

Land Use policy influences and challenges for the coming decade

Janet Dwyer
Professor of Rural Policy

Context

The value of taking the long view.....

- ‘Land Use Futures’ foresight exercise, 2008-9
- ‘Short scientific reviews’ to feed into staged workshops and working groups, conceptualisation & development of futures scenarios
- ***brief: how might rural land use policy look, c.50 years ahead? What might be its key challenges?***
- ***In truth, it was difficult to see beyond 25 years – but 10 is pretty certain!***

Approach – how to predict the course of future policy?

The only certainty is uncertainty, BUT analysis of ***context***, ***design*** and ***delivery*** tell us:

- there is path-dependency in medium-term policy styles / fashions (so history is relevant)
- some ‘lock-in’ within cycles (current and likely future drivers important)
- some underlying ‘cultures’ of beliefs/values in political process / policy choice (characteristics of UK political systems relevant)

Lessons from history

Three 'waves' of rural land use policy:

1945 to '75 The post-war compact: control built development, stimulate agricultural modernisation, improve infrastructure and communications

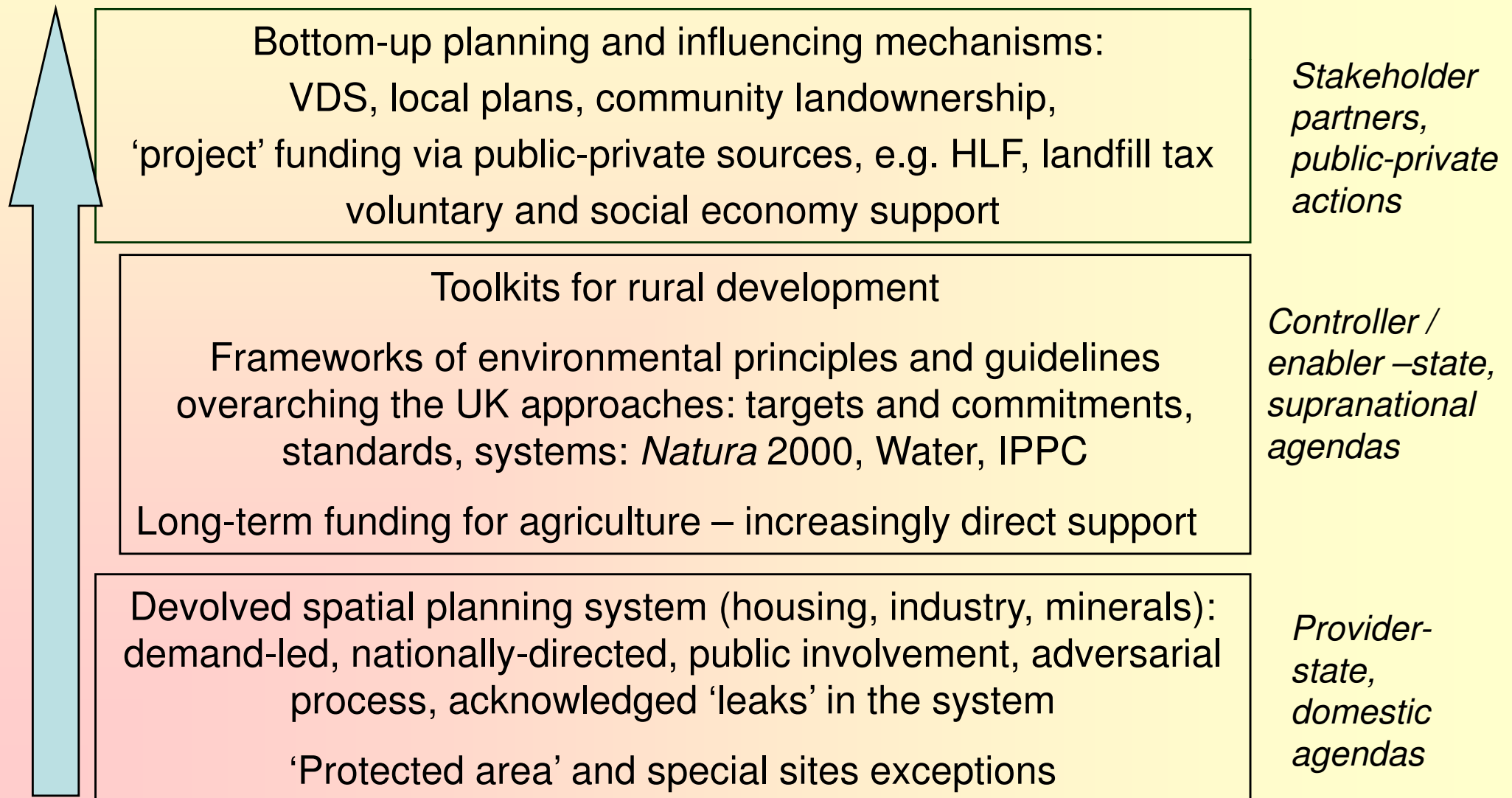
1975 towards 2000 The European phase: common market, environment, CAP and its reform

2000-? The multifunctional phase: new demands on land; consequences of counter-urbanisation (consumption countryside); internationalisation of the agenda (food, energy, climate)

➤ ***Each wave draws from the previous, but each develops new focal points / key instruments and approaches.....***

Lessons from history (2)

An increasing range of policy tools / layers





From this.....



... to these?

To 2025 – trends for the 'old retainers'

- 'Loosened' land use zoning for development: *new towns, new infrastructure, infill, but local resistance will slow the process*
- More strategic planning for minerals
- More community-led land uses
- Steady decline in CAP influence: farming more responsive to market trends
- Liberalised trade drives increased marginalisation of remote / disadvantaged areas
- More, but more flexible, environmental 'protection'

To 2025 – trends for the 'new kids on the block'

Ambitious climate targets supported by:

- funding to 'facilitate' some large-scale renewables
- peatland protection and carbon credits (*private funding for public goods?*)
- More woodlands and forest support, and/or
- Modest return to coal + CCS; nuclear revival?
- Novel crops for insulation/city 'greening'
- Many smaller-scale rural projects



RDPE project Photographs
courtesy SWRDA NWDA,
EERDA



‘New kids on the block’ (2)

A stronger food and health agenda:

- Market opportunities for new outputs
- Farming and forestry as healthcare options: social farming, rehabilitation, reconnection, leisure and rural retreat, education and culture

BUT

- A sustained reduction in UK public sector 2010-2020? – *increased emphasis upon private and voluntary sector delivery*



Photos courtesy of 'Let Nature Feed Your Senses'

How, when and where will changes come?

- Inertia in the system – local level change is often less than suggested by targets
- Some notable exceptions: innovation and transformation from the ‘ground up’:
transition towns, environmental entrepreneurs, enlightened landownership, Local Action
- How will Whitehall work with this?

How, when and where will changes come? (2)

- ***EU drivers*** for more national action: funds, regulations – but these will be resisted.....
- ***UK drivers*** for ‘big society’ solutions – more scope for local action, but will it be sufficient?
- Not so much conflict ***or*** consensus; potentially ‘*ships passing in the night*’, perhaps.....

Key land use policy challenges for the coming decade

- How to invigorate *positive* planning within the established development control context – *modify piecemeal, or change more radically?*
- Strengthening corporate effort and incentivising lasting investment
- How to sustain the marginal areas?
- Ecosystem services and sustainable business solutions: making the links for long-term resilience