The discussions centred round a set of key questions:

* How can the new network influence the current leadership agenda in Scotland and beyond?
* How can the new network promote research within the field of leadership to inform future understandings of leadership and leadership development within Scotland and beyond?
* How can the new network be promoted in Scotland and beyond? – By whom?
* What other networks/associations/bodies should the network connect with? – What is the potential relationship with SCEL?
* What are the key themes/issues that the network should engage with in its first year?
* What suggestions do you have for the initial network events?
* What ision would you have of the network in five years time? What would it have achieved? With what would it be engaged and with whom?

## Main themes to emerge from the discussion

### The purpose and focus of the new network

Much of the discussion centred around the contribution which the new network could make in terms of prioritising a research-informed understanding of educational leadership to underpin policy and policy development as it pertains to educational leadership across the various sectors of the Scottish educational landscape. This was perceived as a long-term endeavour: one which pertains beyond Scottish boundaries, informing understandings of educational leadership and leadership development internationally. It was suggested that there was a need to look outwards but also to look inwards, to examine the context and culture within which Scottish educational leadership resides and the beliefs and values which underpin it, probing beneath the assumptions which are often made to come to a deeper understanding. It is about tapping into the tacit knowledge held by experienced practitioners and examining the concept of educational research itself – What do we mean by educational research? Where do we stand? What do we want to achieve? Who creates the knowledge? It is about championing critical and independent, high quality research, free from the policy agenda, enabling researchers to stand back from it objectively.

The network should probe questions about the distinctiveness of Scottish education, examining what ‘leadership for all’ looks like across sectors, mapping out conceptually how it is understood and practised, including understandings located within Higher Education. It should focus upon understanding leadership at a systems as well as at a local level and who exercises leadership at each level. It was considered that the network should seek to widen the constituency of those who are involved in research in the field of leadership, broadening its reach to the international arena whilst also seeking to strengthen linkages at the local level between practitioners and researchers, recognising that practitioners can engage with research in a wide range of ways. It was considered, however, that considerable strides had already been made in furthering research within this field.

### Key features in the approach adopted by the network

It was considered important that a highly collaborative, authentic approach, reaching out to public bodies, the educational community and the research community is essential for progress. An outward-looking, dynamic, active and inclusive approach is called for, promoting links and networks, looking beyond systems, structures and events to impact at a deep level, and making research accessible (engaging with the GTCS and the EBSCO initiative) were considered to be important in furthering the aims of the network. Networks and seminars could be used to promote collaborative research, for accessing reviews and books and to enable the identification of external examiners for doctoral candidates. An important aspect would be to set up initial meetings with local authorities, SCEL, the GTCS and Education Scotland to carry out an initial scoping exercise to ascertain how the new network can support Scottish education.

### Engagement with wider professional bodies and research communities

A wide range of learned and professional bodies with which the new network could form relationships with were identified from the national to the international. [cc. Figure 1] However, it was considered important not only to focus upon potential linkages but also the nature and purpose of the link. The fostering of doctoral students was considered to be an important aspect of the outreach of the network. It was suggested that the network could be supported financially through drawing upon supporters of SERA and that collaborative events could be organised working together with other public bodies such as SCEL, GTCS or Education Scotland. Linkages with the newly formed SCEL Fellowship scheme could be highly beneficial enabling the new network to form connections with experienced Headteachers. Electronic media (such as twitter, web pages) could widen the network of participants and publicise the work of the network.

Figure 1: Potential collaborations