The origins, focus and relevance of the ELC

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The South Downs National Park Public Inquiry reopens
From the Editor

Welcome to issue 27 of the LCN News. The beginning of 2008 has been a hive of activity in the landscape world, with the publication of Natural England’s Policy on Landscape and a number of Public Inquiries. The South Downs National Park and the Glyndebourne Opera House Wind Turbine Public Inquiries are both discussed in this issue from Natural England’s and CPRE’s perspectives.

Also in this issue, John Briggs introduces the new landscape character map for Wales, Carys Swanwick discusses education and the ELC and we look at regional landscape work in the East Midlands Landscape Scoping Study and the East of England Integrated landscape framework.

Please continue submitting ideas and articles to LCN News: your input is essential to its success (for information on submissions please contact LCN News editorial team).

The Editor.

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Please Note

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The views expressed in LCN News are those of the respective contributors and are not necessarily those of Natural England. LCN News welcomes new contributions but can assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or illustrations.
New legislation to create rights of access around the English coast

In September 2007 the Government announced that it would legislate to give Natural England new powers to create rights of access around the whole of the English coast. Natural England are working closely with Defra on the content of this legislation, which is expected to form part of the forthcoming draft Marine Bill.

Natural England and Defra are developing an outline methodology to guide decisions at the local level on improving and managing coastal access. The draft Marine Bill and outline methodology are expected to be published in the Spring; and for the Marine Bill to be introduced in Parliament in November 2008.

The government’s vision for coastal access is for ...

“A coastal environment where rights to walk along the length of the English coast lie within a wildlife and landscape corridor that offers enjoyment, understanding of the natural environment and a high quality experience; and is managed in a sustainable way in the context of a changing coastline.”

There are currently no general rights for people to use the coast, despite its enormous public popularity. Current use is through a mixture of legal rights, other long term arrangements, short term permissions, and in many cases people just walking along the sections of coast in places where they know this has been possible in the past. The new legislation provides huge potential to improve the coastal environment – and people’s enjoyment of it.

Two-thirds of the English coast is covered by nature conservation designations (national designations – National Parks, AONBs, NNRs, SSSIs; European designations – SPAs and SACs; and international designations – Ramsar Sites) and some of these sites have real sensitivities to the presence of people or to particular activities. Natural England will deliver the protection that is required by law and, equally importantly, that is in the best interest of all who love the natural environment.

For further information please contact Natural England’s Coastal Access Project Team.
The Condition and Quality of England’s Landscapes Project

Andrew Baker of Natural England’s Evidence team describes the successor to the Countryside Quality Counts (CQC) project.

In 2008 Natural England will commence the planning process for an assessment of the condition and quality of England’s landscapes. Does that sound familiar? Following on from the launch the 2nd Assessment of Countryside Quality in June of 2007 (www.cqc.org.uk), Natural England undertook an evaluation of the CQC Project to determine if it was policy relevant. This concluded that there was still a need to know how the character of the England’s landscapes are changing and what this means for each of the Character Areas of England. The integrated approach that CQC used was considered to exemplify the approach to understanding the natural environment that Natural England is seeking to develop.

It is envisaged that the Condition and Quality of England’s Landscapes Project (CQuEL) will report in 2012 and will assess change for the period 2004 to 2009. Detailed planning work, which will include consultation with key stakeholders, will be underway by the autumn of 2008. It is intended that an extensive consultation progress with the professional landscape community will again be a key feature of the assessment.

For more information about CQuEL, please contact Andrew Baker of Natural England:
Andrew.baker@naturalengland.org.uk

CPRE’s ‘Unlocking the Landscape’ initiative - an update

By Sarah Halevy, Campaigns Outreach Officer with the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Unlocking the Landscape is a tool created by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) to guide and support parish councils and other local groups through the process of producing Community Landscape Character Statements. Preparing such statements can enable communities to appreciate and record the beauty and individuality of their countryside, and help people influence decisions that local authorities and landowners make.

Since CPRE launched the campaign in 2006, 173 local groups have expressed an interest in producing Community Landscape Character Statements. However, after this initial interest, only a relatively small number have completed the process. CPRE is therefore currently reviewing the Unlocking the Landscape initiative.

A project researcher is contacting a number of parish councils and local groups at different stages of this process, establishing why only a relatively small number have so far produced statements. Evaluating this data will allow CPRE to inform and modify the campaign, and improve it for future planning.

For more information on the Unlocking the Landscape initiative, or to order copies of the introductory literature from CPRE National Office, contact Sarah Halevy:
Tel: 020 7981 2800
sarahh@cpre.org.uk

More information about the Unlocking the Landscape initiative is available in the campaigns section of the CPRE website:
http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/countryside-character

Previous articles on Unlocking the Landscape have appeared in LCN News 24 and CCN News 18

Image ▲ The cover of CPRE’s Unlocking the Landscape action pack

www.landscapecharacter.org.uk
News

East of England Integrated Regional Landscape Framework

Natural England is working with local authorities in the East of England region to develop an integrated landscape framework. The East of England Integrated Regional Landscape Framework will include a region-wide GIS-based landscape character framework that will contribute towards landscape evaluation and decision making. It will prepare the region for the implementation of the future Natural England European Landscape Convention Action Plan. The specific outcomes of the work are:

• Production of a regional landscape typology, utilising existing data prepared at national, county and district level;
• Integration of the regional landscape framework with county level Historic Landscape Characterisation and the regional Biodiversity Network Map;
• Raised awareness of the European Landscape Convention and Landscape Character Assessment and its application, through the production of a nested series of character maps at different scales, to be made available through the Landscape Character Network;
• The use of this regional level approach to landscape character to inform the application of landscape sensitivity analysis and to influence the development of regional/sub-regional development strategies and future land management initiatives.

A draft region-wide map of Land Description Units (LDUs) is being developed by consultant Steven Warnock. This map will provide the building blocks for the regional landscape typology. The underlying structure of the landscape has been described according to four definitive attributes: physiography, ground type, land cover, and settlement pattern. A GIS-based database has been created to store the LDUs and other related information. Further work is being carried out to integrate the LDUs as far as possible with county level Historic Landscape Characterisation and the regional Biodiversity Network Map.

There is currently a six week consultation period on the draft maps with staff from each of the region’s six county councils followed by specific county level meetings to produce an agreed final LDU map. A regional workshop will be held in May to present the finalised East of England LDU map and gain consensus on next steps.

For further information contact David Vose at Natural England:
david.vose@naturalengland.org.uk

Regional Landscape Description Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy brown soils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shallow calcareous soils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcareous brown soils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dune sands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loamy brown soils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy brown soils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claylands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loamy gleys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet claylands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry meadowland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet meadowland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltmarsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intertidal sands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Map produced on 27th March 2008 from GEN-i

For further information contact David Vose at Natural England: david.vose@naturalengland.org.uk
The East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA), in partnership with Natural England, are letting a contract for a scoping study to identify the best way forward for developing an integrated agenda for landscape in the East Midlands. This integrated agenda will assist the region in developing its own Action Plan for implementing the principles of the European Landscape Convention. It will also identify the regional landscape policy positions and approaches necessary to support spatial and economic policy in the region, within the overall sustainable development framework of the Regional Integrated Strategy.

The study aims to establish how adequately landscape has been recognised around the region to date and what needs to happen to secure its sustainable future. It will also identify ways that the landscape theme could be used to bring about greater integration between work areas, in order to deliver multiple wider public and environmental benefits.

Among the many drivers for landscape change facing the region is the requirement, set out in the draft Regional Plan, to accommodate significant levels of housing growth and related environmental, employment and transport infrastructure in the period leading up to 2026. The scoping study will identify what the most significant drivers for landscape change in the region are, and where those changes are likely to be located.

With the concept of environmental capacity already embedded in the draft Regional Plan and its policy framework, it is hoped that the scoping study will lead to recommendations for a robust methodology that will take account of the sensitivity and capacity of the region’s diverse landscapes and their ability to accommodate the level of change that they will face over the coming years. Such a methodology must be able to incorporate people’s perceptions and value judgements of landscape, alongside purely scientific data.

The scoping study will also consider green infrastructure - this is the subject of considerable activity in the East Midlands, with research and projects taking place at the regional, sub-regional and local levels. It is hoped that the scoping study will identify ways to make the role of landscape in green infrastructure more evident to policy makers and practitioners, and how best to integrate the landscape component of green infrastructure with other datasets in assessments of the region’s sensitivity and capacity to accommodate development and change.
Glyndebourne Opera House Wind Turbine Public Inquiry

By Rebecca Moberly of Natural England

Glyndebourne Productions Ltd. submitted a planning application for a proposed wind turbine, of 70m height and with a blade diameter of 52m, to Lewes District Council in January 2007. The Council resolved to approve the planning application despite its Planning Officer’s recommendation to refuse and against objections raised by Natural England and others, including the South Downs Joint Committee, South Downs Society, National Trust, CPRE, Council for National Parks and Ramblers Association. The application was subsequently called-in by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and a Local Inquiry held. Natural England presented evidence at the inquiry and advised the Planning Inspector to recommend refusal on the basis that the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the intrinsic character and beauty of the Sussex Downs AONB and proposed South Downs National Park.

Natural England’s view, presented at the Local Inquiry, is that the wind turbine would compromise the objectives of the Sussex Downs AONB and proposed South Downs National Park (to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the area, to promote the public enjoyment of the National Park’s special quality), and would result in significant harm to the landscape of the local and wider area. In our view, the modest benefits to be derived from the proposed turbine in terms of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions would not outweigh the significant adverse impacts on the nationally important landscape of the Sussex Downs AONB and proposed South Downs National Park.

National Government planning policy is clear that whilst renewable energy proposals in nationally designated landscapes may be acceptable in certain locations, they should not be to the detriment of the designated landscape itself. This proposal is of such a nature and scale, and in such a sensitive location that we consider that the detrimental impact it would have far outweighs the limited local benefits and contribution to national climate change objectives. The majority of the Opera House’s carbon emissions arise from visitor transport to the venue. The energy generation expected from the wind turbine development, even when operating at full capacity, would only provide for the Opera House itself and its immediate cluster of buildings. We also feel that solutions that are less detrimental to the sensitive surroundings should be investigated.

Natural England supports clean energy, including renewable energy, as an important part of the fight to reduce our contribution to climate change. As an organisation, Natural England is technology neutral, that is, we are not against wind or other forms of power generation in principle. Our judgement regarding any development (energy related or otherwise) will be determined by the development’s impact on the environment, including its contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

C PRE’s position on the Glyndebourne Wind Turbine Inquiry

By Tom Oliver, head of rural policy at the Campaign to Protect Rural England

CPRE worked with Natural England, the South Downs Joint Committee and others in giving evidence against the proposed 70m wind turbine at Glyndebourne on the South Downs, at a local inquiry held in February and March. The carbon saving arguments extended by the applicant were very flimsy and there were strong arguments in favour of giving landscape considerations great weight in this case.

CPRE’s tranquillity mapping research shows that seeing wind turbines is a significant detractor from tranquillity. In the case of the turbine application at Glyndebourne, the land within a 10 km radius of the proposed development contains much tranquil countryside, a large part of it within the designated South Downs National Park and most with good public access. Much of the most tranquil countryside within 10 km of the proposed development is within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the turbine hub and even more within the ZTV of the turbine tip. A significant part of this land is on or close to the South Downs Way or is otherwise publicly accessible or important open access land. We showed how significant the South Downs Way is for public recreation and enjoyment as well as its associated feeder network of footpaths and bridleways.

Another very extensive tract of tranquil countryside is located outside the National Park boundary, to the north and east of the proposed development. Although this area is not part of a nationally designated landscape, its amenity value is still considerable. It is exceptionally undisturbed and extensive by comparison with most of the south east of England. Its public value is significant and can be enjoyed using an extensive network of public rights of way. We regarded this land as being at particular risk of losing a significant part of its tranquil quality should the development take place. This is due to both the sensitivity of the positive attributes of tranquillity and the scale of the proposed turbine.

We considered that the proposed development would do significant damage to the sense of tranquillity in the places identified. The effect of detracting influences on tranquillity would be cumulative and the proposed development would damage the experience of tranquillity. Given the value and rarity of tranquil countryside, CPRE argued that the incremental damage which is likely to be brought about by the proposed development would not be in the public interest.
New ELC resources on the LCN website

The Landscape Character Network (LCN) website is now hosting a new resources section dedicated to the European Landscape Convention (ELC) and its implementation. The new resources are:

- The text of the Convention in English and its Explanatory Report in various formats, including a special LCN information resource, not available elsewhere, that presents the text of the Convention, article by article, next to the appropriate paragraphs from the Explanatory Report.
- ‘Guidelines for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention’ – the Council of Europe’s recommendations to signatory nations that wish to draw up and implement a national landscape policy based on the Convention. This also serves as an additional gloss to the Convention’s general principles and provisions.
- ‘European Landscape Convention – A Framework For Implementation in England’ – produced by Natural England working with Defra and English Heritage, which seeks to further strengthen the protection, management and planning of landscape in England by providing a structure for action plans of partners and stakeholders.

The LCN website's ELC resources section can be found at: http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk/node/27

Research to Support the Implementation of the ELC in England

Natural England has commissioned the Universities of Newcastle and Manchester to carry out a qualitative analysis of how the spirit of the ELC is articulated and defined in government legislation, policy and technical advice at national and regional level. The research, which commenced in November 2007 and is due to report at the end of March 2008, focuses on mechanisms that incorporate, respect and connect to landscape in spatial planning strategies and sectors. Using a qualitative, content analysis methodology the research considers sample documents and assesses the integration of approaches between national and regional levels as well as across sectors. There are three specific areas identified for research:

- National level guidance such as Planning Policy Statements
- Regional strategies including cross-sectoral strategies and how the national level approach is delivered at the regional level
- Regional case studies which include specific strategies developed by Regional Development Agencies and other regional delivery bodies

Maggie Roe, University of Newcastle, described the research in more detail as part of her presentation to the last LCN Workshop (see the link at the foot of the article). The findings of the research will be the subject of an in depth article in the next LCN News and the completed report will be available to download from the LCN Website in the near future.

The proceedings of the LCN Workshop ‘The European Landscape Convention and its relevance to land use and landscape planning’ are available at: http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk/node/163

New European landscape network for NGOs

On the 23rd February 2008, 40 representatives of 26 Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) from Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom met in Florence to launch the Civilscape network. Civilscape is the third of three new networks set up to support the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), after the European Network of Local and Regional Authorities for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ENELC), formally constituted in May 2006, and Uniscape, which promotes co-operation among learning and research institutions and was formally constituted in January 2008. All three organisations are based in Florence at the Villa Careggi, a 15th Century Medici Villa provided by the Tuscan Region.

The focus of Civilscape will be:

- The exchange of experiences focusing on local and current projects.
- Strategy development to influence national and EU-policies affecting landscape, and to put landscape on the European agenda.
- The stimulation of cross- and transnational projects on landscape management.

The initiative to establish Civilscape was taken by the Landscape Manifesto Group of the Netherlands: this is a national network of NGOs which came together to co-operate in the spirit of the European Landscape Convention. The Netherlands government has secured funding for Alterra Wageningen UR, an independent landscape research institute, to facilitate the network.

For more information, visit: http://www.civilscape.org
ENELC: http://www.recep-enelc.net/
Uniscape: http://uniscape.org
The European Landscape Convention has been receiving a lot of attention recently, and rightly so given its importance in giving new impetus to all sorts of work relating to landscape policy and action. In the last few months there have been two workshops, in Sheffield and in Birmingham, the implementation framework for England has been published and at least two research projects have been commissioned to explore current practice. Many interesting themes have emerged from this period of activity but, perhaps because of my involvement in a University, I have been particularly struck by the emphasis on education in achieving the aims of the Convention.

The Convention contains five specific measures, the second of which is training and education. It refers to several areas of education and training: for specialists; through multi-disciplinary training programmes for professionals in the private, public and voluntary sectors; and through school and university courses. It is tempting to think that this measure is concerned primarily with the education and training of landscape professionals. This is of course a very important consideration since much of the most relevant work in the UK, including, but not confined to landscape character assessment, is being carried out by trained landscape architects (as now defined by the Landscape Institute and incorporating planning, design and management). We certainly must maintain, and ideally expand, the flow of high quality graduates with appropriate specialist skills to meet the growing need for such recruits in both public and private sectors.

And yet in the UK courses that specialise in landscape planning are few and far between and often struggle to survive (witness the demise some years ago of the European Landscape Planning programme at Oxford Brookes University and the recent decision to close the well-regarded Manchester University programme in landscape planning and management to new entrants). The extent to which broader landscape architecture programmes cover relevant topics is a matter for conjecture but it is probably safe to assume that they vary widely. My own experience at Sheffield, where we deliver one optional and four compulsory modules specifically relevant to the aims of the Convention and now have an option for students to specialise in landscape planning in their final professional year, is that students choosing this route are still a small minority compared with the numbers wishing to pursue design. All this suggests that we may need to raise the awareness of young people about landscape issues in general and about large scale landscape planning in particular, well before they get to the point of selecting university courses.

But as Michael Dower pointed out in his contribution to the Birmingham workshop, understanding of landscapes and the processes that affect them, is a major inter-disciplinary challenge. There is a widely recognised need to increase awareness and understanding of landscape matters across a wide range of relevant subject areas including other professions such as planning, architecture and engineering, where there is great potential to incorporate landscape thinking into educational programmes. Training for those already in professional positions in many different organisations is also vital if we are to spread landscape awareness as widely as possible. It is all too easy to settle for preaching to the converted, and reaching beyond our normal constituency and persuading a wider audience to take part poses major challenges.

Perhaps most importantly, the Convention stresses the importance of public engagement. This means finding ways of raising awareness and increasing understanding of landscape among the public at large. It also suggests the need for a new breed of landscape facilitator who can provide a bridge between the public and the experts. But these facilitators themselves need to be trained. So who do we train and how, and indeed who trains the trainers; and how do we persuade people that they need training in the first place so that all the training that might be arranged actually has an audience and is financially viable? These questions, and the broader issues of landscape education, are challenging but need to be addressed as a matter of some urgency by those responsible for implementing the Convention in the UK.
The European Landscape Convention – its origins, focus and relevance at European level to land use and landscape planning

This January saw the latest in the LCN’s ongoing series of topical workshops. Held at Austin Court, Birmingham, the workshop was the first LCN event since the expansion of the network's focus to include the European Landscape Convention, hence the theme of ‘The European Landscape Convention and its relevance to land use and landscape planning’. The well-attended workshop saw lively discussion and a range of presentations on the Convention and its implementation, from national policy to grass roots, parish-scale landscape character assessments.

Professor Michael Dower, former Director General of the Countryside Commission and co-author of the first draft of the Convention, opened the proceedings with a paper that described the history of the convention, discussed its focus and inclusive definition of landscape, and gave a European perspective on the Convention’s relevance to land use and landscape planning. Michael Dower has given permission for his paper to be reproduced in full here, with the addition of two explanatory diagrams.

Origins of the Convention

The European Landscape Convention sprang from two distinct initiatives, in the north and the south of Europe, in the period 1990 to 1992.

The northern initiative was sparked by the National Trust’s seminal Conference ‘Europe Preserved for Europe’, held in 1990. On that occasion, people from four bodies – the Countryside Commission, the Landscape Research Group, the European Federation of National and Nature Parks (now called Europarc), and ECOVAST (European Council for the Village and Small Town) – began to discuss the idea of a Convention for the Protection of Europe’s Rural Landscapes.

That led to the Conference on ‘Landscapes in a New Europe: Unity and Diversity’, held at Blois in October 1992, on the joint initiative of the Landscape Research Group and the French organisation Paysage et Aménagement, where Adrian Phillips set out the reasons for, and the possible scope of, such a Convention. Adrian (in his IUCN capacity) and I (having succeeded him at the Countryside Commission) then pressed the Council of Europe to take up this cause.

Our approach to the Council of Europe coincided with the separate southern initiative by the
Regions of Andalusia, Languedoc-Roussillon and Veneto to draw up a Mediterranean Landscape Charter, of which a draft was presented at a conference in Sevilla in June 1992. A final version of the Charter was approved at the First International Congress on the Mediterranean Landscape, held in Montpellier in June 1993.

The outcome of these two approaches was the setting up in 1995, by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, of a Working Group to prepare a European Landscape Charter or Convention. I had the privilege to be an Expert Adviser to the Group; and, with Yves Luginbuhl, to prepare the first non-legal draft of the Convention. I salute the Working Group, and particularly my good friend Riccardo Priore, Secretary of the Group, who is with us at this Workshop.

In preparing that first draft, I drew directly on the experience in this country, notably:

• our commitment through National Parks and AONBs to protecting not only wild but man-made landscapes;
• our (by then) well-established practice of countryside management, pioneered by Reg Hookway as Director of the Countryside Commission by reference to coasts, uplands and urban fringes – this management being seen as the essential complement to town and country planning;
• our agri-environment schemes, which had by then become a mainstream activity based on the pioneering in New Agricultural Landscapes, the Wildlife and Countryside Act, Countryside Stewardship and much else;
• our commitment to redemption of despoiled or incoherent landscapes, through the Derelict Land Act, the urban fringe experiments, the Groundwork family, the Community Forests, the National Forests and their equivalents in Scotland and Wales;
• The New Map of England, followed (at the time that we were writing the draft Convention) by the Countryside Character programme and the parallel work on Natural Areas by English Nature, which established the idea of landscape units or areas and which drew upon earlier professional thinking about landscape analysis and assessment.

From these sources came the definition of landscapes; the principles of identification and assessment of landscapes, and statement of landscape objectives; and the central trilogy of landscape protection, management and planning. The Working Group agreed three further crucial points — that it should be a Convention, not a weaker Charter; that it should apply to all landscapes; and that the action should spring from the people as well as from governments.

The outcome, after much debate, was the Convention, signed in Florence in October 2000, and the subsequent events — the build-up of signatures and ratifications to the point at which the Convention came into operation in 2004; the steady growth in number of the states who are signed up; and the Conferences and Workshops organised by the Secretariat. The next of these Workshops, to be held in Slovakia in April this year, is on the same theme as this Workshop, namely “Landscape in planning policies and governance: towards integrated spatial management”. We here in Birmingham can make a useful input to that event.

The focus of the Convention

The stated aim of the Convention is to promote the protection, management and planning of Europe’s landscape, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues.

The Convention relates to all landscapes — urban, peri-urban and rural; the ordinary and even the despoiled, as well as the exceptional. Landscapes are perceived as the setting of people’s lives, crucial to the quality of those lives: so, the general public should be encouraged to take an active interest part in caring for them. Moreover, Europe’s landscapes are of value to all Europeans, being cherished outside the locality and beyond national borders: therefore, public authorities at all levels should take action to protect, manage and plan landscapes so as to maintain and improve landscape quality, as part of the process of sustainable development.

The parties to the Convention are the member states who sign and ratify it. They commit themselves:

• to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;
• to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning;
• to establish procedures for of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties to participate in defining and implementing landscape policies;
• to integrate landscape into regional and town planning policies and into cultural, environmental, agricultural, social, economic and other policies which may have direct or indirect impact on landscape (this fourth commitment is central to this Workshop’s purpose).
Each member state is expected to implement the Convention according to its own legal system and division of powers, respecting the principle of subsidiarity. Thus much of the action may lie with regional or local authorities – who are the prime guardians of the planning system.

The Convention’s focus is on 12 active verbs, which I will briefly rehearse (See also figure 1 – 12 things to do that will make a reality of the ELC);

1. to recognise landscapes in law;
2. to integrate landscape into all relevant policies;

These are jobs for government, and very demanding ones. It is relatively easy to persuade Ministers of Agriculture or Forestry to introduce landscapes into their policies, for example (for EU member states) in Axis 2 of the Rural Development programmes. But the challenge is to get landscapes also into the policies for such fields as transport, water supply, energy, coastal defence, and (crucially) spatial planning: indeed, this is the focal issue for this workshop.

My next seven verbs define the action that is needed everywhere, for every landscape. The action on them lies mainly with public bodies, but working closely with all stakeholders. The key verbs are:

3. to identify landscapes, that is to describe their character and the key elements in that character;
4. to assess the landscapes, that is to analyse what contributes to, and what detracts from, their quality and distinctiveness;
5. to define objectives for landscape quality, after public consultation: these objectives should form the frame for the main process of physical action, embodied in the next three verbs;
6. to protect what should be protected;
7. to manage what needs management in order to be sustained;
8. to plan, in the sense stated in the Convention, namely to take strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore and create landscapes;
9. to monitor what is happening to the landscapes, in terms of change and the impact of that change upon the character of the landscapes and upon the achievement or not of the stated objectives.

These seven verbs are, for me, the heart of the matter. They are an integral package, in that:

- the objectives for landscape quality must be based upon the sound identification and assessment of landscapes, and of external needs which may need to be met within the landscapes: I will return in a moment to this crucial issue;

- in turn, the objectives form the base for the action to protect, manage and plan: most landscapes in Europe need some action within all three of these verbs;

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**Figure 1** 12 things to do that will make a reality of the ELC

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monitoring is vital, in order to judge the results of action within all the preceding verbs and to provide a basis for sharpening policy and action wherever that is needed. I regret the lack of emphasis in the Convention upon monitoring within the member states, and I believe that we are only at the beginning of the monitoring process in most countries. I regret also what I perceive as the inadequacy of the mechanisms for monitoring at the European level.

The next two verbs provide an essential supportive context.

10. to promote education and training

The tasks which are set by the earlier verbs are indeed demanding. Landscapes, and the processes that affect them, are so diverse and complex, so linked to the cycles of nature and the demands of people, so subject to change as policies and human actions evolve, that the understanding of them is a major inter-disciplinary challenge. It is a great opportunity for the universities, professions and schools of Europe;

11. to raise public awareness and participation

This is a great task for both public bodies – at all geographic levels – and for NGOs and the world of education. It is a vital task for three main reasons – democracy, in the sense that landscapes belong to everyone; co-responsibility, in that every citizen, every property owner, every user of land, can influence the look of the landscape for good or ill; and governance, in that concern within the population can lead to a commitment in government. We have a long way to go in raising not only public awareness of the landscape, but active public involvement in the action related to landscape which I described earlier.

The final verb is …

12. to cooperate at European level, through exchange of experience, of information and of specialists.

There is much to be gained through such cooperation, notably between governments; between regional and local authorities; between Universities; and between non-government organisations. I hope that we will hear from Riccardo Priore and others about how this cooperation is shaping up. The Landscape Character Network can contribute much to, and may gain much from, these exchanges.

The link to spatial planning

I mentioned that the statement of objectives for landscape quality is a crucial step in the process (see figure 2 – External needs: the link to Spatial Planning). These objectives must be based upon the sound identification and assessment of landscapes, which is the heart of the landscape character idea. We might call this an internal process, in that one could identify within a landscape the features that need protection, management or planning, and state objectives accordingly. This is indeed the prime process in say a National Park or a National Trust estate. But most landscapes are affected also by external needs, such as demands for expansion of towns or production of renewable energy, or (more subtly perhaps) by external forces such as climate change.
The statement of objectives must take account of these external needs and forces as well as the internal logic of landscape character, and must strive to reconcile the two, so that change to the landscape leads to enhancement, not diminution, of its distinctive character. This is the crucial meeting-point between landscape care and spatial planning. It is the politicians and the spatial planners, not the landscape specialists, who decide where external needs are to be met. If landscape concerns and landscape character are to be reflected in the hard choices that have to be made, they must become integral to, rather than afterthoughts and victims of, the spatial planning process and of the policies which drive external needs, such as those related to energy, transport, water, agriculture and rural development.

The European perspective
For the final part of this talk, I am asked to offer a European perspective on this link between the Convention (and what it represents) and spatial planning. I do so by reference first to the Council of Europe, and then to the European Union.

Council of Europe.
The Convention is an instrument of the Council of Europe. This Council, with 47 member states, covers a wider area than the European Union. Its primary focus is on ideas, not on hard-nosed policies or massively-funded programmes. The formal agreements between its member states take the form of Conventions or Charters, which have no binding legal force, unlike the Directives of the European Union. A state which ratifies a Convention cannot be taken to court if it fails to honour the commitments thereby made.

Nevertheless, the Convention has attracted, so far, formal commitments by 28 of the Council’s member states to do the things that I mentioned earlier, namely to recognise landscapes in law; to establish and implement landscape policies; to enable the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties to take part in shaping and pursuing these policies; and (crucial to our purpose today) to integrate landscape into regional and town planning policies and a wide range of other policies.

The implementation of Council of Europe Conventions is overseen by inter-governmental Committees. The European Landscape Convention has no Committee of its own, which I and some others regard as a serious weakness. Responsibility for its oversight is vested in three Committees – those for Cultural Heritage (CDPAT), Biological and Landscape Diversity (CO-DBP) and (most relevant to our purpose today) Regional Planning (CEMAT). Each of these Committees has a central focus on its own main concern. Each of them has brought landscapes into its debates and concerns, for example some CEMAT workshops have included a focus on how landscape concerns can be integrated into regional and spatial planning. But my strong impression from these events, and from the series of “Workshops for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention” organised by the Council of Europe staff, is that they lack the cutting edge that would really impel landscape concerns into the heart of spatial planning and other policies at national, regional or local levels. The willingness and ability of governments to achieve that ‘centralising’ of landscape is driven more by their own commitment to the subject (pre-dating the Convention), and will be increasingly influenced – for good or ill - by the activities of the European Union.

European Union.
Landscape does not figure among the Directives of the EU. There is no equivalent for landscape of the Birds and Habitats Directives or of the Natura 2000 programme, under which some 30% of the EU territory is recognised as meriting protection of its ecological value (though with inadequate funding attached to that recognition). Nature conservation has for long been recognised as a major joint concern of the EU member states. Recognition of landscape is still relatively weak, although it has risen over the years since Adrian Phillips first achieved the insertion of a Landscape chapter into the Dobris Assessment of 1995.

To put this into perspective, one should recall the three driving concerns of the leading politicians in the European Union. These are:
• to make the EU “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy” in the world (the ‘Lisbon agenda’ agreed in March 2000);
• to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion by reducing the grave disparities in income, living conditions, infrastructure etc between the rich and successful and the poor and declining regions of the enlarged Union;
• to protect the environment and achieve a more sustainable pattern of development ( the Gothenburg agenda of June 2001): in this the priorities are to combat climate change, to ensure sustainable transport, to address threats to public health and to manage natural resources more responsibly.

Landscape does not figure among even the sub-objectives of these major policies. If considered at all at high political levels, it may be seen as a factor in how development is carried out, rather than what development should take place. Moreover, the strong trend to subsidiarity, and delegation of...
policy implementation to the levels of member states and regions, means that landscape concerns must be picked up mainly at those levels.

Nevertheless, there are pressure points at European level which offer possible entry for landscape concerns. I cite three of these:

- The national rural development programmes 2007 to 2013, now coming into operation in all the EU member states, which offer significant funding for agri-environment schemes (Axis 2) and for such tasks as village renewal or heritage conservation (axis 3): it is vital that landscape character and landscape quality objectives are taken into account in this activity;

- The process of Environmental Impact Assessment, which is increasingly being applied – an obligation under EU law - not only to projects, but also to policies and programmes: we need to ensure that the impact on landscape character in integral to this process;

- The European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON), funded by the European Commission, has launched an ESPON 2013 Programme which will “support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory”. This could be used to bring landscape character within the criteria for assessing harmonious development.

But I end by saying that the greatest opportunity for the collective forces of Europe to be applied to the planning of landscape lies with the massive expenditure under the European Regional Development Fund, which operates in all Member States, and the Cohesion Fund which co-finances mainly transport and environment projects in Member States whose GNP is less than 90% of the EU average. That is partly why I am currently working with others in the CURE project – Convention for a Sustainable Urban and Rural Europe – of which the aim is to offer, at the time of the Mid-Term Reviews of EU programmes in 2009-10, recommendation on policy frameworks and measures which will assist a sustainable approach to the future of urban and rural areas in Europe, achieved through effective partnership between governments and civil society. Landscape, with its power to link urban and rural areas and interests, is one of the ten main themes that we intend to pursue within this project.

The proceedings of the LCN Workshop ‘The European Landscape Convention and its relevance to land use and landscape planning’ are available at:
http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk/node/163
John Briggs, landscape architect with the Countryside Council for Wales, writes here for LCN News about a new map which provides Wales with regional landscape character areas for the first time.

Land Use Consultants, in association with the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), divided Wales into 49 landscape character areas. Each area has its own narrative description, about land form, land cover, land use and landscape qualities. As CCW develops this work, further information will be added specific to each area, from which a number of themes relating to ‘forces for change’ will be developed. The outputs will feed into the Wales Spatial Plan work, but will also provide landscape professionals with:

- an iconic map to identify and celebrate regional landscape identities, raising the profile of local distinctiveness in decision-making;
- a set of broad-brush reporting units for a variety of landscape information and landscape scale projects; and
- a portal as an entry point, through which users can drill down to find more detailed and local scale landscape information from LANDMAP (http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/).

The broad-scale of working is similar to that of the English Joint Character Areas. Though there are some methodological differences, there is a reassuringly high degree of correlation of abutting landscape areas along the Wales – England border.
Note: The map shows unique areas, so the colouring is only to distinguish one area from another. The use of similar colours does not imply a relationship between those areas.
The regional landscape character map is not aimed at directly informing individual development control decisions. It is simply too broad-brush for that. Instead its role is more at the regional spatial end of the planning spectrum.

One of the aims is therefore to make sure users have a clear understanding of the relationship of the 49 regions with Wales’ existing LANDMAP landscape information system, which operates at a much more detailed local scale, dividing Wales into thousands of areas through 5 themed ‘aspects’ layers.

However the regions are not created simply by amalgamating information from existing local LANDMAP assessments – sticking together many small landscape areas to create a few larger areas. This is because what defines a region and what defines a small part of it (a local landscape) may actually be very different. For example, think of a local wooded landscape in an extensive open upland area. Those very headline descriptors illustrate the differences in emphasis between scales of working, and point to the importance of using both regional and local scales of assessment in decision-making processes.

Wales is actually a very varied country and those who travel around are likely to be struck by how quickly a landscape changes – from lowland to upland, open to enclosed, urban to rural – and this provided challenges as to how broad-brush a map could be produced and remain meaningful. The key was having LANDMAP information already at a nationally consistent local scale, taking care of the detail, allowing the regional character areas to pick up on much more general information.

When complete, the maps and area information will be available from [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

For more information about the landscape character map for Wales, please contact John Briggs at CCW:

- j.briggs@ccw.gov.uk
- Tel: 01248-387284
By Nicola Davies of Natural England's South Downs and Surrey Hills Team

The former Countryside Agency began the process of designating the South Downs as a National Park in April 2000, producing a Designation Order in December 2002 that showed the area it believed merited including in this designation – in 2004 this area was extended by a variation order to include land around Arundel. The Countryside Agency’s proposed boundary was considered in detail at a Public Inquiry that ran between 10 November 2003 and 18 March 2005.

The resulting Inspector’s report, published in 2006, presented a number of recommendations for inclusion and exclusion in the proposed National Park. The proposals differed significantly from the 2002 Designation Order, most notably with a major variation to a northern section of the boundary between Petersfield and Pulborough. This sought to exclude the Western Weald area. Natural England, as the successor to the Countryside Agency and the statutory body with responsibility for designated areas, prepared an alternative boundary based on the Inspector’s indicative line. In doing so it reserved the right to continue to promote the original northern boundary that the Countryside Agency had proposed in 2002. Natural England maintained the view that the landscapes within the Western Weald still merited designation and that the decline in landscape quality of these areas had been overstated.

A further public consultation on the proposal of an alternative boundary was launched in June and ran through until August 2007. Subsequently, those who responded to this consultation were invited to voice their opinions at a re-opened Public Inquiry.

The South Downs National Park Public Inquiry commenced on 12th February 2008 and will continue through until May. The Inquiry will focus on the following topics:

**Topic 1**
Any implications for the Designation Order arising from the amendments to National Park legislation made by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

**Topic 2**
Implications for the Designation Order arising from the judgments in the judicial review by the Meyrick Estate in respect of the New Forest National Park.

**Topic 3**
Representations in respect of the Inspector’s alternative National Park boundary running north from Petersfield and east to Pulborough suggested in 2006.
Topic 4
Representations in respect of the additional areas that have been recommended for inclusion in any new National Park.

Topic 5
Representations on the AONB land that may be excluded from the National Park, and what their future status should be.

On the first day of reopened Public Inquiry, the Inspector also announced that he would hear new evidence on the Western Weald area that was proposed for exclusion from the National Park. This was welcomed by Natural England.

Topic 6
The Western Weald – Consideration of new evidence relating to the inclusion of the Western Weald within any future National Park.

There is widespread public support for a South Downs National Park based on the 2002 Designation Order boundary which included both the chalk downland and Western Weald. While the Inspector’s preliminary recommendation to create a South Downs National Park is welcomed, there is huge concern at his recommendation to exclude the Western Weald (which includes Petersfield, Liss, Midhurst and Petworth).

The Inspector’s grounds for excluding the Western Weald are based on differing geology (not ‘South Downs’ character in his view) and are not consistent with already designated National Parks such as the Peak District and Lake District which contain more than one landscape character type.

The Inquiry has now dealt with Topics 1, 2 and 4 and has returned to Topic 3.

Natural England does not support the Inspector’s boundary line, which it believes is based on a flawed interpretation of the legislation and current policy framework. It maintains support for the original 2002 Designation Order boundary. Natural England will be presenting evidence on this topic to explain why they feel the boundary line is unsatisfactory and represents a sub-division of a wider area that meets the designation criteria.

In April, the Inspector will consider representations on Topic 5 as to which areas of land within the East Hampshire and Sussex Downs AONBs should retain their protected status, if they are not to be included within any new National Park. Some small areas of AONB land were not included within the Proposed South Down National Park Designation Order Boundary (2002) and Variation Order (2004). In most cases this was due to the need to produce a clear boundary on the ground. Some minor changes were due to changes in the quality of the land since AONB designation and they were assessed as no longer meeting the statutory criteria for designation: for example, road cuttings or residential developments at the fringes of the existing AONB area.

If the Inspector’s current proposals come into effect, then further areas of AONB may be excluded, some of which, in Natural England’s view, are still of designation quality. These have also been individually assessed to ensure that these areas are highlighted to the Inspector, to ensure that nothing loses designation without good cause. If the Western Weald as a whole is excluded from the South Downs National Park (which Natural England hopes will not occur) then it may be possible to create a new AONB and continue designation; this will not extend to the other smaller areas that are excluded.

Natural England will seek to ensure that, if any AONB areas are not to be included within a future National Park, that they maintain their protected landscape status. The Inquiry team are currently working on further papers relating to the AONB areas specifically. Natural England does not consider that creation of a separate AONB represents the best, most integrated, or cost effective management solution for the South Downs as a whole.

Following the Public Inquiry the Inspector will submit proposals in a report to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who will make the final decision on the boundary for the South Downs National Park. DEFRA anticipate that this decision will be reached by the end of 2008.

More information about the South Downs National Park Inquiry is available on the Natural England and Planning Inspectorate websites:
http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/DL/new_designations/SouthDowns
http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/southdowns/

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