some of this at the same time, it will be a ‘no regrets’ decision.

Seeking to inform, not control. Useful if it informs where the grants are targeted. Acceptance that it guides grants will be a major step forward.

Forestry strategy and others, and using existing mechanisms. Something like it has to get into an Environmental Impact Assessment. And if that was built into them, how it conflicts or delivers the LUS. There was a chain analysis for the Borders pilot, a superb piece of work, as for delivering it. R Lochhead said the aim was to know where to put everything. We seem to have lost that overarching vision.

We need a mechanism for future proofing. Some things are coming down the line fast, eg impact of drought on agriculture. We need to be factoring these in, bringing the evidence base forward. In 25 years time it might look very different.

Sectoral approach, tends to discourage support for new ways of doing things, somebody needs to get a hold of that, alternatives to the current model that create problems for other areas.

New things on the South of Scotland policy, and the enterprise agency, not a lot of evidence to date they are particularly clued into ecosystem services or natural capital; needs to be care taken that they share this agenda.

Some of these regional groupings could counter some of the sectoral forums. Start thinking of the wider economic and social objectives of the area, and the sector.

Sense of do-ability and urgency. We could take what we have got and do it within 12 months for not much money. Is there something invisible stopping us? Support for this. Can we just try a regional land use framework. Who needs to give permission? There is not a lot to lose from seeing how it works.

This is one of the key messages, the desire just to get on with it. While policy generally is just marking time, we can explore what we need from the future. Learning from Wales and other and experimenting. How does it fit into Katriona’s thinking?

**Katriona summed up:** one reason keen to have this meeting is to affirm direction. Heard what we have said, huge amount of willingness to take things forward. At Scottish Government level we will look at the discrete actions to think what we can move on quickly, and what needs Ministerial backing. Heard the will to work on the existing pilots, and the question of data, and the third thing is a discussion to be had on what is there regionally, and what is the connection between nationally what we are aiming for and locally. Planning and local place plans and what we can fit in. She would speak to colleagues, and our help and connections across government will be useful too.

**David Barnes** arrived was asked to give a **flavour of what is coming down the line.**
We have an opportunity here, and these can be squandered, decision being taken that given all other things in the world that are changing, stability for a few years is the way to go, explicitly to use the time intelligently to work out what to do later, and practically some pilots. Avoid the example of what happened with beef, where Government took a reputational hit, despite positive results.

On practicalities, mechanisms that the consultation document set out, where is the money coming for testing these out? Proposition to cap farm payments at a very high level, touches few and raises little. The proposal now is to cap at lower level, raise more money and more freedom to decide what to do with it. Quantified decision is yet to be taken. Responses are in now, being analysed, Minister will decide.

What to do with it? Is in the market for ideas. His list has 3 things. Each of them not well formed, so welcomes feedback. Place based wholistic type approach. LUS approach, is a definite candidate.

One would be agri-environment schemes and moving in direction of results based, is intellectually right, practically may work less well in some places than others. England is making a big leap, so testing the water here seems sensible.

Another is in area of agricultural productivity, invest in helping farmers be stronger for the future, rather than funds with no strings attached. Mentioned beef productivity scheme, now good, but there were problems.

Could be done using money from the capping proposal. Or take forward in traditional government way, or outsourced with Government funding, to design a productivity scheme.

As far as long term policy goes, he knows there is impatience, day to day demands must not be underestimated. Dealing with Defra. They have big teams, Scotland does not. The practical demands of Brexit are huge. Need to make sure we don’t leave our thinking too late. Don’t have the answer, but aware of the need to find the time to take it forward. We have now got some extra funding from Defra, will increase the team modestly, hope it will help us.

John: partially in answer to the last question, encourage tapping of resources that are elsewhere as much as possible. We, as voluntary bodies, are willing and able to do what we can.

Vicki: if Government colleagues could think about ongoing engagement with us it could be really constructive, this is really fertile ground. Recognise that there are other stakeholders with different views.

Katriona: a very helpful session, very rich conversation, and hope it lays foundations for ongoing dialogue.