

LANDSCAPES FOR EVERYONE: CREATING A BETTER FUTURE

A shared vision of why we must treasure our
landscapes and how Government can help



BRITAIN'S DIVERSE LANDSCAPES NEED CHAMPIONS

A consortium of organisations has taken up the challenge. We have a shared vision of why our unique British landscapes should be better valued for the benefit of current and future generations and what Government action is needed to achieve this.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LANDSCAPE?

Landscape is more than just 'the view'. What turns land into landscape is our perception of a place, combining how we appreciate its aesthetic qualities – its patterns, colours, smells, textures and sounds – and the associations we attach to them, such as memories, feelings of familiarity or a sense of awe. The relationship between people, place and nature is the ever changing backdrop to our daily lives.

Landscape is everywhere; from mountains, uplands, moors and the seascapes of our stunning coastline, to

rolling countryside and traditional green parks in urban and rural areas, each with their own distinctive character and sense of place. The range of landscapes is hugely diverse: England has 159 National Character Areas¹; Scotland has 79 and Wales has 48. Landscapes are living history. We endorse the European Landscape Convention definition which states that 'landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'

WHY DO LANDSCAPES MATTER?

Our diverse landscapes are hugely important to the nation's health and well-being, making a significant contribution to the economy through tourism and farming or simply providing attractive places for people to live, work or play. They are also nature's home, providing habitats for many threatened species and vital environmental services such as carbon storage and alleviating flooding.

With increasing pressure for housing, transport and other infrastructure, it is more important than ever that Government policy, funding and legislation recognise the enormous contribution that distinctive, beautiful, characterful and cared for landscapes make to the nation.



WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

We recognise that Government has taken steps in the right direction² but many landscapes remain under threat. We believe the English, Scottish and Welsh Governments need to do more to ensure our landscapes survive and thrive by making their protection and enhancement priorities in public policy rather than secondary considerations.

It is essential that Government recognises that the health, social and economic benefits which people receive from landscapes are dependent on both the maintenance of high quality natural assets and improving their accessibility by sustainable means.

We must ensure that areas which have been designated for the national value of their landscapes – our National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), National Scenic Areas (NSAs)³, Historic Landscapes⁴ and Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic

Interest – continue to be protected from inappropriate development. We should also maintain other critically important planning policies, such as Green Belts, which have been very effective in preventing inappropriate development in other areas of the countryside.

A wide range of laws, regulations and policies have been put in place by successive Governments over the last 60 years to manage land use pressures, and have been largely successful in doing so. However, there are worrying signs that recent policy changes may have weakened these protections⁵. We believe that Government and policy makers need to take a new fully integrated approach to ensure that laws, policies and regulations work together to balance differing needs with the special qualities of each place. A better understanding of landscape is the key to this change.



A CALL TO ACTION

We ask all political parties to recognise the importance of landscape to the well-being and quality of life of the nation by committing to:

Better landscapes for people

- Improve and maintain public transport, rights of way networks and public green spaces so that people can access the countryside and enjoy their local landscapes;
- Provide funding to help schools plan visits for children to their local countryside, as well as nearby National Parks, AONBs, NSAs and historic parks and gardens.

Better planning for landscapes

- Strengthen planning protections for landscape – the planning system is one of the best tools we have to protect landscapes. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for England, Planning Policy Wales, Scottish Planning Policy and other planning guidance should be strengthened to protect our best and irreplaceable⁶ landscapes, including their setting, from major and intrusive development;
- Integrate the UK's commitment to the European Landscape Convention⁷ into Government policies, including the NPPF and equivalents in Scotland and Wales;
- Endorse and promote the National Character Area profiles as a tool for local authorities and policy makers to take a holistic approach to planning and landscape management in each area.

Better places for nature

- Encourage the restoration of degraded or impoverished landscapes in and around our towns and cities as well as the wider countryside, for the benefit of people, nature and the economy;
- Ensure our National Parks, AONBs, NSAs, Historic Landscapes, historic public parks and green spaces have sufficient resources to guarantee their long term protection and enhancement.



WE ARE A CONSORTIUM OF ORGANISATIONS WITH A SHARED VISION:



ARCHAEOLOGY
SCOTLAND



The Association
of Gardens Trusts



The Broads Society
Friends of the Broads

Campaign for
National Parks
Keeping beautiful places safe



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside



CENTRE for
SUSTAINABLE
HEALTHCARE
inspire • empower • transform



Council for
British Archaeology



friends of
the earth
see things differently



Landscape
Institute
Inspiring great places



Open
Spaces
Society



WILDERNESS
FOUNDATION • UNITED KINGDOM



¹ England's National Character Area profiles make environmental evidence and information easily available to a wider audience <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

² For example, the proposed extensions to the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks and landscape scale conservation promoted in the Natural Environment White Paper

³ The 40 National Scenic Areas, with their outstanding scenery, represent Scotland's finest landscapes

⁴ The Historic Landscape Register in Wales comprises 58 landscapes, ranging from former industrial centres to ancient rural settlements

⁵ CPRE *Going, Going, Gone? England's disappearing landscapes* (2013)

⁶ For example, active peatland, ancient woodland and wild land

⁷ The European Landscape Convention requires signatory states to 'integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.'