

Panellist contribution by Morgan Parry

10 minute intro to “Big Environmental Society” workshop 14/4/11

Disclaimer: not necessarily the view of CCW!

I don't associate myself with the term “Big Society”

..... its a politically loaded term, not in current use in Wales.

Not because the debate around the role of civil society is not a live one- it is

..... but because it is associated with a political agenda to shrink the public sector

Its an interesting question whether Wales is “already doing” the Big Society – tradition of community

.....or whether Wales is dependent on the institutions of state, government,

Does the public expect “the experts” to safeguard the environment, or do they want to be involved?

Wales is developing “natural Environment Framework” and looking to create a Single Env Body

... also looking at the relationship with other sectors in achieving outcomes – private and third

Not because its cheaper, but because it can be more engaging and effective

Are public bodies accountable?

Other problem (Lawton Review in England) is that conservation sites are too small and fragmented – ecosystem approach requires us to work on a bigger scale. *Biodiversity loss continues*

NAW Committee concluded (amongst other things) that policies of other sectors (economic development, infrastructure, energy) doesn't support environment

If ecosystem approach moves towards valuing *ecosystem services* as basis for economic activity then economic models need to adapt to recognise true value and *limits to ecosystem function*. Need to involve these other actors.

Spectrum of debate is far reaching – from Bolivia where the Law of Mother Earth has recently been passed, to the economically liberalised developed world where the commodification of natural resources is prevalent

Law of Mother Earth expected to prompt radical new conservation and social measures in Bolivia, granting all nature equal rights to humans. 11 new rights for nature. They include: the right to life and to exist; the right to continue vital cycles and processes free from human alteration; the right to pure water and clean air; the right to balance; the right not to be polluted; and the right to not have cellular structure modified or genetically altered. Also enshrine the right of nature "to not be affected by mega-infrastructure and development projects that affect the balance of ecosystems and the local inhabitant communities". Heavily influenced by a resurgent indigenous Andean spiritual world view which places the environment and the earth deity at the centre of all life. Humans are considered equal to all other entities.

Consumerist approach increasingly sees the marketplace fixing the price of resources, and private sector companies determining rates and places of exploitation.

Significant that no mechanisms other than carbon pricing were incorporated in the (radical) Climate Change Act, and coming through are Land, Habitat and Biodiversity Banking

Does Wales wish to adopt this approach, or is there still a place for public policy interventions? Are regulatory frameworks fit for purpose? We are responding to pressures and problems.

Alternative might be spatial planning based on the ecosystem approach: *green infrastructure*

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Requires partnership approach between sectors based on clear Government policy framework

Governance is a key issue here, and as part of the review in Wales we will be looking at an academic study to answer the following questions:

- 1 What are the general principles of good governance in the 21st century to which any new arrangements must conform? Public Appointments, Nolan Principles. Jeremy Beecham Review: Wales should aspire to be a small country exemplar of citizen-centred service delivery, learning from the best in international experience and taking action on:
 - improving citizen engagement;
 - better delivery;
 - effective partnerships; and
 - robust, constructive challenge.
- 2 Are there distinct factors or values pertaining to the management of natural resources and the environment that require a particular approach to governance?
- 3 What are the various governance models available to the new body, and what lessons can we learn from best practice in other countries - e.g. New Zealand and Denmark?
- 4 How should the new body relate to the Welsh Government?
- 5 How should the new body relate to its various stakeholders, individually and collectively?