



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·  
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

*Making Heritage Work*

Natural England  
*Future Landscapes Consultation*

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Dear Sirs

## **FUTURE LANDSCAPES**

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) is the professional body of the United Kingdom representing conservation specialists and historic environment practitioners in the public and private sectors. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

Thank you for inviting us to participate in this consultation.

The Institute supports the broad thrust of this draft policy statement but are not clear about its relationship to the parallel document *All Landscapes Matter* (which we have commented on separately and copy attached). Whilst their purpose and target audiences are different, we can foresee confusion in the minds of users. We wonder whether the issues might not be better handled in one document tiered to suit specific audiences. We would hope to see a much better connection than the two documents have at the moment between the the importance of preserving and enhancing landscape quality and the detailed means of achieving this aim.

**Policy 1.** *Change is a fundamental characteristic of landscapes. Our future landscapes should emerge as a result of planned interventions, set within the context of a long term vision.*

Whilst the Institute does not disagree with this, it seems to be a statement of fact rather than a policy. We are not clear why it needs to be stated in this way.

**Policy 2.** *The character, condition and quality of England's future landscapes should be built on an understanding of existing landscape character, through a landscape character approach.*

The Institute strongly supports this policy. We are strong supporters of Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Landscape Characterization as tools for assessment, planning and monitoring purposes.

**Policy 3.** *Our vision for England's landscapes will accommodate a range of different futures. Some landscapes will be transformed and some will change less markedly.*

The Institute believes that this policy is too weak. It does not seem to us to represent any strong intention on the part of Natural England than to accept change passively. We think the policy should point towards the objectives (as yet unstated) for the importance of landscape hierarchies and specific approaches to control and management.

**Policy 4.** *The vision for England's future landscapes must be developed and owned by all major stakeholders who impact upon the use and management of the land.*

The Institute supports this policy in principle but again it seems to us to be rather passive. We would urge a wording that promotes common understanding of wider landscape issues and seeks to minimize landscape impacts and promote ameliorative action.

**Policy 5.** *There should be a multi-function approach to future landscape management, with England's future landscapes planned and managed to provide a range of ecosystem goods and services.*

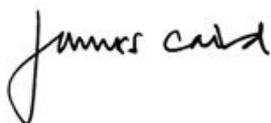
The Institute supports this policy. It is the only one of the six, in our view, that provides a real policy direction, although we are not sure that the terminology would be widely understood.

**Policy 6.** *Developing our future landscapes requires an improved understanding of people's sense of place, values and perceptions, and of the factors that influence attitudes towards landscape change, in order that we can encourage more informed debate about specific proposals affecting landscapes.*

The Institute supports this policy.

**Conclusion.** The Institute feels that the issues raised in this consultation and in the parallel one on *All Landscapes Matter* are set out in a disjointed manner. The policy direction is too fragmented to be comprehensible. We look forward to seeing more a more detailed policy framework at the objectives stage of the process.

Yours faithfully



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