

## LINK External Stakeholder Review: cover note

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### Introduction

In August and September 2019, Graeme Reekie conducted an anonymised external stakeholder review for LINK. He interviewed 5 representatives from organisations with whom LINK and LINK member bodies have worked closely over the last 3 years. One interviewee worked more with the larger LINK member bodies and much less with LINK and the smaller member organisations and this lack of awareness is clear in some of the answers.

### Key emergent themes:

**LINK's impact:** as with the last review, LINK's greatest impact is still seen in the policy sphere. There remains great support for LINK's ability to harness a wide range of member views and to act as a one stop shop. There is also appreciation of the challenges that this presents with such a diverse membership. A suggestion is that LINK could become even more effective by focussing on key areas.

**Roles:** LINK's key role, was and still is seen as being a one stop shop both for our audiences and our members. The one negative comment on LINK not being more than the sum of its parts was an isolated view, and reflected a lack of direct engagement with LINK, very little engagement with smaller members and much more contact with larger members. It does however reflect that LINK does need to be much clearer on how the network and members engage with external audiences (see point on unified voice).

**Critical friend:** While this was a key theme in the last review, in this review, there was clear acknowledgement that progress had been made and that LINK is now more of a critical friend than a criticiser. LINK needs to maintain this trajectory.

**Messaging:** There is clear appreciation that LINK is a voice for the environment and stakeholders welcome the steps that have been and are being made on joint messaging.

### Challenges

**A unified voice:** There is still some confusion amongst stakeholders about when members represent LINK and when they represent member organisations. LINK needs to remind members constantly to make it clear which hat they wear.

The internal challenges LINK faces in relation to climate and biodiversity (NB not landscape) were highlighted, indicating that some work on bridging that gap may still be required. There is a danger that unless LINK manages this internal conflict, the network may lose some of the hard won benefits of a united voice.

**Consistency, creditability and transparency:** it is not always clear to stakeholders how LINK arrives at positions. A recommendation is to become more transparent about how we do that.

One stakeholder has the view that LINK has been naive in our policy demands: this is being addressed through changes in the staff team but also needs to be addressed through Groups to ensure LINK demands are fair and realistic in the given political circumstances.



## Future priorities

- *Climate change and biodiversity*
- *Implementation and people power*
- *Working across policy*
- *Reach and representation*
- *Transparency*
- *Leadership*

The above were the key priorities for LINK that the interviewees saw coming up in the next 4 years.

**Climate change and biodiversity:** These reflect the need for conservation to move in parallel with the need to address climate change and to update and adapt the ways in which conservation is done. There is likely to be an element of a lack of clear communication from LINK on the changes already afoot although there is still work to be done in the natural solutions arena. This will be a challenge for some LINK members.

There was a divergence in views between LINK’s own credibility and that derived from its members and the need for LINK to amplify current messages on climate change and biodiversity loss. This review has uncovered conflicting views here.

**Implementation:** There was recognition that the gap is in policy implementation. As LINK is all too aware, the gap between rhetoric and reality is significant and this was highlighted. The potential that LINK has to bring the transformation needed through the power of partnerships was recognised and stakeholders are looking to LINK to find a way to lead on the change required.

**Reach and representation:** Stakeholders also underlined the importance of LINK reaching beyond its own membership and building wider coalitions. A point was raised about a lack of diversity within the sector. This point was also raised at Congress. It is important and LINK needs to decide how much time and resource we can give to increasing ethnic and age diversity while maintaining capacity on being the voice for Scotland’s environment for future generations.

**Transparency:** Greater transparency on the trade offs LINK has to make are recommended. This includes being clearer about how LINK works in terms of reporting back and groups.

**Leadership:** going forward is key, both within the staff team and within the network. This is something the network dinners have already recognised.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities Challenges (SWOC analysis)

Strengths	Weaknesses
Increasing wider understanding of devolution One stop shop for wide membership Willingness to engage & work in partnership Single voice for Scotland’s environment Effective at parliamentary level Open, practically minded leadership; well known face, trusted.	Lack of focus and identifying priorities Inherent tensions between members make it harder for stakeholders to engage with network Diversity of membership means messages can become diluted Lack of transparency on process behind public positions on eg NEN and env act. Not effective at turning parliamentary or legislative desire into effective govt lobbying

	Naivety on pressures of policy makers: impact of policy asks and timings.
Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Continue trajectory from criticiser to critical friend</p> <p>Reinforcing stakeholder messages would be helpful</p> <p>Find space to debate issues with stakeholders &amp; identify solutions together</p> <p>Climate emergency &amp; biodiversity crisis</p> <p>Use other stakeholders to advocate LINK's line</p> <p>Occupy space in dialogue in linking ambition with urgency</p> <p>Build on LINK's assets: member expertise and memberships</p> <p>Work with, and compromise with other key stakeholders eg NFUS</p> <p>Work to get environmental angle on other agendas including poverty, equalities, urban deprivation.</p>	<p>Deploying influence effectively and efficiently</p> <p>Not the sum of its parts</p> <p>Balancing LINK's profile with member profiles</p> <p>Limited by capacity and member expertise</p> <p>Finding a single definitive voice can be difficult</p> <p>Being clear when reps wear the LINK hat and when a member hat</p> <p>Need to include people angle more often</p> <p>Bring the public along too by winning community arguments</p> <p>LINK perceived to have a preventionist approach: stopping things happening.</p> <p>Public reach: is LINK best placed to do that?</p> <p>LINK is not representative of Scotland's people: white, middle aged etc. This could limit LINK's legitimacy at Parliament?</p> <p>No transparency on how LINK works</p>

## Lessons for LINK and recommendations for action:

### 1. Impact:

LINK needs to be able to focus clearly on where we can make the biggest difference and add most value. LINK also needs to identify where it cannot add value and say so clearly. This is an area of work that the network finds difficult in prioritising priorities.

### 2. Unified voice:

LINK needs to find a better way to ensure representatives are consistently clear on who they present. LINK induction training at member level should major on this and regular reminders on this may be required.

### 3. Critical friend:

LINK needs to maintain its current trajectory as critical friend and being positive when possible but balanced at all times.

### 4. Transparency:

There is clearly a need for LINK to become more transparent. This includes transparency on how our groups work and come to joint positions and how we report back and agree messages. This should be addressed through the new website, which makes our structure and ways of working clearer.

Addressing the conflicts between climate change, biodiversity and landscapes: we clearly still have work to do in this arena and stakeholders are picking up that we have not yet found a complete solution. A focus on natural solutions is likely to be part of the answer and work on what those look like and how we promote them as a network and through wider coalitions will be key.

## 5. Leadership on moving from rhetoric to reality:

This is an area of work that networking dinners have picked up on. This should be a priority for LINK to lead on in 2020 and implement the recommendations of the dinners.

## 6. Sector diversity:

This is much bigger than just LINK and is an area of work for all environmental organisations. There is the potential to run joint LINK events on this. However LINK must decide how much LINK can do and how much members can do given the limited capacity LINK has available.

## 7. Building wider coalitions:

This is a key point that members, stakeholders and funders have all highlighted. A key element of the corporate plan moving forward is enabling LINK to build and be part of wider coalitions from 2020.

## 8. LINK as a public voice:

The success of the FFSN campaign has thrown this dichotomy back into the discussion. Members are keen for this role to be maintained and stakeholders are also supportive. LINK Board needs to be comfortable for LINK to maintain both the unified voice behind the scenes as well as more publicly if we are to maximise the potential we have as a network in tackling the environmental challenges and making the most of the current public space the environment is occupying.



## Summary of LINK external stakeholder interviews September 2019

*This paper provides a snapshot of the key themes emerging from four stakeholder interviews conducted in the summer of 2019. The themes are presented as headings, with a small amount of narrative, with verbatim quotes providing illustration.*

*Graeme Reekie, Wren and Greyhound Limited  
September 2019*

### Impact

*As with the last strategic review, LINK's main area of impact is perceived to be on policy, with some stakeholders distinguishing between the success of its influence on parliament and government. As shown elsewhere, partners also value LINK's ability to harness the voice of its members, though it is also recognised that this comes with challenges and that LINK's effectiveness could increase, with greater focus on where it can have most impact.*

'LINK have been pretty successful in putting over the connective UK and European networks to raise issues and spotting the gaps that might exist as a result of EU exit. In that sense it has been very much a two-way dialogue that they have helped to create...One of the things that LINK has been extremely successful at is getting the UK network to understand what devolution means. That has been extremely helpful – in response to the EU exit, people might have gone into a knee-jerk UK approach, whereas LINK have helped to draw out the fact that we have got such strong devolution in Scotland around environmental policy that that isn't going to work with our legal and parliamentary systems. That has been a good example of where the influence is not just two-way within Scotland, but it has been really important in terms of debate elsewhere...That has helped us in Scotland, and we are also helping our colleagues [elsewhere] understand that there may be differences and certain areas where we might want to co-operate and collaborate. It has been important in helping grow understanding of what devolution means in practice and therefore the types of approaches that might work.'

'LINK and LINK members have been closely involved in all the work on the biodiversity strategy, governance and delivery. That is the point where we worked through their individual membership. That has been really positive, because we have been able to work with LINK's members through LINK to

deliver an enormous amount on the ground. We recognise that that is the role that they are highly skilled at and really good at, and that is an area we would want to try and develop further. Another area has been their willingness in the last couple of years to bring ourselves and other [organisations] into the work on the State of Nature Report.'

'Maybe they need to focus a bit more sharply on where they can have the biggest impact in a subject area and what they do about it... How to use their influence, how to deploy it more efficiently and effectively...If I was the CEO that is what I would be focusing on, impact. I think they are probably operating in the right areas but need to do more on impact...If they can identify the areas where there is a common thread and articulate that clearly, that is where they have the strongest impact. And being honest about those areas where they are not going to go.'

'I don't believe that LINK is an effective organisation. I think that it is weaker than the sum of its parts, and individual organisations that make up LINK are far more effective than LINK itself...I understand why there is a need for all of those organisations and many others to come together and collaborate and to work up a joint policy position, but what I am arguing for is for LINK to be the back-office function rather than the front-facing message bearer.'

## Influence

*LINK is perceived as an influential, respected organisation. It was notable that stakeholders didn't suggest the need to increase its profile – this is an almost universal suggestion in reviews of this kind. Nor was there any sense of resentment of LINK's influence – people appear to understand and welcome it, seeing LINK's potential to raise the profile of environmental issues for everybody's benefit.*

'LINK does need its own profile, but not to outshine its members. It does seem to have quite a profile at a parliamentary level.'

'The willingness of the individual partners and of LINK to acknowledge that we could have a much stronger story to tell collectively if we are all able to sign up to what that [State of Nature] report is telling us, and to be able to agree on the evidence, but then use that evidence in our own ways...I think that indicates a real shift...Through some quite tough discussions, we have managed to get to a point where we are now all working together on all of that – that is really positive and a lot of credit to LINK for bringing their membership into that way of thinking. We are not out of the woods with that particular piece of work yet, but that is a good example of a shift in mindset.'

## Role

LINK was described as playing several roles for stakeholders, listed here and illustrated below:

- Providing a one-stop shop
- Offering policy and strategic advice
- Being a critical friend
- Being a partner for organisations and the environment

### One-stop shop

*This was the most common way for LINK to be described. It was noted that this increases efficiency not just for large organisations or public bodies, but for the smaller organisations that LINK represents.*

'I think LINK mirrors a broader Scottish approach to things, which is big tent, bring people in and all sit round a table, rather than having lots of individual meetings. That model is really powerful...They sat on the reference group that we have for [our strategy], which was really good and helpful.'

'It allows us to get a unified voice where there is one, and where there isn't, we go to the separate bodies. It is definitely more efficient, and it is more appropriate in terms of how Scotland is run, which is much more collaborative and less sectoral.'

'It is good to have someone to corral the smaller NGOs, and to be able to speak to a number of them about the same thing – that is really valuable, and it also gives a voice to those smaller organisations. I think it is a key thing for them to not forget about the wee guys who are just as valuable...The benefit is being able to access people. If we were to try and do that ourselves, we would either end up having to have nine separate meetings or it would take us a lot more time and effort. Having the LINK network, you have got a one stop shop for all the environmental NGOs in Scotland – it makes life as a governmental organisation a lot easier. We are interested in what the organisations have to say – what is the conservation angle on our [plan], and can we help to deliver that? We see a positive about engaging with these organisations and getting to hear as many ideas as possible.'

'They provide us with that one stop shop – we can go to LINK for a view from a really wide cross-section of organisations. Through LINK, we can access resources to help some of the much smaller NGOs who probably would struggle capacity-wise if we had to go to them direct. That gives a greater voice to some of the smaller interests within LINK.'

'There will always be a space for it in the back-office function or when pitching for joint meetings with ministers, or commissioning research – but it

[LINK] doesn't seem to know what it is, and that needs a lot more thought...I see the merit for the civil service being able to make one call and get people in to the room, but that goes back to that back-office function, which is essentially what they are doing. You are not necessarily bringing policy expertise from LINK because, beyond one individual who is in the process of leaving, there wasn't policy expertise within LINK itself, it is a secretariat.'

#### Policy and strategic advice

'A lot of the partnership work we do on projects would be with individual organisations. Our work with LINK as an entity is more in relation to strategic work and policy work, they contribute to a large number of the working groups which we are involved in or which we initiate. In that respect, the working relationship is quite variable, it depends on the nature of the individual piece of work.'

#### Critical friend

*This was a core theme in the previous strategic review and the overall view was that while it is still an active challenge to be managed, progress has been made.*

'In terms of the tenor of that relationship, I would say that it is mixed because there is an inherent tension between ourselves and LINK as an organisation – I would characterise it by saying that whatever we do, it is never enough for LINK. In some respects, that is their role, they take their lobbying role seriously and as individuals and as an organisation, they all have a membership to which they are accountable. However, at times it does feel that they are always on the 'glass half empty' side, and that can make for a tense relationship. It can sometimes feel a little bit predictable at the more strategic end of the relationship – whatever we bring to the table, we know that it will be picked over, it may well be criticised, will be no given credit where credit is due, and that can be a little dispiriting at times... I think they have moved a long way down that road in terms of being more than a critical friend and less of a criticiser.'

#### Partner for organisations and the environment

As noted above, external stakeholders recognise the challenge LINK faces in representing eNGOs with one voice. Although one stakeholder disagreed, the overall view was that progress has been made in this area, and can continue to be made, by finding new ways to work with partners.

'It is extremely positive from my perspective to have such a vibrant sector and to have an organisation that is advocating so strongly for Scotland's environment. That is a real asset for Scotland.'



'The ability to work together – that is difficult because of that tension, and they have a lobbying role, but the ability to reinforce the messages that we are all putting out would be helpful. When push comes to shove, we are all trying to achieve the same thing, we are all looking for a better environment, and being able to support each other better is really important. We have moved quite a long way in that respect, but we are not yet clear what that means in practice – that is something we need to focus on going forward.'

'It struggles to project a single definitive position – often in light of campaign work being carried out in parallel by its own member organisations which may or may not take a more aggressive or ambitious stance. It doesn't speak with one voice. It is often drowned out by its own member organisations.'

## Challenges

### Being a unified voice

*Despite seeing LINK's strength in presenting a united voice, stakeholders also experience some of the challenges it presents, particularly in regard to internal or external confusion about whose voice is speaking at a particular time: LINK's or an individual organisation's. Again, stakeholders generally feel LINK manages this better than 4-5 years ago, but they acknowledged it as a perpetual challenge facing the organisation.*

'(The) thing that maybe hasn't helped with LINK is the sometimes inherent tensions between the different members, and particularly the climate change agenda not always aligning very comfortably with the more local biodiversity agenda, and trying to navigate that space is a real challenge for the organisation. I think it has been brought more sharply in to focus because of the climate emergency, and at the same time the species one. I think I am finding that I am dealing more with individual bodies than I am with LINK corporately now than I would have done previously.'

'Some of the challenges of LINK is the fact that a lot of organisations will have single issues that are very important. I suspect that sometimes the ability to have properly strategic dialogue with government in particular about those issues has been a bit diluted. That is a challenge of having such a wide membership.'

'The challenge is finding a single voice when you have such a broad stretch of partners around the table, and being clear about when someone is speaking on behalf of LINK and when they are speaking about their own organisation is a constant challenge... [Person X] was

dealing with us with both a LINK and [Organisational] hat on, and I didn't always distinguish between the two. I think that was quite tricky.'

'The difficulty is that the membership of LINK and comms who are, for example, part of the biodiversity governance structures, they are often there as LINK nominees but they come with the hat of their individual organisations, and I think sometimes we are not always sure if they understand the distinction.'

### Consistency and credibility

'A couple of other examples – not things that I understand well or have in-depth knowledge about – the proposal for an ecological network and, to some extent, the campaign for an environment strategy – I think that sometimes there has been a tendency to go very loud with a solution whereas it is often not clear what the working is behind those answers. I wonder, in terms of efficacy, whether there is a space for greater dialogue about issues and then the ability to work with others to shape solutions.'

'It is difficult at times for us to be sure quite where they are positioning themselves, because they need to be able to reserve the right to criticise openly, and at times they will do that and that can be a difficult relationship to manage. There has been a recognition in the last couple of years that there has been a shift. As an organisation, we have been working very hard to proactively engage them as much as we can and to bring them into the conversations at a much earlier stage to build that degree of trust between the different entities. They have responded really well to that, and they have been extremely helpful partners in many respects, but then we get the odd dive back. We have to operate within a system where there is that scrutiny and challenge – that is a very healthy way to operate, but I do think it would be good to have a bit more positivity sometimes, to be challenged positively rather than negatively.'

'There has been a terrible naivety at certain times around the pressures which policy makers face. LINK is there to campaign on environmental issues, but sometimes there is a troubling naivety around the political impact of some of their policy demands. This is a difficult point to make, but it can veer between playing out in the public domain as very naïve all the way through to sanctimonious, or, in some cases, hypocritical.'

## Future priorities

*The clearest response to a question about what LINK's future priorities should be was to focus on climate change and biodiversity. Other environment-specific issues arose (like land use), but other more generic themes were also clear. Again, these reflect similar themes from the last strategic review, but they may be of increasing importance as the gap between policy and implementation grows, and the connections between environment and other aspects of life are strengthened:*

- *Climate change and biodiversity*
- *Implementation and people power*
- *Working across policy*
- *Reach and representation*
- *Transparency*
- *Leadership*

## Climate change and biodiversity

'The big one is the implementation of the climate change set of things, meeting the land use change targets by 2045 – it is going to need significant change in the uplands and other parts of Scotland. Some of the sacred cows of conservation are going to have to be seriously looked at, designations, etcetera that protect what is there other than what might be needed in the future. Climate change is the big one, linking to biodiversity loss. From a rural point of view, how that links in with rural depopulation and the issues of migration, trying to get people living and working in some of our remoter areas and the fact that development isn't necessarily a bad thing and we can do better conservation with some development rather than often seeing it as an either/or. Wild land is a semi-designation, saying these places are remote with not a lot of man-made artefacts – but that doesn't necessarily mean that they are ecologically particularly worthwhile... Development might be a way of opening up conservation opportunities rather than always being seen as something that should be opposed. It is a more nuanced message but how we have done conservation for the past 40 years is not going to work for the next 40 years. We are going to have to think radically about big changes, how quickly we can make them and how to take people with us. Most of the conservation issues are people issues, and we can't just exclude them from the conversation.'

'The transformation that is needed on climate change and in relation to biodiversity. There is a commitment from the First Minister to deal with these issues and to work through them methodically. It feels like a golden time for environmental policy and dialogue about how to lead and deliver on that transformation for the changes that are required in society to the economy and to the way that we use our land.'

'The priorities at Scotland and UK level are going to be focused on climate change and biodiversity loss. I would expect that LINK will follow that.'

## Implementation and people power

*Stakeholders believe that some LINK members get their credibility from their own large memberships. Stakeholders didn't see this source of credibility being transferred to LINK, but there was a view that the current public interest in the climate emergency gives LINK the opportunity to connect with or through the people of Scotland.*

'I think they are pretty effective at a parliamentary level. It may be less effective in turning legislation and parliamentary desire into effective lobbying of government, which is a slightly different beast. If you look at what government wants to happen on the environment and then you look at how, for example, farming payments are structured or how different systems are implemented by government on the ground, there is very little that couldn't be done by government if it wanted to, based on legislation that is already in place, but the political will or desire to do that is not there. Sometimes the focus on parliament and the next bit of legislation, the next thing that you can whip people up to get membership and profile, it is not necessarily what needs to be done, but it is the relatively easy thing to do.'

'If you can get other people advocating your line, it is more powerful than doing it yourself. There are things that could be done to be a bit more effective, but it is more in the governmental side than the parliamentary side. They are pretty good at the parliamentary side, but I am not sure that is where the issues lie. The issues are not in more legislation, they are in implementation.'

'Environmental spokespeople really do need to ensure that their messaging takes in to account the public mood. They need to think about how messages land with the public as well as the politicians. Their ability to achieve positive political change will be much stronger if they do more work to ensure that they are bringing the public with them in the first instance... They should be winning community arguments as well as political arguments, and then political success can come off the back of that.'

'The space for dialogue is in linking the ambition and the urgency with where we are now and what could practically drive change. LINK is an interesting organisation in that a very strong part of what it does is about lobbying and advocacy. I am struck by the huge asset that all the members have in the things that they bring, and thinking in the future about, if we took an assets-based approach and built on the strengths of LINK and LINK's members, what a contribution to the transformation. The transformation that we require is about partnership across the sectors, with government, with the public, to create the changes that will be needed. What is LINK's contribution to that? Part of it is about keeping the debate open, but I also wonder what other resources, networks, abilities can be brought in to help with that transformation. I don't have an answer to that! That connection to people is a huge asset to have.'

## Cross-policy work

'It is about trying to be more effective with the ministers who are in government and with the civil service, and trying to get more agreement with people who maybe are not their traditional allies – there is no reason why LINK and NFUS couldn't come up with something that is fairly satisfactory from a farming point of view that they could lobby on. We all have our audiences that we play to, and maybe the more uncomfortable thing is to try and find solutions that aren't the usual sort of green fodder, that we try and tackle some of the more difficult ones that will involve compromise.'

'A wider perspective is needed around some of the other government priorities that might impact on how we use and engage with our environment – the equalities agenda, the poverty agenda, the urban deprivation agenda. All of these things are important to LINK members, but they are not actually representative of those different sectors in society. There is a bit of a risk that LINK could be accused of having a drawbridge mentality. In terms of the wider policy agenda, I think their approach is a very preservationist one – around protecting things, putting lines on maps, stopping people from destroying things. I feel that the thinking has moved on quite considerably and that we have a much wider concept of what the environment is and who it is for and how we use it than perhaps some of the membership organisations are willing to embrace.'

## Reach and representation

'I have seen the campaign activity around the Fight for Scotland's Nature, mainly through member organisations rather than the public-facing campaign. It would be interesting to know whether the people who are responding are the people who would have responded anyway because they are active members of these organisations. I don't know if it has reached into the wider public sphere.'

'Effectively what LINK are doing is providing co-ordination and a way of presenting messages and campaigns which can be used in a public-facing way through the individual member organisations. There is a question there about reach and who is most effective at doing that direct, public-facing work.'

'There are one or two issues that I would hope LINK would begin to think about – the environmental sector is primarily white, middle income, middle class, very urban and preservationist in its perspective. I am not sure that that is representative, certainly not from a diversity perspective and in terms of where the general population is thinking environmentally. LINK and its constituent bodies need to have a long, hard think about that. There is an undercurrent of concern in some quarters that a lot of what LINK and its constituent bodies are pursuing is very good for the

environment but is also very good for the limited cross-section of the population who are members and who can access that environment and benefit from it.'

'If the legitimacy is based on a public membership but all coming from a very small section of society, then how legitimate is that? It is a question that they need to look at. Given that they have quite a powerful voice with politicians and the Scottish parliament, there is something in there that needs to be unpicked a little bit to ensure that that legitimacy is valid.'

'There is a desperate need for a fresh environmental voice in Scotland, the voices you will hear time and again are the same. They are also male, white and middle-aged. There is a hardcore of expert voices which the Scottish media will always revert to. Would we benefit from having a fresh voice in that mix?...I have no doubt that Deborah could establish a reputation in that area within time.'

### Transparency

'There are trade-offs in every big organisation but making them transparent is often the key.'

'When we have someone who has come as a LINK representative, I don't really know how they report back to the network and if there is a wider reporting back network. I don't really know how that internal working works.'

'I am aware that they have a series of working groups and they have parliamentary lobbyists, but I don't know more than that. Despite having worked with them for such a long time, I don't really know how they operate internally. It might be helpful to have something on their website, a little bit more transparency around that.'

### Leadership

'I think Debbie coming in will make quite a difference. They maybe lacked that central figure that managed to command a bit of respect, it has helped to have someone who is a well-known face and who people know and like and trust in that role.'

'The leadership appears to be very open and very practically-minded, and I think that is going to be the key for the next phase, to keep the ambition for Scotland's environment while getting in to conversations about what really drives change and how far can we go in Scotland. I think this is a great time to be reviewing the corporate strategy.'