

**LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE DEVOLVED NATIONS MEETING
12 MARCH 2014
RIBA BIRMINGHAM AND MIDLANDS INSTITUTE
11.30- 15.30**

NOTE OF MEETING

1 Present

Peter Hutchinson LINI Joint-Chair (PH)
Emily Smyth LINI Joint-Chair (ES)
Wendy Richards LIW Chair (WR) (chair of meeting)
Mark Turnbull LIS Chair (MT)
Sue Illman President LI (SI)
Noel Farrar President Elect LI (NF)
Phil Mulligan LI CEO (PM)
Paul Lincoln Head of Policy and Communications LI (PL)

2 Agenda

- 1 Branch/Nation operations (members, statistics, activities, structure, representation on LI council / committees etc)
- 2 Branch/Nation finances
- 3 Nations' Education matters
- 4 Nations' Local government matters (includes policy officer operations)
- 5 Branch Issues
- 6 Secretariat
- 7 Nation / Region Promotion of the profession
- 8 AOB – LI digital communications; Landscape Futures;
- 9 AOB - Devolved Nations Actions – the way forward

3 Introduction

- 3.1. The inaugural devolved nations meeting took place on 30 January 2013 at the RIBA Birmingham, attended by MT LIS, WR LIW, Pete Mullin LINI, SI LI President, Alastair McCapra LI CEO. It was a useful, informal, discussion, no notes were taken but it set the precedent to repeat the process on a more regular basis. Following the meeting, the appointment of Policy Consultants progressed.
- 3.2. An Agenda had been circulated prior to this meeting.
- 3.3. Although informal a note would be taken of this meeting and if possible the agenda would be followed to make sure all items were covered within the time available.

4 Branches

- 4.1 SI stated she has talked to a number of branches during her tenure as LI President.
- 4.2 PM: LI is setting the strategy, which they are looking to branches to deliver locally.
- 4.3 The branches will be supported from LI core Funding and Secretariat.

5 Devolved Nations

- 5.1 LINI, LIW and LIS stressed that they represented Nations and as such were different from branches in England which represented areas. The implication for LINI, LIW and LIS was to

ensure that advocacy, policy and connections to government were given a high priority as well as organising branch events to ensure there was a strong network of practitioners.

6 Review: What has changed since last meeting?

6.1 Scotland - LIS

- 6.1.1 The Independence Referendum in September 2014 and the sensitivity of the general situation in the run up to the Referendum. Although less Consultations were anticipated NGO consultations have increased in the last month.
- 6.1.2 The Scottish Landscape Forum had produced Scotland's Landscape Charter in 2010 and had been put on hold. One of the recommendations of the LIS 2012 Conference had been to re-establish it. The one year on review with the Conference Partners suggested that there would be political resistance to this and therefore it was agreed that LIS should lead a new forum titled Landscape 2020. 2020 being the year in which many Scottish Government Targets are to be met.
- 6.1.3 LIS has prepared Business Plan to 2020 (12 month plan is not sufficiently long term).
- 6.1.4 One of the benefits of devolution has resulted in greater inclusiveness, which has been excellent for the nation.
- 6.1.5 It is now very clear that Scotland is in many ways going in a different direction from the rest of the UK and is considered to be in the forefront of environmental and design policy.
- 6.1.6 LIS has a full and active Committee of 12; Administrative and Policy and Development Meetings are held separately and immediately prior to committee meetings.
- 6.1.7 LIS have used events such as PM's recent visit to get members from all sectors together.
- 6.1.8 LIS desire for a champion/patron. PM requested LIS send proposal for the role to LI Board

6.2 Wales - LIW

- 6.2.1 At the inaugural meeting of the group WR took away that the function of the branch was to focus on the social/CPD events, building the community of landscape architects and strengthening their voice as a profession.
- 6.2.2 The interests of the LIW committee are broad and some of the younger members of the team are not as engaged with policy work being discussed as the more experienced members of the team. With the expectation that the branch needs to feed into National UK and National Wales and issues, there can some times be difficulty in striking a balance. LIW was interested to hear that LIS separates policy discussions into a different meeting.
- 6.2.3 LIW reported that there was relatively easy access to special advisers and politicians within the Welsh Government.
- 6.2.4 LIW had lost momentum from the lack of a Policy Officer but Policy Consultant now appointed and very beneficial; nonetheless LIW committee members were still involved in a lot of input into policy consultation responses, our previous Policy Officer had been a Landscape Architect, our current one is not.
- 6.2.5 LIW has a core small number of members involved in committee; the majority of the membership is disengaged from LIW activities. Reinvigorating the LIW social network is very important.
- 6.2.6 Two key members working in the public sector have set up cross-authority liaison groups to coordinate their voice in north and south Wales. They have concerns that individually they do not have a strong voice. The Government is currently encouraging cross authority working and looking to move to less local authorities after the next election.
- 6.2.7 WR concerned that beyond the Branch Handbook (2009) there is nowhere to store information and provide continuity to committee and policy consultants. The archive of information from the last Policy Officer seems to have disappeared. In terms of succession planning it would be useful to have somewhere to store and build a bank of information. PL agreed there could be cloud storage for LI branch committees; all material on branch websites is public, no facility for

member password. WR also suggested that it would be worth reconsidering the purpose and remit of branches and updating the 2009 guidance.

6.3 Northern Ireland – LINI

- 6.3.1 Value of Joint chairs – could be a model for other Nations (share workload/increased output, sounding board for ideas-invaluable) (LIS has a Vice Chair which performs in the same way)
- 6.3.2 Policy Officer work extremely beneficial, but working considerably extra hours than contract - difficult/impossible to cover all policy issues, make responses and other essential matters; LINI struggling with National and local issues in spite of having a Policy Officer
- 6.3.3 LINI consider that NI government is now recognising existence of LI / LINI
- 6.3.4 2015 Re-organising Local Government (will have planning powers)
- 6.3.5 Importance of joint LINI / NIEA conference (Minister of Environment opening speech, commitment to importance of landscape architecture); now NI Landscape Charter similar to Scotland's; revision of NI LCA for 2015; NI Landscape strategy for NI 2016
- 6.3.6 Benefit to LINI of having member on board of MAG, DCAL Minister request for advice from MAG on landscape matters NI, in consultation with DOE minister, includes review of Landscape Charters elsewhere
- 6.3.7 LINI is member of NI Environmental Link; established Land Matters Taskforce (to be advisory body to DOE?); LINI presence is useful in terms of pushing design. While link a campaigning organisation LINI played a valuable factual role in ensuring a proper understanding of landscape.
- 6.3.8 Review of Public Administration – invitation from new NI local government districts for LI coordinated roadshow relating to local government structure and capacity. LI confirmed commitment – opportunity for real engagement of Landscape architects at senior/decision-making level and employment/work opportunities for LI UK membership
- 6.3.9 LINI is Member of Construction Industries Group CIG – forum to raise importance of heads of professions in local government
- 6.3.10 50 years of landscape profession in Ireland / NI: LI funding for LINI conference 2014
- 6.3.11 LINI 2013-14 series of events (not including several presentations to NI Assembly committees):
1. Civic Stewardship event with MAG; 2. Craigavon Conference [and workshop roadshow -11 Councils]; 3. The Big Event
- 6.3.12 LINI communications issues – discrepancy between member numbers and recipients of email communications; appointment of non-member for email / website / banner design; also for work on heritage assets of profession in NI; questionnaire sent to LINI members
- 6.3.13 LINI concern regarding lack of LI Fellows in NI. MT reported that LIS committee completed the forms for the proposed fellows or they would not have been submitted.

7 branches / nations / finances / structure

- 7.1 PM explained more support is being made available for Branches/Devolved Nations, aware that LI has been insufficiently supporting its branches, that branches are 'flagging'; recognition that LI is a membership led professional body, & of duty of care to members
- 7.2 PM: announced increase in funding: Branch - additional £10-15,000 in annual budget (10% increase?); Policy Officer – 50% increase in their annual budget
- 7.3 SI: LI needs to do less to achieve more; focus on high impact work
- 7.4 PM: Branch activities and therefore funding needs to generally align with overall LI strategy. Branches local delivery of the national message. PM: not aware of any branch applications for funding not funded.
- 7.5 PM: accepts that social events can be funded too out of Branch allocation, recognised as important.
- 7.6 LINI & LIW – Policy dominates. LIS: Activities dominate.
- 7.7 PM: Recognition that the UK is 4 nations and LI needs to look at a new way of structuring itself and its activities to recognise this fundamental change since devolution

- 7.8 There is a real question as to how the LI does and should support the Devolved Nations who represent the LI to their nation?
- 7.9 Members want effective representation; includes parity for English members / branches. LIW / LIS / LINI = approx 10% of LI membership.
- 7.10 Note that all 4 Devolved Nations chairs had previously been Chairs, and concern some branches in England are without chairs.
- 7.11 LINI suggested a Chair for England. PM: LI will have new staff responsible for governance, will address consistency and transparency
- 7.12 LINI raised the issue of a branch post address / telephone number, LIW and LIS use only an email address and have not found this to be a problem. LINI notes problems with member contact through email communication, but telephone communication is very effective. -
- 7.13 PM: confirmed that any Nation & any Branch can have a paid administrative / secretarial support, it just needs to be included in the annual LI budget application.
- 7.14 LIS raised the matter of being a member of an organisation such as Scottish Environmental Link similar to that of LINI(See 6.3.7). It was agreed that while such organisation were campaigning in nature there was an advantage in membership in that appropriate landscape advice given making sure that there was no conflict of interest.

8 Digital Communications (PL)

- 8.1 PL: Noted that the LI Policy and Communication committee has new terms of reference; assured all Policy and Communication work will be run through P & C standing committee with no exceptions.
- 8.2 PL: clarified staffing and resourcing: Sabina - comps/awards; Stephen Russell – English Policy Officer and UK Policy; journal-Darkhorse; freelance editor-Sarah Harrison; some freelance graphic design and website design; Lesley Malone - website and LI publication editing
- 8.3 LI has new website and LIS trialling new Nation / Branch website which when fully operational will then be ‘rolled out’ to all Nations & Branches. Websites for Devolved Nations will recognise nation status rather than just as branches
- 8.4 LI intention to make the 3 Devolved Nations more obvious on LI website
- 8.5 New websites will be managed by the branches and have: basic nation / branch information, projects, policy, twitter and facebook managed by the branches; image-led; no central LI Facebook – Discussion on value of LinkedIn
- 8.6 Pinterest allows graphics to be shared, PL examining usefulness.
- 8.7 Special edition of Journal relating to all 4 nations in September 2014 – devolution and LI: what’s happened in past 10-12 years, and focus on different landscapes of the nations

9 Policy Consultants

- 9.1 PL presented LI Obligations of Policy Consultants
 - 1 Respond to consultations
 - 2 Lessons from Nation to LI
 - 3 Communicate LI work to Nation (eg. local case studies for national position papers etc)

9.2 Discussion

- 9.2.1 The issue of Development time was discussed as was the actual time being committed by the Consultants. Time will be increased from 30 days to 45 days, MT said this was not sufficient for Scotland and suggested 52 days was required.
- 9.2.2 Both LIW and LIS have members on LI Policy + Communications Committee. These do not represent LIS / LIW but in practice liaise closely with LIS / LIW Policy Officers. There is no member from LINI on the P+C Committee (since Pete Mullin became LINI Policy Officer and had to stand down from P+C committee).

- 9.2.3 A rebalance of P+C committee members is required as membership is presently policy-heavy. New P+C committee members will be appointed according to communication expertise.
- 9.2.4 LIS Policy and Development Officer and LIW Policy Consultant discouraged from attending LIS / LIW committee meetings but they are attended by LIS / LIW members of the P+C committee.
- 9.2.5 LIS Policy and Development Officer has access to LIS email account
- 9.2.6 PL: Stephen Russell is England Policy Officer (located in LI secretariat London)
- 9.2.7 LIS policy consultations expected to be less next 6 months due to referendum, Policy Officer will be used on development.

10 Landscape Futures and Land Use (PL)

- 10.1 There have been 4 lectures in England – each has been filmed and written up
- 10.2 Lectures to come are
 - 1 Digital landscape
 - 2 Future of Landscape Architecture
 - 3 Run 3 more for LINI, LIW and LIS June – Sep 2014
 - 4 Final Session (London Oct / Nov 2014) – what have we learnt – practice/academic
- 10.3 NF: LI considering the issue of rural land use and P+C committee will be setting up a working group
- 10.4 SI: LI not going to attend main UK party conferences but will invite specific Westminster MPs / influential individuals to dinner to discuss specific issues

11 Education

- 12.1 PM: LI Priority is to try to halt further course closures. LI actively working with SCHOLA and providing bursaries.
- 12.2 LINI raised question of courses in relation to the European Landscape Convention – NF / PM recognition that this needs to be further investigated
- 12.3 PM stated that LI looking at revamp careers material. LINI attends schools careers events (approx. 6 annually). LIS does not. LIS have prepared an interactive DVD which will be going to the careers advisors in all secondary schools in Scotland. LIS have also prepared a ‘Why join the LI’ to give out to students at the end of year show.
- 12.4 PM: LI would like to see more members involved with schools and landscape courses. LI will consider a course of action to follow
- 12.5 PM: LI would like to see registered practices offering work experience
- 12.6 LINI have prepared: LINI Membership Questionnaire; Branch/Nation Brochure (could be useful template for all branches); published a book on work of LINI Gold Medal winner /first practitioner in NI-Robert Carson –again could be useful approach for all Nations /Branches. LINI seek system in place to encourage sharing work between LI branches / Nations at no cost saving time and energy with visible benefits all round ?

12 Summary

12.1 General Considerations, Actions and Issues arising:

- 12.1.1 Branches:
 - o SI to confirm branches visited during her time as LI President
 - o LI Strategy: needs to be a 2-way process reflecting/including the needs of LI as a whole and of Nations & Branches and individual membership; with a degree of flexibility to take account of uniqueness of individual Nations & branches
- 12.1.2 Nations:

- LI fellowship process to be reviewed
 - PM to check Membership Data based on LINI comments
 - NF suggested LI should set a Target of making sure there are LA's in all local government Councils (LINI council roadshow will be useful to LI UK-wide)
 - PM / NF: LIS / LIW should engage with Welsh / Scottish Environment links to be present at the debates, not necessarily taking prescribed positions.
- 12.1.3 Finances / structure:
- LI action required to reverse the trend of 'flagging' branches – survey to understand issues
- 12.1.4 Digital Communications:
- Consideration to be given to LI recognition of England as a 'Nation' similar to the 3 Devolved Nations - in structure, websites etc
 - LI Nation / Branch websites: consideration must be given to Nation / Branch time required for managing the websites and features
- 12.1.5 Policy Consultants:
- Objective consideration required of time / resources required for the LI journal issue – to ensure no impact on other necessary work of the Policy Officers
 - Recognition that LINI is 'by circumstance' disadvantaged by lack of representation on LI P+C Committee, which might be addressed with new appointments made on communications merit
- 12.1.6 Landscape Futures:
- Important that all engagement with MPs (eg. UK Party conference events) must be inclusive of balanced Devolved Nation representation
- 12.1.7 Education:
- Suggestion for specific LI focus relating to seeking /supporting accredited courses especially in the Devolved Nations as well as throughout England
 - Develop a course of action to engage more LI members in schools and courses
 - Assistance / resources relating to practices offering work experience opportunities to be investigated, specifically enhanced benefits to the practices

12.2 Overall Key Issues

- 12.2.1 Recognition through out all LI activities of the separate status of the Devolved Nations branches and the need for the LI to re-structure its activities and support accordingly so that its clear what are national issues and what are local issues and who is dealing with them.
- 12.2.2 Recognition of the practical reality (distance and different governments also) of the Devolved Nations representing the LI within their Nations and the administrative, policy and communications necessary to provide support to them in undertaking this work.
- 12.2.3 Recognition that while there is a lot in common between the Nations there are also fundamental differences in the way in which they have to promote the landscape and the profession.
- 12.2.4 The big question for the LI is how will it ensure that the differences between the Nations is recognised in all LI national decision making. This opens up the question of representation on Committees and the Board and suggests a proper review of the structure and the status of the Devolved Nation chairs.