Local Action Groups, the GB Strategy and the ‘Big Society’

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Invasive Non-native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain

What is it?

- A strategy document covering a huge multi-facetted subject...
- Cross-cutting and widely relevant...
- An enabling / direction-pointing framework...
- More Forward-facing than Backward-facing...
- A brave first attempt?!
- Up for review in 2013?
Invasive Non-native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain

What is it NOT?

- A pure Govt product!
- An imposition of top-down targets...
- A shopping list for eradicating established INNS...
- Exclusive to Govts...much is applicable at national, regional and even local level...
- Perfect!!
So what is “Big Society”?....???
So what is “Big Society”?

Big Society in crisis as economy weakens

Adoption couples are barred on race grounds

Yeates family’s ‘relief’

School music threat
What is the “Big Society”? 

“The Big Society is about a huge culture change, where people...don’t always turn to officials or Government for answers to the problems they face, but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities.”

David Cameron
It’s about:

• Shifting to a smaller State structure
• Greater involvement of civil society in policy-making
• More partnership with civil society in delivery
• More empowerment and responsibility within civil society – devolving power
• Less resort to regulatory approaches
“Big Society” thinking means:

- Looking differently at those problems Govt can’t solve alone – Q: is it even for Govt to solve?

Where Govt...

- Removes barriers...
- Decentralises power...
- Provides toolkits, evidence, facilitation, powers and funding....
What’s it going to take?

• Time & learning for all...
• Working in an uneven landscape...
• Govt frameworks/steering where some degree of national cohesion is necessary – e.g. INNS!
• Recognition that it can’t be extended fully for everything, e.g. to implement EU Directives etc
Local Action Groups, the GB INNS Strategy & a “Big Society” approach...

- Happy coincidence?
- Why could Big Society work in the INNS field?
Who’s problem is the INNS issue?

• Land owners & managers, land-use businesses...
• Statutory bodies & authorities...
• Government (public interest)...
• Plant and animal trade and user interests...
• Various business sectors, e.g. transport, shipping etc
• *Society as a whole - it’s everybody’s problem!*
The vision in the Strategy is?:

• Widespread awareness and understanding...

• A **stronger sense of shared responsibility**...

• A **framework for national, regional and local action**...
Core thrust of the Strategy:

- Prevention measures
- Early detection and rapid response
- Longer-term control

Govt emphasis

Civil society / affected interests emphasis
Govt/LAG partnership approach benefits...

**Government side...**
- National policy framework & priorities...
- Support – knowledge, materials, guidance, networking, initiatives, funding...etc?
- Regulatory back-up

**Local action groups...**
- Local management & partnerships
- Deeper awareness raising in society
- Change at grass roots level
- Support for surveillance, reporting and national priorities
The Government/Society Partnership vision?

A greater role for the “Big Society”?...

• “Communities, businesses, civil society organisations and local authorities should have much bigger roles in protecting and enhancing the natural environment...”

Natural Environment White Paper Discussion Document Summary
Challenges ahead?

• How to enhance involvement of civil society stakeholders in INNS policy making?
• How to maximise the value of LAGs as examples of a “Big Society” approach?
• How to support LAGs to achieve at the greatest strategic scale their context allows?
• Thank you.