

Event	Attendance	Format Feedback	Overall Feedback
8 th May Exeter Environment	31 SPARSE 0 RSP 3 Community 13 Other 47 Total	0 Excellent 100% Good 0 Fair 0 Poor	57% Very Useful 43% Useful 0 Not Useful

Key Points from the seminar raised by delegates and through the discussion:

Natural Environment White Paper

- Many of the issues have been trailed before.
- How effective is the process of monetarising the natural environment – is it fully credible?
- How effective will any of the activities in the White Paper be without the force of law?
- Localism has a key role to play in the context of the NE White paper.
- There are some paradoxes to the benefits of living in a valued environment – are they considered actively enough in the White Paper?
- Have economists (or perhaps even accountants) become too influential in the environment debate and does their approach lead to short termism?
- Is one good definition of sustainable development - “Something which can go on for ever?”
- Does the White Paper really reassert the environment as a key are of policy concern – and more widely have the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) given the need for managed development a stronger rationale?
- The environment is too thinly represented as an issue across the different disciplines within Local Government
- Does Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) provide an opportunity to take a new approach to valuing the environment in the context of development?
- “Holy Grail” in terms of the contexts set out within the White Paper is to establish coherence in terms of the interface between LEPs, LNPs and Health and Well-Being Boards.
- Is there a danger that the positive forces of economic development could be actually and detrimentally constrained (in terms of settlement sustainability) by too heavy a swing against any form of development?

Key additional sources:

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) - www.teebweb.org/

Millennium Ecosystems Assessment - www.maweb.org/

Transition Town and Localism Act Discussions

- Stewart Barr – has a detailed study of 3 transition towns due out in November 2012
- Are transition towns too narrowly focused as a concept?
- Does the argument about peak oil involve a denial of changes to the energy agenda?
- What is the most appropriate scale to run and manage a sustainable settlement on the model proposed around the transition agenda? – this discussion also “speaks” to the challenge of deciding at what level neighbourhood plans might best work.

- There are two wings in the transition movement – pragmatists and idealists and their distribution determines the nature of the transition model in any given town.
- There are clear links around the debate in terms of governance going in within the transition town movement and more widely in relation to the roll out of the Localism Act esp around Neighbourhood Planning.
- Transition could be described as a “middle class” movement and there are really interesting broader debates to be had about how the “working class” in rural England are using their parallel ingenuity to build resilience and to consider the links between the two.
- Parish Plans are a useful starting point for Neighbourhood Planning but are sometimes not very spatial in their context
- Neighbourhood Planning may give an extra impetus to the role of the backbencher councillors in representing their communities.

Key additional sources:

Communities and Local Government: A plain English guide to the Localism Act

<http://services.parliament.uk/Acts/2010-11/localism.html>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/decentralisationguide>

CABE 'Spaceshaper. A user's guide' (2007)

TCPA Your Plan Your Place

These notes do not necessarily represent the views of seminar delegates they are Ivan Annibal's interpretation of the discussions on the day.