



Landscape

Topic Paper No 13 – Summary

Introduction

The landscape, in whatever form, is an important part of our everyday lives. The landscape is integral to the County's wealth, health and wellbeing and we are fortunate to have such a diverse landscape within Flintshire. Therefore consideration of the landscape is an essential element of land use planning.

Context

The importance of the Landscape is demonstrated within policy and guidance at all levels from International, national and regional planning policy down to local policy and more detailed sources of information and guidance.

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) gives the definition of landscape as: *"...means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."*

The ELC does not take a preservationist view but encourages creating future landscapes just as much as sustainably managing the ones we have inherited.

This is reflected in the CCW (now (NRW)) working definition for landscape:

'...the physical reality of the environment around us, the tangible elements that give shape and diversity to our surroundings.....also the environment perceived, predominantly visual but additionally through our senses of smell, touch and hearing. Our appreciation of landscape is affected too by our cultural backgrounds and by personal and professional interests. It is the sum of all these components...' (CCW 2001)

On the basis of this definition CCW developed LANDMAP - a system for the comprehensive assessment of landscape quality that considers geological, habitat, visual and sensory, historical and cultural aspects. The LANDMAP system is recommended by the WG as *'an important information resource upon which local planning authorities can draw in making the landscape assessments needed to inform local policy'* (PPW 5.3.13).

The landscape surrounds us in many forms and provides a sense of place and local distinctiveness. A key role of the planning process is acknowledging that the landscape is not just about statutory designated or historic sites but includes urban areas, the countryside and the coast.

Our landscape, in whatever form, is important for the benefits it brings to the economy, biodiversity and wellbeing of both the inhabitants of and visitors to the County. Growth patterns across the County and indeed across County borders are influenced by the landscape. The Wales Spatial plan and PPW encourages cross boundary working and as a border authority a fundamental element of the plans preparation is to take a spatial approach.

The plan will facilitate the preservation and enhancement the special characteristics of Flintshire which include:

The Gateway to North Wales; Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); Historic landscapes; Dee Estuary and associated wildlife designations; Ancient Monuments and Ancient woodlands and hedgerows. In addition

it provides Historic Towns and areas for economic growth such as Deeside Enterprise Zone and Broughton.

Role of the Plan

To deliver a development plan which preserves and enhances the special landscape character of Flintshire:

- Protect statutory designated landscapes
- Protect the landscape character and features where development proposals arise
- Recognition of landscape as source of wellbeing and for its contribution to tourism and the rural economy
- Recognising the consequences of climate change on landscape

Key Landscape Plans and Strategies

International

- European Landscape Convention (2007)

National

- Wales Spatial Strategy
- Planning Policy Wales Edition 5 (2012)
- Technical Advice Note TAN 7: Outdoor Advertisement Control 1996
- Technical Advice Note 8: renewable energy (2005)
- Technical Advice Note 10: Tree Preservation Orders (1997)
- Technical Advice Note 14: Coastal Planning (1998)
- LANDMAP
- Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales

Regional

- Clwydian Range AONB Management Plan
- West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy 2004-2021

Local

Landscapes Working for Wales: A Landscape Strategy for Flintshire, Vol 1, April 1996

Issues to be addressed in Plan

- Improvement of our Coastline and Seascape supporting the economic growth of the County
- In looking to address Climate Change, the impact of infrastructure on landscape – i.e. renewable energy; utilities, travel networks
- Protection and enhancement of the County's important/special characteristics
- Control Outdoor advertisements which can have an adverse impact on the rural landscape.
- Assessing whether the plan should include a Special Landscape Area or other local landscape designation in view of the timetable for delivery of the plan, the lack of the necessary resources in terms of time, staff, finance and expertise.
- Addressing the creation of high quality landscapes as part of new development proposals, particularly on large brownfield sites.

Potential Land Use Policies/Proposals

Within the UDP there are 6 policies relating specifically to Landscapes, although the need to have consideration of the Landscape is also covered within strategic and general policy.

In reviewing the current policies, some landscape policies could be subsumed into strategic and general policies. It is proposed that key policies and proposals relating to landscape are along the lines of:

- Maintaining and enhancing Landscape character
- Protection of woodland, trees and hedgerows.
- Outdoor advertisements are only permitted if sensitively designed and do not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area.