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Our Reference: 202400437417
Your Reference: LINK Letter to Minister Ivan McKee

31 October 2024

Dear Juliet Caldwell,

Thank you for your letter of 17 October, on behalf of Scottish Environment LINK's Planning Group, in which you write to follow up on matters discussed at our introductory meeting on 25 September.

I very much welcomed the opportunity to meet with you and your colleagues and to hear more about the SE Link Planning Group. I am also grateful for SE Link's continuing support for NPF4 delivery.

I recognise that halting and reversing the biodiversity decline in our landscapes and seas is critical to our future environment. That is why our most recent [Programme for Government](#) set out commitments which will help us to continue to make progress with protecting 30% of our land and seas for nature by 2030. On 18 October the Scottish Government also launched a consultation on proposals to amend policy on the protections afforded to certain Ramsar features, further information on which is available by contacting officials at biodiversityconsultation@gov.scot.

Whilst you note that our most recent planning work programme update did not specifically mention nature or biodiversity, NPF4 policy 1 is clear that significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals. As we discussed when we met, we have published guidance to support delivery of NPF4 biodiversity policies, and NatureScot continues to progress work to develop an adapted biodiversity metric to support delivery of NPF4 policy 3b) and further updates on this work will be made available in due course.

I note the significant time and effort made by volunteers to compile Planning Democracy's research on the implementation of NPF4 biodiversity policies and understand this will be discussed in more detail with my officials next month.

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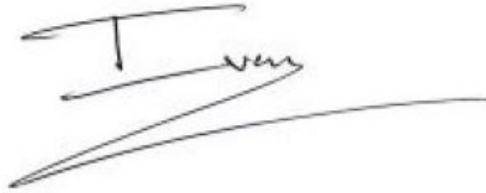
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Whilst I also note your invitation to meet on a regular basis, I am aware that officials from Planning Architecture and Regeneration Division meet quarterly with SE Link representatives and consider this to be the most practical route going forward to ensuring continuing engagement and dialogue on planning matters.

Thank you once again for your continued support in the delivery and implementation of NPF4.

Yours sincerely,



IVAN McKEE

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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