

EcCoWell – Pat Ledwidge – Closing Remarks

First of all I'd like to thank everybody for a super day today – thank the speakers, the guests who came, the facilitators at the workshops, the organisers, the participants – and I think it was a super day. It's been one of a series of events that we've had in City Hall: we had the ITLG Conference¹ in January, we have the Economic Forum in October and the Lord Mayor will host a conference on Age Friendly Cities in November. So this fits in with a deep thinking and a learning process we're all going through which we'll use to address the problems our guests have alluded to. So I think everybody should give themselves a round of applause.

The second thing is that, although these are Closing Remarks, you are only at the half way stage – there's a buffet dinner tonight, a big opportunity for networking, and there are site visits tomorrow. And as the theme of this conference is about learning, there are still many learning opportunities available for everybody over the next 18 hours or so, so take them on board.

Just going to this morning and this afternoon, I suppose it reinforced the way I think about the world: the importance of the Third Sector, and I think Cork has shown today what I've known for a long time, that it has a very powerful, very hard-working and innovative Third Sector; the importance of sustainable development; and also the fact that sustainable development is made up of, as José² said, of the three pillars. There's very many ways you can define the three pillars, my shorthand is economic, social and environmental. I think a key part in this is that sustainable development isn't a soft, woolly concept and, as Michael³ said, you can't redistribute poverty. So it's important that we understand when we're in the economic sector that there is the social and environmental dimension, and when you're in the social sector that there's the economic and environmental dimension, and to think outside the box and to be open.

Again, going forward from this event, there's a very strong institutional framework in place, which Michael Osborne and Joan Devlin⁴ alluded to, both in terms of the whole PASCAL network and the whole WHO Healthy Cities network and that's something the people in the city can take advantage of in the future.

Things that stuck in my mind from today's talks – the first one was the Medici Effect, which Denise⁵ talked about, and the key thing from that is listening, it's actually about people from various backgrounds and various sectors in the city listening to each other. Michael Osborne's remark about the smallest geographical unit – making decision-making and doing things at the smallest geographical unit, the EU used to

¹ 5th Annual ITLG Global Technology Leaders Summit

² José Arriba, keynote speaker.

³ Michael Parkinson, keynote speaker.

⁴ Keynote speakers .

⁵ Denise Cahill, Introducing EcCoWell Cork.

call that subsidiarity and I think that's a very strong concept. Again, what Michael⁶ said about powers being devolved to cities comes under that as well. José's alignment of the technical and the political in the citizen is very important in getting our act together as a city region and moving forward. **Vitoria Gasteiz** has been very impressive in that and he gave us a wonderful insight into a city that we don't know much about in Cork.

Michael (Parkinson) talked about Manchester and referred to it in his closing remarks as well. My memory of Manchester coming onto my radar was when it made an Olympic bid two sessions in a row. They weren't successful, but to me that seemed to galvanise Manchester. And looking at José's presentation, the bid for the Green Capital seems to have galvanised **Vitoria Gasteiz** as well and given it something to coalesce around and to look forward to in a very worthwhile way. The question I have for the people in the audience is – what will Cork coalesce around? We were European Capital of Culture in 2005, is there something else we can aim for to try and align the city towards a very positive future?

I just want to make some remarks about what for me, as a public servant, is the most important part of today – and it's a theme which has been alluded to in all the discussions – and it's about governance. One definition of governance is the how we do things and the values and behaviours we have when we do them.

To me there's two bits of governance – there's the policy bit and the implementation bit. I always say to people who come into me with ideas, and generally they're looking for funding, is that the first thing you need to do is to get it on the policy agenda. There's a lot of learning that's coming from today's sessions and hopefully from tomorrow and we have to capture it and get it on the policy agendas of the various actors in the city, including the City Council.

For me, in charge of Planning and Economic Development, the Draft City Development Plan is being prepared and is going to go on public display early next year. So it's important that some of the learning from today's event finds its way into the Draft City Development Plan. Next year there's Local Elections and after that the City Council has to prepare a Corporate Plan, some of the values and learning from today should also find their way into the Corporate Plan. They are in the Corporate Plan at the moment but they may be improved upon, we might be able to improve how we do them.

The most important one is implementation. For implementation we need to distil our policies into actions, but it's important that the actions are implemented. And the people who implement the actions are the decision makers in the various organisations and Denise talked this morning about how sometimes you have rows with people and conflicts about getting things through, and that's all very well.

⁶ Michael Parkinson, keynote speech.

For decision makers it's about power and how people use power and there's a very famous paper that was done in the 1970s about the three levers of power- there's the obvious power, there's power that is hidden and there's power that's imbedded.

And what I'd like to see, and it's a very long road and I'll be long retired when it happens, but if some of the values from today and the behaviours that we advocate, and the policies and actions that we advocate, can eventually be so embedded in the minds of the decision makers that they're almost sub-conscious, that would be a very good thing to aim for. It'll be a very long way, but that's the thought I'll leave you with, Thank you.