



Conclusions of the Green Work(s)! conference

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The main question for this conference was 'Does Green Work?'

Of course green works.

In our lectures and our workshops and our site visits yesterday, we have seen excellent examples of how green works – good research – and good evidence that high quality green infrastructure brings a whole range of economic, social and health benefits for communities and individuals.

We have also seen some interesting and valuable techniques for putting a monetary value on these public benefits. These rely on good data and good research – but we must also adopt shared methodologies across regions.

This is the good news.

But there is also not so good news.

I have also heard over these two days that many of us are increasingly concerned that many of our economies are likely to face declining public sector investment in the environment – particularly as people prioritise economic growth. So what should be our response?

I think I have heard four important targets for all of us –

Firstly, and particularly where public money is limited, public money must pay for public goods. For example, where farmers are making space for water, helping with flood

regulation, they should be paid for this – as well as for food production and biodiversity. So we need to accurately quantify the ecosystem services which GI provides. We must also avoid unintended consequences – using public money to fund things which have negative environmental impacts.

Secondly, we must get more private sector investment in GI. Private developers and businesses will invest in GI if the requirements are clear and consistent. Often they can build the costs of this into land purchase costs. But this means governments must provide clear regulations, consistent across regions.

Thirdly, we must make it easier for people to become more involved in enjoying and caring for their local environment. But this is not a cheap option. It needs people who understand about community capacity building and removing barriers to engagement.

Conservationists must embrace people.

Finally – we need to talk to people who are not believers using simple language they understand. Tell good news stories. Explain simply what is needed and what difference it will make. Find champions – public figures who can communicate these messages simply and well. But also let us move outside our own comfort zones, and talk to organizations and individuals who do not yet share our beliefs.

We all know green works – we must now use our best research, our best practice, and best communicators to share that message with others.