



Natural England Position Statement: *Landscape*

1.0 Key Issues

- Our landscapes are key resources for Natural England, providing the physical settings for everyday life. In addition our best loved, iconic landscapes are protected by statutory designations. All our landscapes matter and Natural England has a huge opportunity to demonstrate what this means in different places and at different geographic scales.
- England's landscapes are already being affected by major challenges such as climate change. We need to ensure that, as they change, our landscapes continue to evolve in distinctive, diverse and special ways.
- People perceive and react to landscapes in different ways: we need to find ways of tapping into their concerns and values as part of our commitment to strengthening the relationship between people and place.

2.0 We believe

- Landscape is 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (European Landscape Convention).
- All landscapes matter: landscapes in towns and cities are as important as those in the countryside and on the coast.
- Protected landscapes play a key role in the conservation, enhancement and delivery of sustainable use and management of our natural environment, exemplifying and demonstrating best practice.
- Landscape is a key aspect of the natural environment and a vital resource: this means that we will engage in landscape at many scales, from international, through national and regional, to local.
- An understanding of landscape character, aesthetics, systems and dynamics is essential in delivering the government's commitment to an ecosystem goods and services approach to resource management and planning, and visioning future landscapes.
- Landscape character and cultural heritage are key contributors to regional and local identity, influencing sense of place, shaping the settings of people's lives and providing a critical stimulus to their engagement with the natural environment.

3.0 We call for

- All levels of government to recognise the positive contribution played by England's landscapes to local, regional and national prosperity and quality of life.
- Our stakeholders and partners to be inspired to create their own action plans for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention.

- Demonstration of what conservation at the landscape scale, in a time of climate change, really means.
- A system of protected landscapes that responds to major drivers such as climate change and continues to ensure the best care for our most loved places.
- A national park for the South Downs.
- A closing of the gap between the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.
- Demonstration of the benefits to the natural environment of integrating the conservation of both natural and cultural heritage.
- Many more people engaged in learning about and doing things in and for their landscapes.
- Production of practical guidance showing how people can work with landscapes in our towns, cities and growth areas as well as the countryside and the coast, making a difference for England's natural environment.
- The need to influence relevant legislation and government guidance, so that it endorses an holistic, landscape approach.
- Engagement of our partners in visions for a secure environmental future, where our changing landscapes are managed sustainably, highly valued, distinctive expressions of local identity.

January 2008