

THE ARCHAEOLOGY FORUM

a grouping of independent bodies concerned with archaeology

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Andy Neale,
Natural England

27 March 2009

Dear Andy Neale,

Future Landscapes: Draft policy for consultation

The Archaeology Forum is pleased to be consulted on this draft policy document.

The Archaeology Forum (TAF) is a grouping of the key, non-governmental organisations concerned with archaeology in the UK. Its members include the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers UK, the Council for British Archaeology, the Institute of Conservation, the Institute for Archaeologists, the National Trust, Rescue, the Society of Antiquaries of London, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (formerly SCAUM), and the Society of Museum Archaeologists UK.

We make the following comments.

Policy 1

The Forum welcomes Natural England's approach to developing a vision for landscape in the future and a more strategic framework for managing change at a time when there are many continuing and new forces for change. We agree that landscapes are inherently subject to dynamic change and that an important aspect of landscape character is its mutability which it is important to respect and to protect.

Policy 2

The Forum commends the use of Historic Landscape Characterisation as a framework and evidence-based approach for defining what is distinctive and particular in different landscapes due to their exploitation, use and care in the past and the way that this is manifest in today's landscapes. We strongly support an approach that is built on an understanding of historic character.

Policy 3

We look forward to the opportunity to comment on the Historic Environment Policy and specific consideration of the strategic approach to transformation of some landscapes - e.g

for forestry, through rewilding, and coastal realignment – that will inevitably result in the loss of historic landscape character and historic assets to serve new environmental and recreational purposes.

Policy 4

The Forum commends the development of a vision involving, and owned by, stakeholders who are directly concerned with the use and management of the land.

Policy 5

The Forum supports a multi-function approach to future landscape management provided that it is based on a much clearer realization of the functions, services and benefits that flow from the cultural and social value of landscapes as well as their economic and environmental functions. We agree that landscapes are vital to our national culture, for enjoyment, inspiration, recreation and our sense of place in an evolving world. These are values that should be balanced proportionately with other more utilitarian benefits and services and an integrated multi-function approach will require innovative approaches to evaluation and strategic planning.

Policy 6

The Forum agrees that an improved understanding of people's sense of place, values and perceptions of landscape will be essential to encourage more informed dialogue about landscape change. There is a large body of academic research in this area and we welcome the work Natural England has in hand to assess this and to formulate a new research agenda and strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to make these comments,

Yours sincerely,



Dr Gill Chitty, Secretary

The Archaeology Forum's members are:

The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers UK
The Council for British Archaeology
The Institute for Archaeologists
The Institute of Conservation
The National Trust
The National Trust for Scotland

Rescue: the British Archaeological Trust
The Society of Antiquaries of London
The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
The Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers
The Society of Museum Archaeologists