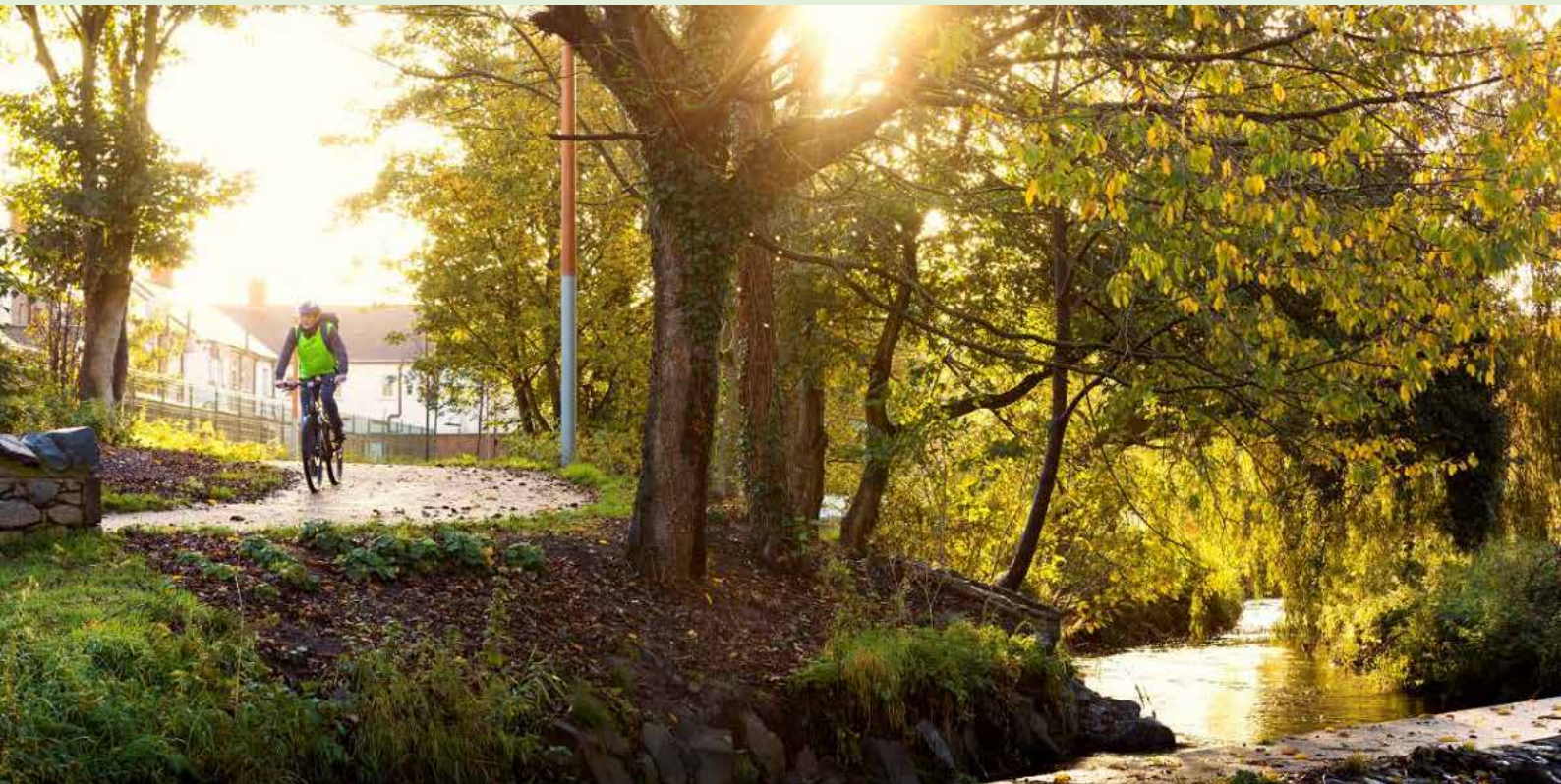
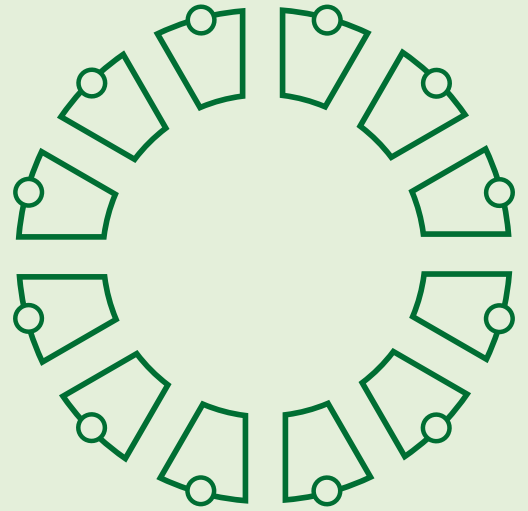


# 12 ASKS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT



# The Landscape Institute's key asks of the new government

The LI will be continuing its work to raise the voice of landscape in public debate, and to argue for people, place, and nature. There are issues pressing not just our sector but the country that will require urgent action, from climate to housing. Below are the key asks that both the LI and our members will be bringing to government in 2020.

## Climate and biodiversity action

1. Cut net emissions across the whole country
2. Start building places that are climate change ready
3. Commit to Environmental Net Gain (ENG)

## Design for people

7. Champion high quality design
8. Set and enforce higher place standards
9. Embed public health in place

## Landscape after Brexit

4. Mitigate Brexit risks for landscape business
5. Secure the skills we need
6. Maintain and enhance EU-level environmental protections

## Maximise green infrastructure

10. Invest in green infrastructure with maintenance
11. SuDS as the default option
12. A joined-up approach to land management

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# Climate and biodiversity action

Places that have set faster ambitions should be supported to meet those targets.

## 1 Cut net emissions across the whole country:

Business as usual cannot continue; this is an emergency. Climate must be a top priority for the new government, and robust investment now can still avert many of the environmental and economic pitfalls of inaction. The commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 is welcome, but places that have set faster ambitions (Scotland 2045, Greater Manchester 2038) should be supported to meet those targets. Government should partner with cities and regions on solutions, from promoting sustainable transport to afforestation, and direct its investment accordingly.

## 2 Start building places that are climate change ready:

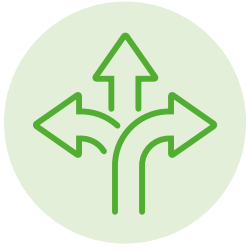
We are already too late to stop some climate changes. The places we live in need to be adapted to a range of new risks, including increased heat waves and rising sea levels. Climate adaptation must be understood as a key priority for planning policy and be given great weight in determining applications for development. Local Planning Authorities currently lack the capacity and skills to lead this, and the power to refuse unsustainable proposals. A changing climate will impact on everything from flood risk to plant health and biosecurity, and a step change is needed from the whole built environment sector.

## 3 Commit to Environmental Net Gain (ENG):

The ambition to leave the environment in a better state than we found it needs to be made real. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a good start to address the severe decline in species (plant and animal) and it should be legislated upon. However, the environment cannot be viewed through a single lens, and without a broader approach to net gain there is no guarantee that the decline will not continue. We must develop an approach to Environmental Net Gain (ENG) that maximises the benefits of natural capital – from regulating pollution and flooding to providing green spaces for recreation.



The commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 is welcome, but places that have set faster ambitions (Scotland 2045, Greater Manchester 2038) should be supported to meet those targets.



# Landscape after Brexit

**A new environmental watchdog that monitors the government's ambitions and obligations must be established.**

## 4 Mitigate Brexit risks for landscape businesses:

The UK landscape sector is seen as a world leader internationally; however, its success could be placed at risk by a no-deal Brexit. Landscape businesses – largely SMEs – are especially vulnerable to any market contraction, particularly in construction. The sector relies upon imports of materials and labour from overseas, the ability to sell services to the continent, a robust framework of environmental legislation, and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications with other European nations. Our future trading relationship with Europe should protect these things, and ensure that landscape businesses can continue to contribute to our economic, social, and environmental prosperity.

## 5 Secure the skills we need:

Ensuring access to the skilled and graduate workforce needed for landscape must be a priority for the new government. Landscape professionals are essential for creating healthier places and tackling climate change. We are facing a skills shortage in our sector, however, and restrictions on labour movement would further limit the number of new workers and international graduates who will be able to stay in the UK to fill those vacancies and add value to our country. New landscape apprenticeships and the recent addition of landscape architecture to the Shortage Occupation List are positive steps, and this progress must not be halted.

## 6 Maintain and enhance EU-level environmental protections:

Until new laws are passed, the UK will continue to rely upon European legislation for many of its environmental protections, from air pollution to water quality targets. There must be a guarantee that existing environmental standards and targets will be maintained in law (without regression) and plans developed to meet them. A new environmental watchdog that monitors the government's ambitions and obligations must be established, and should be fully resourced in order to provide proper scrutiny. These ambitions are all in the draft Environment Bill: passing it must be one of the earliest priorities of the new government.



**There must be a guarantee that existing EU-level environmental standards and targets will be maintained in law and enhanced in the future.**



# Design for people

**Engraining placemaking is key**

## 7 Champion high-quality design:


The new government will need to tackle the huge challenge of delivering more housing for Britain; however, the ambition to increase supply must be matched by a commitment to make these places where people want to live. Engraining placemaking is key: well-designed places that respond to local character, contain green spaces and trees, promote connectivity, are appropriately dense, and are designed with sustainability in mind. Earlier and better infrastructure planning (both grey- and blue/green-) is essential, and innovative ways to involve communities and design experts should be supported. Permitted development rights need to be balanced with achieving sustainable development.

## 9 Embed public health in place:

The evidence is now clear that spending on healthcare could be reduced if more targeted investment was made in preventing ill health before it has a chance to occur. Landscape plays a key role in this. The public health sector needs to be more closely involved in guiding the planning, design and management of new and existing settlements to help ensure healthy, sustainable places, for both current and future residents. Learning should be taken from the NHS Healthy New Towns programme, but this cannot be a one-off exercise. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides a model for how all facets of policy and planning can be aligned towards sustainable development.

## 8 Set and enforce higher place standards:

In too many developments, high-quality design fails to survive through to final build. Green infrastructure and open space are value-engineered out, while green features are included in application visuals but never delivered or enforced through conditions. There is a need for a national framework of standards for the provision and quality of green infrastructure. To measure the value of these spaces the planning system will need to begin to embed the practices of natural capital accounting as well as measuring the socio-economic benefits of these assets. There are best practice examples of urban greening standards and requirements across the UK and the world that we can learn from.

 **There are best practice examples of urban greening and placemaking across the UK and the world that we can learn from.**



# Maximise green infrastructure

## 10 | Invest in green infrastructure with maintenance:

Green Infrastructure can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities, but it requires a level of investment, planning and stewardship that is currently insufficient. Cost-cutting of service charges and management contracts often leads to poor stewardship of green spaces and assets (such as street trees) and therefore poor outcomes for communities. Sustainable funding models are needed for our parks, public realm, and valued landscapes. Ringfencing of developer contributions through Section 106 and CIL for green infrastructure should be explored, and innovative models of management – such as trusts or community ownership – supported.

Bringing multiple benefits for people, place and nature.

## 12 | A joined-up approach to land management:

Our rural landscapes must play a key role if we are to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency. Restoration of natural landscapes through afforestation, nature recovery networks, and robust landscape management can reduce net carbon emissions while also bringing multiple benefits for people, place and nature. To deliver this, any new Domestic Agricultural Policy must have the environment at its heart. Subsidy payments must be tied to delivering public goods and promoting environmentally sustainable land management systems. National Parks and AONBs must be empowered to support this, and the recommendations made by the Glover Review should be enacted.

## 11 | SuDS as the default option:

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) has the potential to make a major contribution to surface water flood management, as well as improving water quality, amenity, and biodiversity. However, the current planning, policy and delivery system is inconsistent. Clear and coherent guidance and policy must be developed so that authorities can consistently deliver SuDS within their planning frameworks. In principle, all development should incorporate sustainable drainage that takes a multifunctional approach. Development requiring planning permission should be expected to include SuDS unless there is clear and proportionate evidence that it is unfeasible.



**Green Infrastructure can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities, but it requires a level of investment, planning and stewardship that is currently insufficient.**

# About the LI

The Landscape Institute (LI) aims to lead and inspire the landscape profession to ensure it is equipped to deliver its purpose under our Royal Charter for the benefit of people, place and nature, for today and for future generations.

The Landscape Institute provides a professional home for over 5,600 landscape managers, landscape architects, landscape planners, urban designers, and landscape scientists, and many other landscape professionals working across urban and rural areas.

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