

# Recommendations for the next UK government

## A landscape policy agenda for people, place and nature



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As we approach the forthcoming general election, the UK faces multiple, interrelated crises – from climate and nature emergencies to public health, wellbeing and housing.

The next government has a vital opportunity to address these challenges with connected policies that add positive social, environmental and economic value to our country.

The Landscape Institute calls for an integrated policy agenda, promoting landscape-led and nature-based approaches that can deliver sustainable solutions to tackle the issues we face.

The skills and expertise of landscape professionals address a range of issues. We can provide life-enhancing solutions for people, place and nature: addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies, benefitting health and wellbeing, mitigating against flooding and excess heat, and alleviating the housing crisis by enhancing community cohesion and providing quality green spaces.

Decisive and swift action to bring about policies which realise this opportunity is essential.

# The Landscape Institute's 12 recommendations for the next UK government

## Scale up climate resilient, low carbon development

1. Leverage green infrastructure
2. Prioritise positive outcomes from planning
3. Foster sustainable development

## Promote a combined approach to environmental policy

7. Structure government strategically
8. Focus on land use
9. Prioritise sensitive and creative placemaking

## Drive education, awareness, and skills for a greener and more resilient economy

4. Develop green skills for a greener economy
5. Promote community engagement
6. Inspire the next generation

## Champion the power of nature for health and wellbeing

10. Improve access to green space
11. Utilise existing greening guidance
12. Enhance Protected Landscapes

**For further information or to discuss these proposals, please contact [policy@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:policy@landscapeinstitute.org)**



# Scale up climate resilient, low carbon development

## 1 Leverage green infrastructure:

Promote climate resilience and environmental net gain by embedding multi-functional green infrastructure and ecosystem services provision in the planning, design and construction of all new residential, energy and transport infrastructure projects.<sup>i</sup>

## 2 Prioritise positive outcomes from planning:

Realise opportunities to create better places for people and nature by retaining the safeguards of environmental assessments<sup>ii</sup>. Ensure that any review of the planning system addresses resource shortages within planning departments, and places substantial weight on whole life sustainability, landscape character and design quality<sup>iii</sup>.

## 3 Foster sustainable development:

Create foundations for cleaner, greener, energy efficient and economically viable urban areas by linking environmental and planning policy to investment schemes such as the Long-Term Plan for Towns<sup>iv</sup>. Make landscape planning and design skills essential resources within planning departments and ensure that early consideration is given to landscape issues in all development proposals.



**Promote climate resilience and environmental net gain by embedding multi-functional green infrastructure**



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# Drive education, awareness, and skills for a greener and more resilient economy

## 4 | Develop green skills for a greener economy:

Recognise the essential need for green skills in a productive economy and reduce their existing shortage by reinstating landscape architecture as an essential UK occupation and by lowering the Skilled Worker visa threshold on the Immigration Salary List to former levels.

## 5 | Promote community engagement:

Raise environmental awareness, understanding and community engagement through co-design, and inform decision-making with initiatives such as Neighbourhood Plans<sup>v</sup> and public information campaigns like the Countryside Code<sup>vi</sup>.

## 6 | Inspire the next generation:

Encourage young people to discover and pursue careers that apply both arts and sciences in delivering creative responses to social and environmental challenges by recognising landscape architecture as a STEM subject and adding landscape studies to the Natural History GCSE syllabus<sup>vii</sup>.



**Recognise the essential need for green skills in a productive economy**



# Promote a combined approach to environmental policy

## 7 Structure government strategically:

Mandate government departments such as DEFRA and DLUHC to act more collectively, efficiently and in concert, e.g. by reviewing DEFRA's 25 Year Environmental Improvement Plan to address broader landscape issues and opportunities in both urban and rural contexts.

## 9 Prioritise sensitive and creative placemaking:

Manage development whilst enhancing nature recovery and respecting local heritage by linking Local Nature Recovery Strategies<sup>x</sup> with Landscape Character Assessments<sup>x</sup>, and investing in local authority landscape skills and resources.

## 8 Focus on land use:

Build on the House of Lords recommendation to establish a Land Use Commission for England<sup>viii</sup> and establish a land use framework that would support and facilitate making best use of land as a multi-functional resource.



**Invest in local authority landscape skills and resources**



# Champion the power of nature for health and wellbeing

## 10 | Improve access to green space:

Promote good health outcomes and reduce the burden on the NHS by investing in access to green space for all<sup>xi</sup>, particularly in deprived urban areas.

## 11 | Utilise existing greening guidance:

Improve air quality and biodiversity, reduce urban heat island and flood risks, and boost mental health by rolling out green development policies and the use of evaluation tools such as Natural England's Urban Greening Factor<sup>xii</sup> across the UK.

## 12 | Enhance Protected Landscapes:

Connect more people to nature by establishing new National Parks, strengthening the roles of Protected Landscapes, and implementing key proposals for England from the Glover review of protected landscapes.<sup>xiii</sup>



**Improve access to green space for all**

The Landscape Institute looks forward to working with the next UK government, including ministers, civil servants, local authorities and other decision makers across all UK nations.

**For further information or to discuss these proposals, please contact our Policy team at [policy@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:policy@landscapeinstitute.org).**

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The Landscape Institute is a registered charity and the chartered body for landscape architects, planners, scientists and managers. Its members work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for public benefit. They are part of a wider, increasingly vital and high-skilled sector which annually contributes £24.6bn GVA (Gross Valued Added) to the UK economy<sup>xiv</sup>.

The Landscape Institute supports a multi-functional and sustainable approach to making best use of the land as a finite resource, and recognises the obligations of the European Landscape Convention<sup>xv</sup>, which the UK Government ratified in 2006. Having been established by the Council of Europe, the Convention is still relevant today, post-Brexit.

Landscape is everywhere – not just in protected countryside, but also in urban and developed areas, from rural lanes to high streets. Our landscapes have been created by human activity interacting with nature, and our affinity with them is a key part of everyone's cultural identity. Landscape is the setting in which our social, environmental and economic pressures may be managed and tensions reconciled<sup>xvi</sup>.

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# References

- i New homes, communities and green infrastructure <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/natural-england-unveils-new-green-infrastructure-framework>
- ii Retain environmental assessments <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>
- iii Landscape Institute responds to EOR consultation <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Landscape-Institute-EOR-consultation-response-FINAL.pdf>
- iv Investing in our town centres <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-long-term-plan-for-towns>
- v Public engagement in design and development <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>
- vi Refreshing the code, educating the public <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>
- vii Adding landscape studies to the Natural History GCSE syllabus <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/25/the-new-natural-history-gcse-and-how-were-leading-the-way-in-climate-and-sustainability-education-your-questions-answered/>
- viii Establish a Land Use Commission <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/583/land-use-in-england-committee/news/175072/england-needs-a-land-use-framework-says-lords-committee/>
- ix 48 partnerships established to create LNRSs <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategies/local-nature-recovery-strategies>
- x Landscape Character Assessments <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landscape-and-seascape-character-assessments>
- xi Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx>
- xii Urban Greening Factor <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance/urban-greening-factor-ugf-guidance>
- xiii Implement the Glover Review proposals in England <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>
- xiv Landscape sector contribution to UK economy <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/skills-for-greener-places/>
- xv European Landscape Convention <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape>
- xvi See XV

# **Landscape Institute**

**Working to protect, conserve  
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environment for public benefit**

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