Call for Evidence

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Before responding to the specific questions in the call for evidence, it is important to point out that we welcome the Fabian Society's research into this important subject. For many years we have been championing the idea of green infrastructure (of which local parks, woodland and other natural spaces are a part) as an approach to land use planning, design and management that has the potential to unlock the potential of our finite land resource by providing multiple benefits. Our work can be seen in three publications, research undertaken on behalf of Defra, various communications and the concept is also central to many of our members' work. More information can be found here:

http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/policy/GreenInfrastructure.php

In our latest publication on the subject, *Green infrastructure: An integrated approach to land use*, we urge a strategic approach to green infrastructure because it provides a focus for multiple initiatives operating at various scales. Local or neighbourhood level projects can contribute incrementally to the bigger landscape-scale picture, so that the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. We outline seven steps for developing a successful, strategic approach to green infrastructure (further information on page 14 of the position statement)

There is considerable overlap between our work on green infrastructure and other policy agendas we are pursuing, something that only goes to strengthen the argument that green infrastructure can deliver against many objectives, including public health, water management and housing:

http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/policy/health.php
http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/policy/Housing.php
http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/knowledge/Landscapeandwater.php

Local green spaces have the potential to provide vibrant and accessible sites where people can get to know their neighbours and rekindle declining community spirit. Can you point to examples of where local parks, woodland and other natural spaces have been used to bring the community together?

We wholeheartedly agree that local green spaces have significant potential to stimulate a real sense of community. It is a message we have been advocating for some time through our work on green infrastructure and public health. A variety of factors contribute to the success of such spaces, not least early landscape planning, design and meaningful consultation (particularly where such spaces are to be newly created) to ensure that the resultant green spaces are not 'incidental' and really do respond to the social and environmental needs and opportunities of the local community.

There are a whole host of examples where local parks, woodland and other natural spaces have been used to bring the community together. Just some are outlined below and more information can be provided if the Fabian Society would like to explore in greater depth. Site visits could also be arranged if of interest as could contact with project coordinators / landscape architects involved to help researchers understand the specific ways in which each project engenders a sense of community. A key concept unifying all of these projects is that decisions made on their planning, design and delivery has been informed by a thorough understanding of the relationship between the local community and the place. This is the heart of landscape thinking.

Eastern Curve Garden, Dalston, London
The success of the Eastern Curve Garden lies in the social benefits it has provided for the local community in Dalston, an area lacking in open space, prioritised for development by the Greater London Authority and experiencing a significant amount of demographic and physical change – a process not always easy to manage. It is a useful example of how public space has been revitalised without losing the existing qualities of the local neighbourhood, and has quickly established itself as a flexible and popular place for people of all ages and backgrounds, hosting a variety of activities.

The Eastern Curve includes space for wildlife-friendly planting as well as raised beds in which local residents can grow food. The site's restoration led to a design and construction apprenticeship scheme for young men in partnership with the local youth centre and Hackney Community College. The site is a good example of temporary land use. With the local community's support, a 'meantime' arrangement was secured with the landowner to allow development for community benefit until a long-term solution was found. In just eight months, the two practices leading on the consultation, planning, detailed design and delivery of the project turned a little-know parcel of contaminated railway land into a vibrant community asset.

Greenlink, Motherwell
The Motherwell area was once the capital of steel production in Scotland. The decline of this industry and the subsequent loss of jobs and opportunities have had a profoundly damaging impact on the lives of local people. The Greenlink project is seeking to turn this situation around.

Linking Strathclyde Country Park to Motherwell, the Greenlink cycleway and its adjacent green spaces and woodland have been brought into management by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT), with North Lanarkshire Council the main landowner. Established in 2005, 10,000 people live in the core area, more than half of whom are severely income deprived (29 per cent of those of working age are on benefits) with low life expectancy and poor mental health (17 per cent are in receipt of health benefits). The project has focused on the exploring how environmental interventions can be a catalyst for social regeneration of the area through activities that have sought to improve the health, mental wellbeing and skills of the local people.

Led by the CSGNT, the Greenlink team worked with the community from the very outset to clean up the site (for example, 27 burnt out cars, 91 tonnes of rubbish, 87 shopping trolleys) before putting in place physical infrastructure (cycleway and footpaths) around which green spaces and the local community could flourish. There is a regular health walk programme, 40 allotments plots have been created and weekly conservation sessions are led by Greenlink staff and volunteers take part in tree planting, bulb and wildflower planting, litter removal and basic woodland management. More than 2,000 hours of volunteering take place each year.

Earlier this year we visited the site to experience first hand how this quite modest intervention has had a positive impact on the local community. The allotment site in particular has evolved into a place where the community regularly come together, engage with, and learn from, one another. It gives people a sense of purpose, particularly those out of work and those who have suffered from drug and alcohol misuse. It also acts as a place to learn new skills which have enabled some individuals to go on to gain full time employment. Funding the project isn't easy, and it is difficult to plan long-term. But there are examples of imaginative funding sources. For example, on the day we visited we met with a representative from North Lanarkshire Council's public health team who explained to us why they were felt compelled to provide some funding for the allotment, in light of the health and wellbeing benefits they see being delivered.

Royal Edinburgh Community Gardens
One of the key outcomes of the Royal Edinburgh Community Gardens (RECG) project is the way in which the landscape has fostered inclusion. Started in January 2010, RECG is a project run by the Scottish charity Edinburgh Cyrenians using six hectares of land owned by NHS Lothian at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. Four key goals guide the RECG: to promote community building and social inclusion; to promote environmental

sustainability through education and volunteering; to tackle health inequalities by encouraging healthy eating, providing a place for physical activity and reconnecting people with the environment; and to provide a green space to support the recovery of patients and other vulnerable participants.

The physical structure of the site is made up of distinct areas to cater for different people's needs. This includes an urban orchard and a forest garden, a woodland walk, a local nature play area, raised beds and glasshouses for food growing.

The project has focused on creating opportunities for those in the hospital and also those within the wider local community who are often excluded from activities due to mental health, disability or poverty. There are 19 community and health groups and more than 50 regular volunteers who collectively give more than 10,000 hours each year to the project.

The RECG is a vibrant and active space that supports the involvement of a wide variety of people with different interests. As all of the land is shared communally, the gardens are a much more social place than they would have otherwise been. Established with a view to being able to replicate its success across the NHS estate, Edinburgh Cyrenians launched the Midlothian Community Hospital Gardens in 2012 and intends to establish a similar project at St John's Hospital, Livingston, by 2014.

Stepping Stones to Nature, Plymouth
Stepping Stones to Nature (SS2N) was a four year partnership programme hosted by Plymouth City Council to foster community spirit using green space resources in some of the most deprived areas of the city. Building confidence in local, disadvantaged communities and targeting groups known to need greater support to get outdoors, SS2N has broken down perceptual barriers as well as delivering better quality, and more accessible, open spaces.

At the outset, a multi-agency Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was undertaken to assess the potential health and wellbeing benefits of the SS2N programme and align it with local public health objectives. The HIA identified opportunities across proposed sites to make users feel more secure and reduce antisocial behaviour. It also highlighted potential conflict that could arise within communities at times of change. This validated the SS2N team's methodology, which provided opportunities for individuals to engage in a range of ways, and acted as a bridge between different generations and user groups within each community.

The focus on a community engagement approach has made the project possible. Funded by the Big Lottery as part of Natural England's Access to Nature programme, between June 2011 and July 2012 SS2N held more than 75 events that were attended by more than 2,800 people. Across Plymouth, volunteers have been trained to lead Walking for Health Groups while new paths and play facilities at one of the sites have

increased local use and, subsequently, antisocial behaviour has decreased through passive surveillance.

SS2N research delivered by the University of Plymouth identified that improved access to natural spaces requires a multi-agency approach and that health and wellbeing emerged as a unifying concept. However it also highlighted the need for leadership and ongoing community engagement to ensure that benefits continue to be derived. To that end, Plymouth City Council has secured funding to embed the SS2N team and approach within its existing green infrastructure team.

Do you observe differences in access to quality greenspace by demographic group and what tools do local authorities have to improve that access?

This issue is one that we are hearing more and more about and, in response, earlier this year we were involved in an initiative led by Design Council CABE, the *Inclusive Design Hub*. This hub is a collection of the latest guidance and best practice on inclusive design in the built environment. Some of the resources could be useful to local authorities. More information can be found here:

http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/projects/inclusive-design-hub-built-environment

We are aware of differences in access to quality green space between older people and the rest of the population – an issue of particular concern in an ageing society and one where there is increasing recognition of the impact of isolation and loneliness on mental wellbeing. For this reason we wholeheartedly support the work of Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I'DGO) which recently came to an end. Led be academics in the landscape profession it is a critical resource in ensuring that access is not denied to this this demographic group. More information can be found here:

http://www.idgo.ac.uk/
http://www.idgo.ac.uk/design_guidance/open_spaces.htm

We would also recommend consideration is given to Open Space, the research centre for inclusive access to outdoor environments:

http://www.openspace.eca.ed.ac.uk/

The centre focuses on the benefits to be gained from getting outdoors and the barriers currently experienced by different users, particularly those from disadvantaged groups.

We are also aware of the following great resource which has, unfortunately, been archived along with many other resources produced by experts within government

agencies. This is unhelpful to say the least:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/publications/141756.aspx

In previous years when local authorities had the resources to promote community projects around housing improvement areas (Housing Action Areas, General Improvement Areas) parks staff, landscape officers and planners used to work together, talking to local people who wanted to improve their local parks, play areas, and 'incidental' spaces. If there were spaces that could be planted, or made into a play or sitting area, the local authority would run small local projects to get everyone involved. More recently planners and highways officers could introduce HomeZones, but these tend to be about parking and tree planting on narrow terraced streets.

In times of austerity local authorities have very little funding to carry out local projects or even to engage with local people. Consultation around local plans and neighbourhood plans can generate ideas for use of green spaces, but it was left to the community to progress these. Local authorities usually have to rely on partnerships with other organisations to encourage access to green space, for example, Locality and Groundwork.

We would also welcome comment on whether and how natural greenspace contributes to community and individual health and wellbeing?

In 2013 we launched a new position statement*, Public health and landscape: Creating healthy places*. The scope of the publication covered landscape in its broadest sense, using the European Landscape Convention definition:

"Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of cultural and natural factors."

Despite this broad definition, to a large extent the focus was on green space. The position statement included a review of the evidence linking landscape / green space with public health. This enabled us to develop our *Five Principles of a Healthy Place*, which acted as a thread throughout the document:

1. Healthy places improve air, water and soil quality, incorporating measures that help us adapt to, and where possible mitigate, climate change.
2. Healthy places help overcome health inequalities and can promote healthy lifestyles.
3. Healthy places make people feel comfortable and at ease, increasing social interaction and reducing anti-social behaviour, isolation and stress.
4. Healthy places optimise opportunities for working, learning and development.

5. Healthy places are restorative, uplifting and healing for both physical and mental health conditions.

Rather than repeat here the list of references that have been used to support the development of the five principles, we would encourage the Fabian Society to refer to the position statement itself, which can be accessed here:

http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/PDF/Contribute/PublicHealthandLandscape_FINAL_singlepage.pdf

Pages 6 – 11 present a summary of the evidence base. Pages 13 – 33 give examples of projects which have had positive impacts on public health and wellbeing. Pages 37 -39

With many councils speculating that they will soon only have money to fulfil their statutory duties, how can local government care for and conserve local parks, woodland and other natural spaces in tough times? Can you point to examples where new partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors have been successful? Where and how is private sector involvement appropriate / helpful in the management of public goods, and why? Are there examples of innovative approaches by local authorities that have improved local parks, woodland and other natural spaces whilst saving money?

We are acutely aware of the financial difficulties facing local authorities, and the pressures they are under to deliver their statutory duties. This awareness has been heightened by the fact that many of our members, who worked in local authority teams, have lost their jobs since 2010. While many of these losses have been absorbed by the private sector, this resultant lack of internal landscape expertise in local authorities will undoubtedly have a negative impact on, for example, emerging Local Plans with subsequent negative impacts upon the built and natural environment.

As a result we have been thinking a great deal about this issue. Something we are concerned by is the current focus on 'innovative' funding solutions to the maintenance of our existing green infrastructure, let alone the capital spending on new (and much needed in some areas) green spaces. To an extent this is actually undermining the often-cited case made by many, including government, in support of the natural environment. We are not aware of similar debates concerning other forms of infrastructure – funding is found to provide this, for example the recent Autumn Statement commitment to road-building. Why therefore do we even countenance the idea that funding for something as vital as green infrastructure – our natural life support system – has to be 'innovative'? If it is as important as many have agreed (e.g. UKNEA, this Government's Natural Environment White Paper and the previous Government's draft Planning Policy Statement on Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment, to name but a few) then funding should be made available in light of the multiple benefits to

be gained from proper investment in landscape. 'Investing to save…' underpins this argument – the idea that investment in green infrastructure has the very real potential to deliver savings in the longer term through, for example, public health benefits (and reducing the long-term burden on the NHS), training and skills development and managing flood risk.

It is also worth considering the impact of declining investment in green space and the potential for subsequent costs in relation to increases in, for example, anti-social behaviour, crime, vandalism.

Overall we feel that what is required is a fundamental reassessment of the importance we really do attach the natural environment, reflected in spending commitments over the long-term. Policy drivers are now in place and an increasingly robust evidence base supports the argument that the natural environment provides society with so many basic needs. What is now required is a bold commitment to invest in our natural environment. Of course reducing public spending is a critical concern, but money is still available. It is about how we/Government choose to spend it. This may be considered by some to be a naïve stance to take but given the importance of the natural environment and the vital life-sustaining ecosystem services it provides us with, it is the right approach to take.

Private sector involvement can be appropriate, and indeed investment by this sector in green infrastructure has been seen in the past, albeit where the sector itself is a direct beneficiary. However an important consideration must be the need to avoid any restrictions on access/enjoyment of such spaces which will limit the benefits to be derived.

Some of the projects identified in response to the first question highlighted where multi-agency funding had been sourced to deliver and maintain green space and other natural resources.

Sheffield Manor Fields is an interesting project – a park adjacent to a housing estate where sustainable drainage systems have been delivered and are successfully reduced flood risk. The land is owned by Sheffield City Council but managed and maintained by Green Estate, a social enterprise. Further information on both, including some remarkable images of the site before and after intervention by the Council's landscape architecture team, can be found here:

http://greenestate.org.uk/about-green-estate
http://www.manorfieldspark.org/bad-memories.html
http://www.manorfieldspark.org/choice-shots.html

A more detailed description of the park, from a landscape perspective, can be found here:

http://www.landscapeinstitute.co.uk/casestudies/casestudy.php?id=21

Other examples that the Fabian Society might like to explore include:

- The Land Trust http://www.thelandtrust.org.uk/community/
- Nesta's Rethinking Parks programme http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/rethinking-parks
- Jubilee Gardens, an example of a charitable trust being established to maintain and manage the site upon completion: http://jubileegardens.org.uk/about-gardens

However sites such as Jubilee Gardens are exceptional; its location in a prime position on London's South Bank means that it is not one of the numerous 'everyday' spaces that are so important to the vast majority of the population. For such spaces attracting the same levels of interest and investment is unlikely to be a realistic option.

An important point to make here is the need for long-term financing to ensure that green infrastructure continues to deliver multiple benefits. We have visited various projects around the country and found that concerns around funding overshadow the core purpose of those coordinating the work – a disproportionate amount of time is spent looking for the next pot of money from which funds might be accessed, rather than delivering change on the ground.

Polling for Pride of Place found that one third of people would be likely to participate in community action to protect their local environment, one third would be unlikely, and one third were neither likely nor unlikely. Where (and how) might people be galvanised into taking greater responsibility for the management of their local environments? Are you aware of examples where communities themselves have been empowered to participate in the collective management of public space?

There is a long history in the UK, from the heyday of parks in the Victorian era and earlier, of people being involved with (not just benefitting from) their local open spaces and parks. This also applies in rural areas where villages have ancient rights to common land. Involvement of local people continues; and with more recent cuts to local authority budgets, becomes even more important particularly for the quality and management of open spaces. Heritage Lottery Fund research on the state of our public parks which involved questionnaires to park managers and Friends' groups found that staffing levels are in steep decline, maintenance standards have or will decline and capital and revenue expenditure will continue to reduce over the next few years. The surveys also found that the role of local community groups in supporting local parks is projected to grow in the future with over 75 per cent of Friends' groups already involved in management activities.

The coming together of people to form, or reinforce, a community group with interest in green infrastructure can often emerge in the face of adversity, such as objections to development proposals or reaction to changes in much-loved provision or funding. The impetus for action in the case of Elephant and Castle was the vulnerability from redevelopment proposals for the area of what is referred to as 'London's secret woodland'; which had been thriving behind large empty social housing blocks. The Elephant and Castle Urban Forest campaign emerged when it became apparent that the 450 mature trees, a legacy of a central London social housing estate which once housed over 3,000 people, were at risk through the redevelopment proposals. In 2011, the developer adjusted the scheme to accommodate preserving as many of the mature trees as possible. Local residents had recorded measured and assessed the trees green infrastructure assets using the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees system which is used by the London Tree Officers Association, to create a monetary value for the trees of £15million, compared with the local authority's valuation of £700k. The Forestry Commission agreed the £15m valuation is feasible.

Residents established partnerships with other campaigning groups and professionals working in urban sustainability and planned, created and promoted forest events to widen knowledge of and promote retaining the undervalued trees. The Elephant and Castle Urban Forest CIC was established to underline the significance of the campaign and to take up opportunities of managing interim uses within the estate. Through another CIC, Mobile Gardeners, working closely with the developer, it has been possible for residents to operate temporary community gardens on sites within the redevelopment zone. The gardens will be moved round to fit with the development phases and are turning neglected spaces into vibrant gardens. 2013 was the first full gardening season.

Another example is Green Spaces South Cheshire, a not for profit community interest company (CIC) which was formed in response to the demise of the Nantwich Riverside Project through a lack of ongoing local authority funding. A realisation that there would be no environmental projects carried out in future in South Cheshire unless community-led initiatives were instigated prompted a group of twelve interested people to garner support and eventually funding to set up the CIC. From initial concerns about the one riverside project, work has spread across the southern part of the Cheshire East district, widening the scope from education and management activities along the river to improving disused land and ponds, the installation of swift boxes on newly renovated social housing stock and an urban produce project in nearby Crewe, where residents are learning to grow their own food and benefitting from healthy, fresh fruit and vegetables. The CIC's partners are numerous and include local primary schools, the local agricultural college, town council, district council, social housing provider, the riverside Friends' group, local residents; and includes training for NEETS (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Communities are also being empowered to take control of their local area via the

Neighbourhood Plans process. Mostly Parish Councils, villages and small towns at present, Neighbourhood Plans can also be made by Neighbourhood Forums in towns and cities. Many local authorities are encouraging the designation of neighbourhood plan areas - in addition to the local plans that local authorities develop themselves. The community is then empowered, and can seek funding, to deal with all the issues that are important to their community, including public space. The Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan focuses to a significant extent on improving public realm/green space: http://www.exeter.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18581&p=0

A key barrier to people getting more involved we discovered was a perception that it's the 'usual suspects' that put themselves forward to participate in local life, dominating decision making bodies and forming cliques.
How can we broaden out opportunities for participation and volunteering at a local level – making it feel more inclusive?

n/a

How could current institutions and policy mechanisms be recalibrated to rebuild community spirit and ensure the continued viability and accessibility of green spaces and the natural environment?

As discussed earlier, in recent years we have been exploring the relationship between green space and public health. A couple of measures to promote public health, introduced in the Health and Social Care Act (2012), could offer some potential in this regard:

- The transfer of responsibility for public health to local authorities. This is a move that has significant positive implications in terms of relationships between Directors of Public Health and other services provided by local authorities, for example planning and environment teams.
- The introduction of Health and Wellbeing Boards, to include Directors of Public Health, and at least one elected Councillor. Their role in the development of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies (JHWSs) will be central in promoting health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities. JSNAs must assess current and future health and social care needs and ensure that mental health receives equal priority to physical health, including health protection, and upstream prevention of ill health. There are therefore a range of issues that needs to be considered by Health and Wellbeing Boards, including broader social and environmental determinants of health, many of which can be influenced positively by interventions in green spaces and the natural environment (as highlighted in responses earlier in this submission).

However, in our discussions with Directors of Public Health it has become clear that

these functions within local authorities are equally under pressure and financial resources are largely limited to statutory responsibilities.

We are also keen to consider the role of the planning system. How can planning policy respect and represent people's sense of place? Could the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) be used more effectively to ensure conservation benefit by better protecting places people value?

The NPPF already requires planners to promote green infrastructure, local green space, protect biodiversity and encourage good design. Planners in local authorities do work with NPPF – it is now part of the Development Plan process and therefore mandatory for planning decisions. There is no need to enlarge on NPPF, the whole point was to make national planning guidance more succinct, understandable and easily applied.

Planning policies and guidance at a local level related to green space are included in Local Plan policies, Neighbourhood Plans, Parish plans, various development and regeneration projects, redevelopment schemes, Green Infrastructure Strategies, plans and proposals for New Settlements, Garden Cities etc. in addition to designated Conservation areas, Local Green Space designations and Ancient Woodlands.

In our experience it is in the application of planning policies that issues around the 'protection of local places' arise. Planning, development and future management depends on collaboration between a huge number of agencies and organisations; local Councils, County Councils, private landowners and developers, private companies and public bodies (for example the Environment Agency, Natural England), through to voluntary organisations, community groups and individuals. Conservation groups, such as CPRE, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts may be involved.

Everyone in planning, landscape, the development industry, is aware of the duty to deliver sustainable forms of development, to create 'places people value' and to 'protect and enhance' conservation areas, designated wildlife sites, registered (historic) parks and gardens. However, at a local level, landowners, developers, communities and local authorities will always disagree about making places - they all have different motives and different priorities.

The aim of the planning system is supposed to be to achieve a balance between environmental, social and economic sustainability. Regrettably, in our current society, 'growth', investment and profit are always top of the list of the potential benefits of change – even for elected local councillors, who are supposed to represent the views of local people, and who are now driven to consider financial before non-monetary benefits.

Another key issue is the current Government's move to archive the vast majority of

planning and environmental guidance contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance, under its Smarter Guidance initiative. This has left the bare minimum on the .gov website, with fewer people aware of green space issues (and their relevance to other planning matters such as housing, flood risk management and public health) and these concerns are carrying less and less weight in decision-making. We understand that there is no appetite to amend the NPPF significantly. However the NPPG must be revisited and great consideration given to the ways in which green space can be highlighted as a way of achieving a wide range of policy objectives.

How much do the following contribute to protection of quality greenspace for communities, and how could their protection be improved:

(1) European law (protected areas)

Though not 'law', the European Landscape Convention (ELC) has the potential to greatly increase the protection of quality green space for local communities. The ELC was signed by the UK Government in 2006, and became binding in March 2007. It is the first international treaty dedicated to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. Articles 5 and 6 in particular have the potential, if integrated into policy, to greatly improve the relationship between people and place:

Article 5: General measures
Each Party undertakes to:

a. *recognise landscape in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared culture and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;*
b. *establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning through the adoption of the specific measures set out in Article 6;*
c. *establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies mentioned in paragraph (b) above;*
d. *integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.*

Article 6: Specific measures

Awareness raising
Each Party undertakes to increase awareness among civil society, private organisations and public authorities of the value of landscapes, their role and changes to them.

Training and education
Each Party undertakes to promote:

- *training for specialists in landscape appraisal and operations*
- *multi-disciplinary training and programmes in landscape policy, protection, management and planning for professionals in the private and public sectors and for associations concerned*
- *school and university courses which, in the relevant subject areas, address the values attached to landscapes and the issues raised by their protection, management and planning.*

Identification and assessment
With active participation of the interested parties, as stipulated in Article 5c, and with a view to improving the knowledge of its landscapes, each Party undertakes to:

- *identify its own landscapes throughout its territory*
- *analyse their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them*
- *take note of changes*
- *assess the landscapes thus identified, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and population concerned.*

Landscape quality objectives
Each Party undertakes to define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation in accordance with Article 5c.

Implementation
To put landscape policies into effect, each Party undertakes to introduce instruments aimed at protecting, managing and/or planning landscape.

The UK Government considers itself compliant with the ELC. We believe however that there is a long way to go, particularly with regards article 5 and the integration of landscape into other policy areas.

(2) National planning guidelines (NPPF)

(see above comments in relation to National Planning Practice Guidance.)

(3) Community involvement?

n/a

Pride of Place found that local attachment is often most resonant at a very micro level – your street, your estate, your local park. But local authorities are often too big to properly reflect the reality of people's sense of place. How can councils ensure people are better connected to the places they hold dear? Can you provide examples where local government has successfully connected people with their locality, and when this hasn't worked? Are parish/town councils or area committees of councils an effective way of helping people take responsibility for the places they hold dear?

n/a

Are you aware of examples of participatory budgeting – local people making decisions directly over how local public budgets are spent?

n/a

Is there potential for trained community leaders to play a greater role in facilitating local environmental action? Are you aware of good examples of where community organising or community development has co-ordinated local action?

n/a

With all political parties committed to building more homes, how can we ensure that new towns, garden cities and other housing developments, have placemaking, establishing vibrant public space and ensuring community resilience as central goals? Are there other policy areas where we need to ensure more joined-up thinking?

Housing is a core policy area for us, with a recently published document for housing developers, *Profitable Places*, and a forthcoming position statement (due for publication in January 2015) explaining the relationship between housing and landscape for local planning authorities. In the Foreword for our *Profitable Places* publication, the Chair of the Berkeley Group states that *"I know from experience that beautiful, robust public space delivers a better quality of life for residents. It creates a sense of place. It generates more value. Most importantly, it helps to create a sense of pride and*

ownership."

It is our view that investment in landscape context around and within housing developments is an essential component of establishing vibrant public realm and nurturing community spirit. This was supported in the recent DCMS-commissioned Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment which states that:

"Landscape should be seen as the primary infrastructure which creates value directly and indirectly. Government needs to reprioritise the importance of its role and perception in placemaking. This applies at all scales, from streets to parks to regional planning."

Unfortunately, despite commissioning the Review, this Government appears not to have any appetite to consider how it might implement some of the recommendations.

For us, a major change is required which puts landscape at the heart of decision-making. This means a great appreciation of a site's context and setting, including the knowledge and aspirations of existing communities. This has to be the starting point of decision making on housing development in the future. The location and development of new housing is always a contentious issue but with an estimated annual shortfall of around 230,000 new homes, housing is now firmly top of the political agenda. However, with a track record of too many low quality, featureless housing developments out of keeping with their local landscape context, it's no surprise that local objections are a key barrier to meeting the high level of housing need across the country. The key to winning local support is a more sensitive, landscape led approach.

This view is supported by research from the Local Government Association. Its New Housing Developments Survey (2010) is designed to enable a better understanding of attitudes to new housing development at the local level, and identify potential barriers to housing delivery. It found that 61 per cent of local councillors considered public opposition to be a significant barrier to housing development. When asked what would make housing development more acceptable to local communities, the following responses were given:

- Ensuring housing came with improved local services and facilities (including green space) – 82 per cent;
- Involving local communities in early discussions about design – 56 per cent;
- Ensuring a commitment to excellent design – 65 per cent

Landscape is the context in which development happens and the 'glue' that holds places together, providing distinctive local character, movement networks that connect places and the public realm where social life can happen.

We welcome the Government's call for new, locally-led, garden cities, as part of a range of measures aimed at increasing housing supply. Garden cities provide an exciting

opportunity to encourage a revolution in the way we plan and deliver new communities, with truly sustainable lifestyles as the new imperative. To achieve this, the new generation of garden cities must demonstrate the very best in landscape planning and design, from the outset of their development. By adopting this landscape-led approach, change in the landscape is not to be feared, and we will make the most of our precious land resource.

Founded on utopian principles and envisioned in Ebenezer Howard's influential text *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, the original Garden Cities Movement provided a response to issues of urban housing and poor health at the end of the 19th century. Garden cities of the future must similarly respond to current issues, but also need to address the challenges of sustainability and climate change, and respond to 21st century society's needs, expectations and aspirations. To meet these challenges we have identified five guiding principles which we believe must be followed to ensure that new garden cities are fit for the 21st century and beyond:

http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/GardenCitiesStatement_20140704_FINAL.pdf

Other mechanisms that we advocate to enhance the public realm necessary for communities to thrive include Design Review and also Building for Life12. Design Review is a tried and tested method of promoting good design and is a cost-effective and efficient way to improve quality. It is an essential part of the planning process which helps local authorities meet their statutory duty under the Planning Act 2008, 'to have regard to the desirability of achieving good design'. The Design Council, Landscape Institute, RIBA and RTPI's, *Design Review Principles and Practice* document provides guidance. However, despite its inclusion in the NPPF it remains unclear how far this process is being used by local authorities and developers.

Building for Life 12 (BfL12) has the potential to achieve a real change in the quality of new housing developments. BfL12 , published by Design Council CABE, Design for Homes and the Home Builders Federation, is a traffic-light system which assess the quality of development. The system asks 12 questions of development proposals. 11 of these 12 have are reliant upon landscape planning and design. We believe that greater use of BfL12 by local authorities during pre-application discussions could play a considerable role in improving design, thereby reducing opposition to new development. It would also have the added benefit of tackling poor design issues that may arise at a later stage and which can result in greater costs and delays to delivery of housing.

Please return the completed form to Daisy-Rose Srblin daisy.srblin@fabians.org.uk