

**REPORT ON THE HERITAGE COUNCIL
LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE, 2009**

Tullamore, County Offaly, 14th-16th October, 2009

“PEOPLE AND THEIR PLACE”

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



January 2010



**NATURAL
ENGLAND**

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Abbreviations

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DoEHLG	The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
ELC	European Landscape Convention
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
ICOMOS	International Council of Monuments and Sites
IFA	Irish Farmers' Association
IUCN	International Union of Conservation of Nature
LCA (1)	Landscape Character Assessment
LCA (2)	Landscape Conservation Area, (under the provisions of Section 204 of the <i>P&D Act 2000</i>)
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NLS	National Landscape Strategy
NRA	National Roads Authority
RECEP- ENELC	European Network of Local and Regional Authorities for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention
TD	Teachta Dála (Deputy to the Dáil)

Report on the Heritage Council Landscape Conference

Tullamore, 14th-16th October 2009

Preamble

This report highlights the issues raised during the Heritage Council's Landscape Conference in October 2009. It draws on the papers, presentations and discussions at the conference, including the European Co-operation Workshop, and subsequent internal discussions at Council and consultation with all participants. This preamble seeks to set the conference within an overall national and international context and indeed show how the structure of the report, and the findings it presents, reflect the purpose of the Conference as a whole.

The fact that this report has been prepared and will be placed in the public domain so soon after the Conference itself, emphasises the fact that the conference is only one step along the way to encouraging and influencing others in their work of ensuring the Irish Landscape, in all its guises, has the highest possible standards applied to its conservation, its management and its planning.

As the place where we all live, work and play that is the least our landscape deserves.

Understanding Landscape

Landscape is everywhere and means everything to everybody. It is about people, their place and how they perceive that place. As such, the "concept" of using landscape as a force for unifying and integrating competing interests can seem so complex as to act as an obstacle to obtaining agreement on how best to proceed. Yet it is this very complexity – this breadth of involvement with people, that provides landscape with its greatest strengths. It is relevant to everyone and our use of it has an effect on everyone and the quality of their lives.

The Council of Europe in formulating the European Landscape Convention (ELC), otherwise known as the Florence Convention (2000), recognises this to the extent that the agreed definition/ meaning of landscape contained in the Convention places people at its very core. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as;

'an area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'

In other words, it is about people and their place, where they live, where they work and where they play.

People act on and interact with their landscape such that landscape becomes the foundation of their identity. People are constantly creating new landscapes through this action and interaction. The convention recognises that landscape is dynamic, ever changing and that if we are to make the best of it collectively, we must have the correct tools and structures to allow us to do so co-operatively. It provides a framework of general and specific measures to allow us to do just that.

The ELC details the scope of its intent by stating that it applies to the entire territory of those parties that have ratified it¹. It covers the natural and cultural as well as rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered as outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes. The aim of the convention is stated as being to promote landscape conservation, management and planning and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues.

The Heritage Council conference set out to identify those landscape issues and more importantly to set us on a path of resolving them in partnership with others.

People and Place – a Common Language

A major issue that arises from the Conference is how to communicate simply and effectively what appears to be such a complex concept. This requires a shift in mindset away from viewing and using landscape in a sectoral way to one that considers our impact and use of landscape in an entirely integrated way. In working towards such a shift there is a need to take nothing for granted, to identify a range of effective awareness raising measures that allow advocates of the landscape approach to create their own public – to have an effective constituency. Much work has been done in this regard since 2002 and *landscape* has come in from the wilderness. More agencies are recognising the ‘Landscape’ dimension and there is a greater public awareness of the significance and value of our natural and cultural landscapes². However, the next six months requires a much more structured and intensive approach to maintain current positive momentum.

¹ Ireland signed and ratified the European Landscape Convention on the 22nd March 2002. The Convention came into force on the 1st March 2004.

² The Heritage Council “Valuing Heritage “ 2007.

Undoubtedly in the structuring of its conference, the Heritage Council sought to address this communication issue from day one. To do this, it placed living community landscape initiatives at the core of each day of its deliberations and built-in a facilitated discussion to build on a series of outstanding and passionate 15-minute presentations.

This added a very people-focused and community-led flavour to the discussions and allowed people to articulate how they viewed their landscapes, a view that showed quite clearly how they do not compartmentalise where they live, work and play. They see the whole landscape picture and it was clear from the views expressed that they feel huge frustrations in dealing with numerous agencies that do not view landscape in that manner.

Such a view complemented the more formal papers and presentations that looked at international best practice and the influence of Irish land use agencies on the landscape. The international papers examined aspects of how other Countries (EU and beyond) were dealing with the issues. The Irish agency presentations examined how the major agencies that impact on and encourage use of the landscape, viewed landscape in their work. These included agencies with responsibility for agriculture, tourism², forestry, roads, recreation, environmental protection and planning. The conference also sought to build on the Programme for Government commitment to develop a National Landscape Strategy through presentations from the Minister of the Environment and highlighted ongoing European developments through a presentation from the Council of Europe. In addition, the significance of agriculture to the rural landscape was represented through the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), as was the importance of landscape ecology in the coastal-region and urban-region landscape through a presentation by Richard Forman from Harvard University.

The wide-range of issues arising from the formal papers and the discussions they provoked make up the bulk of this report. They are presented in a thematic form.

And Where to now?

The Heritage Council will use this report to inform its submission on the Draft National Landscape Strategy. The Minister in his address to the conference committed his Department to having such a draft ready for public consultation by the middle of 2010.

² For example, according to Fáilte Ireland's *Visitor Attitude Survey (VAS) 2008*, French and German respondents (two of Ireland's main tourist markets) ranked landscape and natural heritage as their number one destination choice factors.

The Council will invite further comment on the report from those who attended but also a much wider audience through the use of its web site – www.heritagecouncil.ie.

This report, together with the ongoing and wide-ranging consultation; the published papers from the Conference, the *Landscape Highlights* and *Landscape Fact Sheets* that together form a tangible output from the Conference, will help to inform and shape the next steps to be taken to ensure that Ireland's National Landscape Strategy (NLS) is people-focused and people-friendly and that the NLS identifies effective structures and frameworks through which it can be implemented and monitored.

Michael Starrett
Chief Executive

8th January 2010

Part 1

1. Introduction

Ten years on from the successful conference held by the Heritage Council in 1999 entitled – ‘*Towards Policies and Priorities for the Irish Landscape*’, the 2009 Landscape Conference in Tullamore - ‘*Looking Around – Looking Ahead*’, sought to examine the changes, pressures and responses that have shaped the Irish Landscape in the intervening years.

More significantly, the 2009 Tullamore Conference looked beyond 2009 seeking to influence the landscape agenda over the next decade and attempting to assess how effective our current strategic and legislative provisions are in securing the appropriate sustainable development of our landscapes and in providing for effective landscape planning, management and conservation in all sectors of society. A copy of the Tullamore Conference Programme is provided at *Appendix A*.

A range of international, European, national, regional and local speakers addressed the conference. These included speakers from the Council of Europe, the Landscape Observatory in Catalonia, Parks Canada, ICOMOS, Natural England, RECEP-ENELC³, Scottish Natural Heritage, Harvard University, Teagasc, Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, the EPA, NRA, Local Authorities, Irish Universities, Professional Institutes, farming organisations and local community groups. As an integral part of the Conference there was a European Co-operation Workshop organised by the Heritage Council in association with Natural England – the workshop report is provided in *Appendix B*. Details of all the presentations and material provided for attendees can be found at www.heritagecouncil.ie.

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr John Gormley TD, addressed the conference on Friday morning.

The Minister’s speech, which makes reference to planned changes in national legislation and policy and also announced the development of a National Landscape Character Assessment in parallel with the preparation of the National Landscape Strategy, is provided at *Appendix C*.

³ RECEP-ENELC European Network of Local and Regional Authorities for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention

2. Tullamore Conference 2009 – Key Aims

In organising this conference, the Heritage Council sought to provide a forum for constructive debate on the future of the Irish landscape in order to:

- Inform the National Landscape Strategy (NLS) currently emerging under the aegis of the DoEHLG;
- assess how we can best implement the European Landscape (Florence) Convention (ELC) and its direction regarding “all” landscapes;
- ensure that the significance of the Irish landscape is valued by all who live in, work in and visit it;
- ensure that a landscape approach to environmental and heritage management is valued and pursued by government departments and agencies in a joined-up manner;
- guarantee that communities/citizens are placed at the heart of the management, planning and conservation of their landscapes; and
- learn from and exchange international best practice.

In order to facilitate the Heritage Council in reaching these aims, the conference was structured to consider:

- International Best Practice and European Partnership;
- Irish Agencies and their Relationship to Landscape;
- Community Case Studies – Living Landscapes; and
- Political and Stakeholder Impetus.

An initial draft conference report (October 2009) examined the extent to which these aims were met by reviewing feedback from Heritage Council Board Members, Heritage Council staff and conference participants. This final report (January 2010) seeks to incorporate findings from speakers, the record of discussions from the floor and the evening workshop, as well as general feedback from the first report.

2.1 Tullamore Conference - General Findings

It should be noted that a common theme in all feedback was the overall success of the conference, the quality of the presentations, printed material, and the level of informed discussion from the floor and workshop.

It is broadly recognised that the *community case study* presentations were a great success. Discussion on the successes, failures and frustrations of these groups set the tone for animated and informed discussion and it could be argued that the inspiration provided by them set the positive tone for the conference as a whole.

An increased level of awareness of, and for, the Irish landscape among professionals and government agencies was also identified.

Moreover, there is a growing realisation of the need for meaningful participative measures rather than passive ‘consultation’ on the design and detailing of actions likely to arise. This, it has to be said is the basis on which the ELC is built. One of the recurrent phrases mentioned in post-conference observations was that cited as ‘*a re-awakening of the sense of place*’. Council seeks to reflect this in the sub-title given to this report “*People and their Place*’

3. Key Issues Arising from the Tullamore Conference

This section of the conference report provides an overview of the feedback received from speakers and attendees in response to an initial draft conference report circulated in October 2009, along with issues raised at the Heritage Council’s Inaugural Landscape Working Group meeting held on the 13th November 2009. The record of discussions from the floor and from the European Co-operation Workshop, which was held on the Wednesday evening, have also been examined and we have sought to reflect the reactions and challenges from these lively conference and group discussions.

To facilitate their consideration in this report, the feedback and key issues arising have been grouped into six key areas. However it is very evident that the six areas enjoy extensive crossover and need in themselves to be considered in an integrated manner:

The six Key areas are:

- 1. Co-operation**
- 2. Research**
- 3. Stakeholder Participation**
- 4. Communication, Training and Public Awareness**
- 5. Legislation and Policy Issues**
- 6. Landscape Management**

These are examined in detail below and a selection of summary bullet points that best encapsulate the themes is also provided.

It should also be noted that these can reflect the general and specific measures contained in the European Landscape Convention (a summary of these ELC measures is provided at *Appendix D*).

1. Co-operation

Our national landscape, although consisting of areas and components, does not recognise electoral boundaries and therefore ‘insists’ that co-operation happens between national, regional and local government. In particular, discussion and feedback centred on the need for an all-island approach to landscape strategies. Co-operation also relates to the need for agencies, government bodies, and local and regional government to work closely together on landscape policy and management and for them to avoid considering landscape issues along sectoral lines. This was very evident from the Agency presentations on day two:

- The need for more Northern Ireland involvement as well as east-west and wider international linkages was clearly expressed, using the European Landscape Convention as an umbrella mechanism
- The necessity for greater collaborative work involving all State agencies, and including the National Roads Authority and Coillte regarding landscape issues such as design, planting, access and use of baseline data including Landscape Character Assessment was a strong theme.
- Strengthen, widen and deepen links with landscape agencies in the EU, including The Landscape Observatory of Catalonia, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage.
- Build on the evident willingness for Agency co-operation on landscape issues.

2. Research

As demonstrated very strongly in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presentation, research underpins an understanding of the forces for change on our landscape, but also how it is perceived and how it might be classified and managed:

- Ongoing research is needed on the ‘socio-economic value’ of landscape. This would help ‘sell’ a more integrated approach to landscape management at a regional and local authority level and would increase the effectiveness of the proposed NLS.
- Given that the ELC defines landscape in terms of how it is perceived, there is a need to understand how landscape is perceived and understood.

- Baseline sources of landscape information and their integration are also needed for ecology, archaeology, built heritage and land cover.

3. Stakeholder Participation

One of the key themes in the Tullamore conference was the need for community support and effective participation from the outset in any landscape management matters:

- There was agreement generally that landscape, indeed, people's perceptions of place (see ELC definition) and accordingly those who live within and work on the landscape need to be centrally engaged in any decision-making in relation to it, i.e. participative decision-making.
- In noting the importance of meaningful participation and consultation, it was pointed out that if managed properly this can be time consuming and potentially challenging, in that it requires resources (i.e. the process is labour intensive) and requires a shift in the way many organs of the State do their business.
- Landscape designations cannot be made to work without the cooperation of those who own and manage them. That means attempting to achieve a climate of goodwill over the years ahead. This can only happen if the areas concerned come to be valued as assets and not as impediments by all involved. The same principle applies to our built heritage through the lists of protected structures, and management of conservation areas.

4. Communication, Training and Public Awareness

Communication concerning landscape should be seen as a multi-directional process where local perceptions and public awareness inform national and regional communication strategies as importantly as any top-down approach. Great effort should be invested in making the concepts easily understood and relevant to the public at large:

- A lot of work is needed on the communication of 'landscape', as an idea/concept and as a place, including the 'value' of a national strategy relating to our landscape and the benefits to be devised from it.
- Landscape management training is needed for practitioners and community groups.
- A need to highlight the food-producing role of the rural landscape was seen as important.
- Urban/suburban and peri-urban areas need to be integrated into the public consciousness as landscape – as well as that of practitioners.

- The use of the arts (literature, music and visual, e.g. community plays) as a means of conveying and interpreting landscape should be considered and promoted.

5. Legislation and Policy Issues

A tiered national, regional and local legislative and policy framework is required to deliver on the full potential of the ELC:

- There is a general fear of introducing/considering new legislation. Any new legislation should be enabling and empowering and not restricting.
- A definition of landscape, already defined in the European Landscape Convention, in the forthcoming *Planning & Development Bill 2009* will be a significant step towards embracing the spirit of the ELC. A more developed assessment of how Ireland intends to implement and monitor the ELC is urgently required.
- Effective and robust National Guidance on landscape management and the various tools used for this such as Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) including Historic Landscape Characterisation is badly needed.
- Some preparation for potential changes arising from climate change is needed. The impacts may not be very dramatic at first, but the concept of space for nature, connectivity, place for flood waters need to be worked into our management concepts.
- Widening awareness and participation is considered a central policy issue.
- There is, in light of the experience and certain frustrations expressed, a need to consider whether existing frameworks, structures and legislation can deliver on what is required.

6. Landscape Management

- Effective tools to assist in the management of landscape are a serious requirement, whether this is improved characterisation techniques or guidance, capacity and sensitivity tools, as well as means to integrate landscape scale data such as habitat mapping and historic characterisation data..
- There is an urgent need for an all-island integrated coastal zone management strategy – many of the major issues are concentrated on the coastal areas (Climate change, eco-damage, resource depletion, development pressures).

- Issues in relation to sea level rise and coastal landscapes need to be taken more seriously by all citizens and effective management measures need to be built into any emerging landscape policy, including allowing room for coastal adjustment rather than assuming an automatic reaction of putting coastal defences in place. Similarly, the introduction of engineering solutions to manage river floods must not be viewed as the only solution.

Part 2

4. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) & the Emerging National Landscape Strategy (NLS) – Using them to resolve (not identify) issues

Within the key tenets of the *European Landscape Convention (ELC – Florence Convention)*, the Council of Europe recognises the important role of landscape in the cultural, ecological, economic, environmental and social fields. The Council of Europe also identified landscape as an economic resource whose protection, management and planning could aid job creation. The specific and general measures of the European Landscape Convention are provided in *Appendix D*. These provide a very clear framework against which to measure our progress on implementation of the Convention.

Ireland signed and ratified the ELC on 22nd March 2002 and the Convention came into force on the 1st March 2004. The Council of Europe website (www.coe.int) provides a useful overview of the ELC and guidelines on its implementation, management and monitoring. As of May 2009, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) has been fully ratified by 30 States and signed by six.

In recognition of the value that the landscape provides to the citizens of Ireland and that it provides a setting for people's lives and is of important economic, social/community and environmental value, the *Programme for Government 2007-2012* included a commitment to design and deliver a *National Landscape Strategy (NLS)*. The Irish Government also recognises the importance of landscape in the National Strategy Document *Building Ireland's Smart Economy-A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal 2009-2014*. For example, Section 7 (page 82) of the Smart Economy Report (*Action Area 3: Enhancing the Environment Securing Energy Supplies*) states that:

“The success of our economy is intimately related to how well we manage our environment. For example, tourism depends on high quality landscapes and built environments and certain high value-added parts of the food industry depend on Ireland's ‘green image’ for competitive advantage. More fundamentally, for the purposes of this Framework, if we wish to keep talented Irish people working in Ireland, as well as attracting the most talented people from around the world to our shores, we cannot afford to offer a poor quality living environment.

The importance of this approach was emphasised in all of the agency papers given at the Conference, particularly those dealing with agriculture, tourism, environmental protection and recreation.

In late 2007, the Minister announced the initiation of work to prepare The National Landscape Strategy (NLS). The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy (NLS) are to prepare a framework to:

- recognise the importance of all landscapes in Ireland;
- implement the ELC in Ireland;
- promote sustainable development;
- protect and enhance the environment;
- positively manage change;
- provide context for appropriate development; and
- provide a high quality environment for people to work, live and play.

As part of the formulation process, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) hosted the inaugural meeting of the National Landscape Strategy Steering Group & Consultative Panel in April 2008.

Issues Paper

Following this meeting, the DoEHLG invited all panel attendees to make a submission on the scope of an NLS by the end of May 2008. The DoEHLG agreed to collate submissions and to compile an *Issues Paper* for circulation to the group. The issues paper was duly circulated in September 2009. The key issues raised in relation to the formulation of a National Landscape Strategy by the ten organisations that participated are summarised, as follows; that the NLS should:

1. ***Be based upon the framework and content of the ELC;***
2. ***Ensure the creation of a national landscape character assessment using a single methodology. The national LCA should be widely accessible and usable;***
3. ***Ensure public participation in the entire process from design through to implementation;***
4. ***Include a robust principle on public awareness, training and education;***
5. ***Embody a dynamic approach and embrace all landscapes;***
6. ***Facilitate the improvement of damaged landscapes;***
7. ***Ensure the recognition of landscape in law and integration of landscape in all relevant policies; and***

8. *Contain a framework for its implementation. This framework should include, inter alia, clearly defined structures, processes, and guidelines for monitoring and review.*

Importantly, the issues paper noted that representation and views from a number of key state agencies, stakeholders and other bodies were missing including:

- Representation from farming groups (IFA etc.), local authorities, NGO's, etc.
- Sections in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, which cover agriculture, rural development, fisheries, aquaculture, foreshore and the coastal zone.
- Sections in the D/EHLG including National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), archaeology, local government, and climate change.
- Sections in the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, which regulate energy including renewables and peatlands.
- Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, which covers rural development, the islands and Udarás na Gaeltachta.
- There is also no mention of climate change in submissions and this needs to be considered in a NLS, particularly in regard to the recent severe flooding and the apparent lack of integrated river basin management as proposed in the Water Framework Directive and highlighted at the conference in discussion such as those on Waterways Corridor Studies.

In addition, it should be noted that in the time that has elapsed since the receipt of submissions, progress has been made with regard to a number of issues relevant to an NLS. Some of these include:

- Introduction by the Heritage Council in September 2009 of an all-island *Multi-disciplinary Landscape Character Assessment CPD Training Course* in partnership with eight professional institutes, the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia and local community groups – this course recently won the *ILI President's Award 2009*³;
- The initiation of the Tara-Skryne '*pilot*' Landscape Conservation Area (LCA) project between the DoEHLG, the Heritage Council and Meath County Council, in collaboration with a wide range of other stakeholders, and with a focus on effective public participation from the outset;

⁴ See www.irishlandscapeinstitute.com/home.html

- Proposed changes to the Irish Planning System including the provision of a definition of ‘Landscape’ in the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2009*, in accordance with the ELC;
- Consideration of legislative provisions for significant cultural landscapes in the emerging *National Monuments Bill 2009*;
- A review of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) in Ireland and the drafting of national policy guidance on this by the Heritage Council; and
- An update of the review of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in Ireland by the Heritage Council.

The September 2009 *Issues Paper* does not constitute the formal consultative process for key stakeholders – the Heritage Council views the circulation of the issues paper as the first step in an in-depth, collaborative process. The Heritage Council has been informed that the DoEHLG intends to issue a draft NLS Report (to be approved by the NLS Steering Group) for public consultation/national debate during the second quarter of 2010. It is envisaged that the National Landscape Strategy (NLS) will be finalised by the end of 2010.

The Heritage Council has proposed through its membership of the Departmental NLS Steering Group that a phase of extensive consultation will shortly be embarked upon. The Government has also committed to undertaking a comprehensive programme of *national character mapping* in order to inform the development and implementation of a National Landscape Strategy – the Minister confirmed the undertaking of this project at the Tullamore Conference.

As such, the Tullamore Conference has acted as a highly effective means of publicising this planned DoEHLG national strategy and of initiating and facilitating debate to inform the overall formulation of the Strategy. The conference has also created a certain level of expectation. It is submitted that the Heritage Council’s Conference can also be considered by the Department as a major part of the overall consultation exercise referring, as it does to the views of key stakeholders, participants and practitioners in the landscape sector and beyond.

Finally, the points raised in the Tullamore conference papers and case studies have been placed in the context of the provisions of the European Landscape Convention – this detailed analysis is provided at *Appendix E*.

Part 3

5. Next Steps for the Heritage Council?

As a result of the Tullamore Conference and as per earlier chapters, a range of issues have been identified and potential ways to resolve those suggested. Suggested next steps for the Heritage Council have been prepared and are set out in summary form below. This is not an exhaustive list and is merely intended to stimulate further discussion at Council and to inform Council's formal contribution to the planned National Landscape Strategy (NLS), to be provided under Section 6 of the *Heritage Act 1995*.

The key steps identified for the Heritage Council are, as follows:

- 1. Meeting the challenge of the European Landscape Convention (ELC)**
- 2. Influencing Integration and Joined-up Government**
- 3. Developing the role of Regional and Local Authorities in Ireland**
- 4. Establishing effective Participative Models**
- 5. Promoting Communication, Training and Public Awareness**

1. Meeting the challenge of the European Landscape Convention (ELC)

The European Landscape Convention, (as noted above, a summary of specific and general measures is provided at *Appendix D*) as articulated in the presentation by Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons on the Friday morning, offers a way to widen the scope of landscape and heritage management and a way to make landscape more broadly democratic. Importantly, it offers a means to unify discussions about cultural heritage, the agrarian economy and tourist initiatives.

As far back as 1997, Aalen, Stout and Whelan⁴ argued that:

'at present, we [Ireland] have a designation policy rather than a landscape policy, a concern with sites rather than landscapes, with elements rather than wholes. The chief strategy has been to establish enclaves encompassing valued resources and to safeguard them by limiting human use. Landscape is treated as a series of discrete elements to be planned in isolation; the outcome is a fragmented and confused perspective, inimical to the landscape, which is holistic and requires broad strategic approaches. Nowadays, whole landscapes are the issue, not sites'.

⁴ Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape.

In the intervening period since the publication of the *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape* some twelve years ago, there has perhaps been a growing awareness in some sectors of the need to move towards a landscape-based approach, yet the same period has seen an unprecedented level of development. The European Landscape Convention embodies the approach of looking at *all* landscapes and not just unique or special places, and all the papers at the conference now suggest that the time is opportune for Ireland to embrace the ‘whole landscape’ approach in accordance with the ELC, i.e. urban, rural and peri-urban.

In Ireland, major conservation developments since the 1990s have been designation-led, as seen in the creation of:

- Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas when the Habitats and Birds Directive were transposed into Irish law;
- Record of Monuments and Places under the *1994 National Monuments Act Amendment*; and
- Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and Landscape Conservation Areas (Section 204), under the provisions of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*.

While such a designation-led policy has been beneficial in broad terms, it should be pointed out that the European Environment Agency is of the view that site protection through designated areas is insufficient to halt biodiversity loss, thereby arguing that other landscape initiatives outside of designations are required to mitigate against biodiversity loss⁴. These could include, for example, more targeted agri-environmental schemes that will support and maintain High Nature Value Farming.⁵

Meeting the spirit of the European Landscape Convention requires a far greater engagement with broader spatial planning policies and will require a new landscape focus in policies at national and local level above and beyond that which is currently contained in the *Planning and Development Act 2000*. Clearly further discussion and public debate is required on this.

As an initial step, Council will position itself further as a ‘*champion*’ of the European Landscape Convention, seeking its appropriate implementation and monitoring in Ireland.

⁴ European Environment Agency, 2004. *High Nature Value Farmland: Characteristics, Trends and Policy Challenges*. European Environment Agency, Copenhagen.

⁵ Smith, G.S., Bligh, J., Delaney, E., Egan, M., O’Donovan, G. and O’Donoghue, P. in prep. *Case Studies on High Nature Value Farming in Ireland: Aran Island and North Connemara*, A report for the Heritage Council.

Continued encouragement of landscape-wide policies, improved Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), and the use of inter-dependent techniques such as Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), co-ordinated habitat mapping and the implementation and ongoing development of Waterways Corridor Studies are all clearly relevant. The use of Council's status as a *prescribed body* under the Planning Acts is also extremely relevant in this regard, in so far as seeking ways to meet the potential of this role.

It is considered that the National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland should not seek to 're-invent the wheel' but reflect the work already carried out for the European Landscape Convention. Indeed, its future implementation should also follow the very clear general and specific measures that are laid out within the Convention.

2. Influencing Integration and Joined -Up Government

A key theme in the overall feedback has been the need for more joined-up thinking and collaboration between departments and agencies including those responsible for designations, planning policy, agriculture, tourism and natural resources and socio-economic development. In much the same way that tackling climate change requires a more integrated way of operating that will transcend administrative boundaries and structures, a meaningful and integrated landscape policy will also require greater joined-up strategic thinking, frameworks; tools and monitoring strategies. For this to be effectively introduced, consideration needs to be given to new empowering and enabling legislation such as the Landscape (Ireland) Act for which Council has already called.

3. The Role of Regional and Local Authorities in Ireland

In his conference paper Mr Pat Gallagher, Offaly County Manager, commented that '*At a national level, we need 'ownership' of landscape policy.... There is currently much confusion between landscape 'value' and its consequent 'sensitivity to change' and this needs a lot of work across the national context also...We are hoping for outputs from the National Landscape Strategy, specifically a policy and protection framework together with finalised landscape guidelines...This package must be something that local authorities will buy into*'.

Assuming that these comments are representative of the experience of other local authorities in Ireland, it is clear that the policy context local authorities operate within needs significant revision. The local authority is largely where the 'buck' stops in terms of a policy hierarchy, given that local authority spatial planning units are the key focus in terms of decision-making.

If an emerging landscape policy is to seek the sustainable management of all of our landscapes, and not just so called unique or special places, the role of the local authority, and indeed regional authorities, will be key in the implementation of spatial planning policies linked to wider sustainable economic development.

4. Effective Participative Models

A key theme of the Tullamore Conference was the need for community support for landscape management and conservation measures and effective participation from the outset. This was an area given prominence due to the series of very useful case studies presented on Tara, Bere Island, the Burren, Wicklow Uplands Council and The Irish Uplands Forum), which were all positive and optimistic. This contrasted with the sporadic references to the negativity surrounding the Clonmacnoise World Heritage Site designation process.

Contributions from the floor pointed out that if undertaken properly, consultation and participation can be extremely rewarding. Yet, there is a perception amongst various professionals of such work being intensive, time consuming, slow and potentially challenging, in that it requires resources and perhaps a shift in the way many organs of the State do their business. This process requires skilled and experienced people – effective and true participation does not just happen – it is conceived and designed, agreed, resourced, delivered and monitored throughout the life-time of the project.

Clearly, greater local engagement (i.e. bottom-up) is crucial in terms of creating ‘buy in’ for any landscape policy that involves designation or management strategies for particular landscapes. Indeed, harnessing local engagement from the outset will ultimately determine the success of the overall landscape programme and associated projects in Ireland.

The comments in Heather Thompson’s paper attributed to her colleague in Parks Canada were useful in this wider context:

‘This is not about Parks Canada, provincial agencies, or municipal governments. This is not about conservation, tourism, development, or history. This is about the future. It is about having a voice in ensuring the quality of our communities, building sustainable economies, determining what we want as a legacy for our children, for the future.’

5. Communication, Training and Public Awareness

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) states that '*landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and that it is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity*'.

This element of the Convention should be developed and built upon as a means to promote the wide-ranging value of our landscape and to re-imagine our 'sense of place' and 'sense of identity'.

Amongst others, the Scottish Government web-based facility www.placebookscotland.com (as mentioned by Ian Jardine, Chief Executive of Scottish Natural Heritage) is perhaps a mechanism to consider as a means to promote the development of the idea of place, or of landscape as an area of land perceived by people and given meaning and significance. Further consideration could also be given to the manner in which the Scottish Government has restructured its Scottish Executive to make it open and accessible and to work in an integrated manner. Indeed the manner in which the structure of government in Scotland has been transformed to reflect its modern day role can provide a useful pointer for us all.

In addition, landscape management training is fundamental to the overall success of the ELC and hence the NLS. As noted above, the Heritage Council has recently developed an all-island, multi-disciplinary *Introduction to Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) CPD Training Course* in partnership with eight professional institutes, Clare County Council and the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia. It is intended to roll this CPD training programme out in Ireland over the next two years. The feasibility of developing a landscape training exchange programme with the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia may also be examined. Council also intends to examine the feasibility of developing intermediate and advanced LCA CPD courses. Training programmes for community groups and local councillors is also an avenue that will be reviewed.

6. Acknowledgements and Summary

The Heritage Council would like to offer its sincere thanks to all those agencies – in Ireland, the UK and further afield, various groups and individuals, who contributed their time and efforts to the organisation and delivery of the conference and to the drafting of the follow-up conference report.

The Heritage Council intends to develop a *National Landscape Programme* in late 2009 based on the conference findings for implementation and delivery from 2010 onwards. This will build on the earlier 2006 Programme.

7. Further Information

For further information or additional copies of the Conference Report, please contact Anne Barcoe, of the Heritage Council, Tel 056 7770777 or abarcoe@heritagecouncil.ie.

Additional information including all conference papers is also available on the Heritage Council website at www.heritagecouncil.ie

Appendix A

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



THE IRISH LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE
14-16th October 2009
Final Programme

Tuesday 13th October

Early Registration 18:00 – 19:30

Wednesday 14th October

EUROPE AND BEYOND - *Chairman Michael Starrett*

- 8.30- 10 am** Registration and Coffee
- 10:00** “Landscape R Us”
Conor Newman, Chairman The Heritage Council
- 10:20** The Landscape Observatory of Catalonia
Joan Nogue, Director
- 11:00** Coffee Break
- 11:20** “Character and Convention”
Val Kirby, Head of Landscape and Geodiversity, Natural England
- 12:00** “Landscape and Culture”
Monica Luengo, International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes ICOMOS-IFLA
- 12:40** OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION
- 13:00** LUNCH
- 14:15** **Living Landscapes – Community Case Studies**
Chairman: Prof. Gabriel Cooney
- Bere Island Conservation Plan 2000- 2009 – *John Walsh*
 - Perspectives on farming community involvement in the management of the Burren – *Michael Davoren*
 - Challenges, Changes and Opportunities in the Irish Uplands – *Frank Nugent*
- 3 x 15 minute presentations followed by discussion and coffee
- 15:30** Regional Nature Parks – Pioneers of sustainable development in France
Bernard Guiheneuf, Director Park de Briere
- 16:00** “Unlocking the Rideau Canal: Planning for the Landscape of a World Heritage Site”
Heather Thomson, Parks Canada
- 16:30** “Taking the High Road”
Ian Jardine, Chief Executive, Scottish Natural Heritage
- 17:00** European Cooperation Session – *Workshop Hosted by Natural England*
- 20:00** DINNER

Thursday 15th October

BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME – Chairperson, Finola Reid

- 9:15** The Agricultural Landscape
Gerry Boyle – Director, Teagasc
- 10:00** The Environment and Landscape
Mary Kelly – Director General EPA
- 10:45** Coffee Break
- 11:00** Landscape & Tourism
Shaun Quinn – Chief Executive Failte Ireland
- 11:30** Recreation and the Landscape
Caro-lynn Ferris – Director Countryside Activities Network
- 12:00** Local Authorities and Landscape
Pat Gallagher, Offaly County Manager
- 12:30** OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION
- 13:00** LUNCH
- 14:15** **Living Landscapes - Community Case Studies** *Chairperson: Kealin Ireland*
- Looking around, Looking ahead in the Wicklow Uplands – *Colin Murphy*
 - Tara Skryne LCA – *Loretto Guinan*
 - The Landscape Circle – *Terry O’Regan*
- 3 x 15 minute presentations followed by discussion and coffee
- 15:30** Infrastructure and Landscape
Lisa Dolan, National Roads Authority
- 16:00** The Irish Coastal Landscape
Andrew Cooper – Professor of Coast Studies, University of Ulster
- 16:30** Forestry and the Landscape
John Landy – Manager Landscape Section, Coillte
- 19:00** Reception hosted by Offaly County Council
- 20:00** Conference Dinner

FRIDAY 16th October

Bringing It All Together- *Chairman: Conor Newman*

9:15 Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Mr. John Gormley TD

10:00 The European Landscape Convention
Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons – Head of Cultural Heritage Council of Europe

COFFEE BREAK

10:45 *Chairman: Michael Starrett*
Arrangements of Nature & People: using landscape ecology, coastal-region and urban-region lenses
Richard Forman, Professor of Landscape Ecology, Harvard University

11.30 The Irish Farmers Association
Pat Smith, Secretary General

12.15 Focus on the Future -
Conor Newman – Chairman The Heritage Council

OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION
Where to now? – Facilitated discussion

13:30 LIGHT LUNCH AND DEPARTURE

Appendix B: Tullamore European Co-operation Workshop Report

Tullamore Landscape Conference Wednesday 14th October 2009 Conference Workshop: European Co-operation Session Workshop Questionnaire Feedback

Approximately 60 people attended the workshop in the *Goodbody Suite* on Wednesday 14th October 2009, from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. The Natural-England sponsored Workshop was organised and managed by Alison Harvey (Heritage Council) and Pamela Harty (Planning Intern, Heritage Council), with Richard Partington (Natural England) and Amy Strecker (RECP-ENELC).

The **Key Objectives** for the European Co-operation Workshop are, as follows:

- i. To encourage networking and a deepening of working relationships between relevant key stakeholders and agencies involved in landscape management programmes and policy development in Europe;
- ii. To review existing and proposed European Landscape programmes and projects undertaken by Natural England, the Heritage Council and RECEP-ENELC, which promote European co-operation and exchange;
- iii. To present the key ‘lessons learned’ from relevant case studies of landscape programmes and projects and to share this information on a European-wide basis; and
- iv. To facilitate a participative session in order to influence and inform the Heritage Council’s submission to the emerging *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland*, in accordance with the key tenets of the European Landscape Convention (ELC):
<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/>.

Attendees were asked to discuss the following themes:

How do we enhance and encourage greater European Co-operation?

- *at a National level – e.g. legislation, structures, vehicles for exchange*
- *at a Regional/Local Level*
- *within Civil Society and the Corporate Economy*

The following team facilitated the workshop groups:

- i. Alison Harvey/Pamela Harty
- ii. Richard Partington/Amy Strecker
- iii. Ciaran Lynch
- iv. Marie Mannion
- v. Ruth Minogue
- vi. Emer Dolphin
- vii. Catherine Corcoran

The findings from the workshop and its evaluation are set out in the remainder of this appendix under the headings.

- National Level
- Regional Level
- Civil Society

An evaluation of the workshop is also included.

NATIONAL LEVEL
1. Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness at all levels in different sectors (e.g. heritage, land-use, nature and culture) of the wide-ranging benefits of best practice landscape management for all sectors of society • Identified need for positive, enabling, visionary legislation (e.g. a Landscape Act)
2. Legislation/Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for statutory definitions of landscape terms. Identified need for common definitions/language of landscape terms • Need for discussion and debate on Irish Constitution (e.g. Art 4 and Art 43, private rights versus the common good) • Need for research on the area of ‘ownership of the landscape’ • Gap analysis: analyse existing legislation versus E.L.C. requirements. Proof a county development plan against the E.L.C. • Consider the philology and language of landscape policy with a more positive rather than preventative approach • Need for inter-departmental interaction on landscape at all levels of governance. Each level should be required to produce landscape guidelines • Establish National Landscape Character Areas • Follow model of national policy on Architecture and their E.U. structures
3. Public Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top Down and Bottom Up approach is required to increase E.U. Co-operation • Irish Government needs to comply with E.L.C. • Irish Government should participate actively and fully in existing framework for co-operation already established by the Council of Europe (e.g. conferences and workshops) • Co-operation on the preparation of a national L.C.A./N.L.S. • Seek national support from stakeholder bodies for the development of a participative N.L.S.
4. Integration

- An all-island approach should be taken to landscape matters- *“Landscape knows no boundaries”*
- E.U. structures already in place, Ireland needs a body/agency to strengthen links with E.U.
- Ireland needs to become more involved in E.U. landscape meetings.
- Strengthen, widen and deepen links with the landscape agencies within the E.U., including Natural England

5. Other

- Need to establish a ‘Champion’ to promote landscape issues and projects etc.
- Initiatives need to be taken at highest level. DoEHLG needs to take the lead
- Promote concept of landscape as a ‘public good’
- The Heritage Council should promote the role of the Heritage Officers to advance the ‘buy-in’ of County Managers Association to adopt an integrated approach to the E.L.C. and the value of L.C.A. to the Development Plan
- Interpretation (e.g. use of TV programmes)
- Create a sense of place- pride, ‘places’ vs ‘non-places’
- Green Corridors- linked to quality of life
- Looking at specifics- balancing energy demands versus landscape protection
- Enforcement needed at a national level
- Explore E.U. funding opportunities
- Avoidance of jargon
- Importance of Designed Landscapes
- Examples from abroad- we should look to Catalonia Landscape Observatory for guidance. We should review other E.U. states’ work on this area.
- Identify good-practice examples

REGIONAL/LOCAL LEVEL
1. Education/ Increase Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local authorities should join RECEP-ENELC • Increase awareness- use existing networks and structures (e.g. voluntary and community networks and Heritage Fora) to increase awareness and knowledge of landscape • Awareness should be created locally first • Need to cultivate an awareness and understanding of the existence of both ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ landscapes • Local Authorities need to up-skill/ re-train staff • Local agencies (e.g. LEADER) need to up-skill. Support and enhance Tidy Town Groups, Golden Mile groups etc. • Need for research • Twinning regional/local authorities with other E.U. states
2. Legislation/ Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of landscape into local planning policies, plans and projects • Biodiversity Habitats are protected under Directives and enhanced through Natura 2000 sites- must be incorporated into national statutory spatial planning system • Regional Planning Guidelines- need guidance • Promote the inclusion of landscape in all planning policy
3. Public Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage MEPs locally • Empowering local people- good, open relationships, trust • Local Authorities need to be open, accountable and approachable • ‘Ask not Tell’- process needs to be participative
4. Integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An all-island approach should be taken on landscape matters
5. Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require an intermediate body greater than Local Authorities (i.e. similar to Greater Dublin Authority)

Authority)

- Identified need for a standard assessment process for landscape assessment at local authority level and necessary training for practitioners (Heritage Council), community groups and local representatives
- E.U. funded partner projects
- Local Authorities need to designate a 'point of contact' within their organisations to deal with landscape issues
- Incentivise compliance with E.L.C.- use 'polluter-pays concept'
- Need to establish a 'Champion' to promote landscape issues and projects etc.
- Pilot a regional project

CIVIL SOCIETY/ CORPORATE ECONOMY

1. Education/ Increasing Awareness

- Education- Local Authorities need to increase awareness of the benefits of landscape management through education, heritage education programmes and youth clubs etc.
- Heritage and Landscape should be included in primary and post-primary curriculum
- Education system should be encouraged to commence and continue a landscape engagement process based upon the structure of the E.L.C.
- Role of Service providers in increasing awareness
- Promotion of landscape through a Landscape Award- see E.L.C. also
- Research needed on economic value of landscapes

2. Legislation/Policy

- A national landscape policy strategy is needed asap
- Identify different levels of governance in parallel with Civil Society

3. Public Participation

- Bottom Up- Top Down approach needed
- Use joint communities to promote joint action on landscape
- We need to identify tools to enable society to engage with and participate in the maintenance of

<p>their landscape (e.g. the Landscape Circle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the importance of community groups in local landscape management • Establish workshops with local communities- identify what's important to their area- 'value of landscape'
<p>4. Integration</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified the need for a dedicated agency (e.g. The Heritage Council) to effectively encourage and enhance E.L.C. implementation and cooperation • Need to identify national and umbrella organisations that provide access to Civil Society. We need to generate discussion and engagement with landscape with Irish society before we can implement European Co-operation • All all-island approach should be taken to landscape matters
<p>5. Other</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban landscapes are often overlooked- E.L.C. includes urban and per-urban areas • Access to landscape is vitally important • More discussion needed on 'land-less' rural dwellers- establish/create a forum to discuss landscape management issues at different levels (e.g. national, regional etc.) • Landscapes sponsored by corporate bodies- look at business sponsorship of the Arts Model • We need to lobby government and E.U. to encourage action. • The role of designers of places and society. Award for Sustainable Landscape Design projects (e.g. Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment and Awards Scheme - see www.ceequal.com) • Recognising community desire for value on place. Need to value landscape- view it as an asset

Tullamore Workshop 'Evaluation' – Feedback from Attendees

Three Questions asked at the end of the workshop session:

- 1. Personally, what was the most useful aspect of today's workshop?**
- 2. In your opinion, what needs to happen next if we are to increase co-operation on landscape matters across the EU?**
- 3. What might you do as a result of things that we have discussed today?**

Question 1: Personally, what was the most useful aspect of today’s workshop?

Results:

Best bit was discussing how local approach can dovetail with a national framework	Ideas from different people
Commonality of purpose	More workshops needed – too much talk/lectures
Understanding what is meant by the word ‘landscape’	Wider perspective
Hearing reality of political issues of promoting landscapes, e.g. Scotland	The opportunity to think and listen
Meeting such a great bunch of people from various agencies	The ideas from other areas and the audience’s openness to these ideas
Information on other countries and project that share information	Opportunity to engage with other delegates
Hearing the consensus around the room	Presentation from RECEP-ENELC and discussions
Presentations useful but too long given the number we had already been through	Experience sharing
Today was good to hear other angles on the same issues	Communication about various issues – good to hear other views from different backgrounds
Resource materials i.e. websites	Talks were good
Engaging in discussion with individuals working in different sectors	Group work, which enabled me to hear the views of various actors
Engagement with local communities	Awareness of EU Initiatives
Becoming more aware of the ELC and need to implement in Ireland nationally and locally	Talk around tables/groupwork
Round table interaction	Useful exchange on bottom up/top down arguments about implementation
Contact with different disciplines and interest groups	The idea that community education/involvement will be vital to the success of this initiative
Useful discussing landscape with people of different backgrounds	I loved the group the group discussion – very lively
Recognition in the workshop that the people of Ireland are physically alienated from experiencing, accessing, their coastal landscapes, natural landscapes	

Question 2: In your opinion, what needs to happen next if we are to increase co-operation on landscape matters across the EU?

Results:

Develop National Guidelines	Lobby for implementation of ELC in national legislation
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Sister organisations from different countries need to talk to each other	National Strategy and funding
Ireland needs to take its responsibilities under ELC seriously	Twinning, exchange models of best practice at an EU level
Get it moving here	Co-operation between agencies and departments, etc
More information needed	Government needs to show leadership a take the responsibility seriously
Legislative framework needed	Groups from Ireland need to visit 'good practice' example in Europe
Landscape needs a higher profile	Implement the ELC
Get our act together in Ireland	Animate local community to take landscape seriously
Reinterpret peoples' issues in terms of landscape	Take it seriously at home first in order to co-operate on landscape
Get an accessible definition	Need to disseminate the information the conference has generated
Focus on bottom up approach	Link landscape to peoples' reality at local level
Ireland to legislate and join ENELC	Encourage awareness and sense of place
Need to make concept of landscape more relevant and benefits of a landscape approach more tangible	Need to explain clearly and unambiguously what landscape means
Need a champion for landscape at Ireland level – what made DEFRA give Natural England the ELC budget and job?	

Question 3: What might you do as a result of things that we have discussed today?

Results:

Consider how landscape issues might be enhanced in RPGs	Include landscape topics and discussions in my work with communities and schools
Share creative ideas about how to engage people in landscapes ...and encourage Canada to sign on to the ELC	Engage in national policy
Call the boss and get things moving!	National Plan and funding
Will look more into Natural England	Will consider my work in landscape context/landscape in work context
Speak to colleagues about the landscape agenda	Incorporate into research
Consider how international practice and experience might be studies	See how landscape might integrate with other EU actions, e.g. GEOLAND, GMES, EUROLAND, etc.

Produce Placebook for Fingal	Push the ideas within my own organisation with more purpose
Drive the landscape concept forward in the Burren (Clare and Galway)	Incorporate some ideas from today into our UDF
Finding a champion for landscape at governmental level	Bring some of ideas into Lough Derg Study
Continue to promote wider Heritage Education in the Burren and Highlands	Make a slide show of our county's landscape
Apply ELC and LCA concepts locally	Sleep better!
Network more with heritage people on planning	Lobby!
Think more about landscape	Kick my colleagues!
Do a bit for my own locality	Undertake LCA CPD training and check the websites mentioned
Check the draft CDP for LCA	

Acknowledgements

The Heritage Council would like to thank Natural England and the RECEP-ENELC for sponsoring the European Co-operation Workshop at the Tullamore Conference.

Appendix C

Address by the

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government,

Mr. John Gormley, T.D.,

at

The Irish National Landscape Conference 2009,

Tullamore Court Hotel,

Friday 16 October, 2009.

Introduction

Mr Chairman, Members of the Heritage Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen

The great physicist, Marie Curie, said “All my life through, the new sights of nature made me rejoice like a child”. There have been times in my own life when this sentiment has truly resonated with me; times when I have had the absolute pleasure of being in and casting my eyes over some of our wonderful Irish landscapes – the Burren, the Céide Fields Connemara, the Tara Skryne valley, the Wicklow uplands to mention but a few.

The landscape agenda has rightly emerged to become a mainstream national objective through Ireland’s ratification of the European Landscape Convention and its coming into force in 2004. This conference has been a great opportunity to consider the full range of issues affecting landscape, what is being done at home and internationally to protect our landscapes, and what challenges remain for all of us.

In keeping with the theme of today’s Session “Bringing it all back home” let me take a few minutes to bring together the related pieces of work that we have undertaken in this area over the last few years. The work already undertaken forms key inputs to the development of a National Landscape Strategy to give widespread acceptance to the establishment and implementation of policies aimed at the active management and protection of our landscape. I will talk more about this shortly.

National Monuments

On being appointed as a Minister one of my first tasks was to deal with the legacy of previous decisions in relation to the M3 and the possible impacts on the Hill of Tara and the surrounding landscape. I was of the opinion then and I am still of the same opinion that our legislative code needed to be strengthened to offer further protection to our national monuments and associated landscapes.

In September 2007, I initiated a major review of archaeological policy and practice with the aim of making our approach to protecting Ireland’s archaeological heritage the best that there could be, drawing from the experience and advice of experts both at home and internationally.

I appointed an Expert Advisory Committee - comprised of a number of the participants at this conference amongst others - to steer this process. The Committee reported to me earlier this year and based on their recommendations, work on the drafting of a consolidated and updated National Monuments legislative code is now well advanced. I hope to bring the outline of the Bill to Government shortly.

The Bill will deal with a wide range of issues but of specific relevance to the theme of this conference, is the draft provisions providing for a new system for the identification, registration and conservation of historic landscapes. The Bill will provide for a statutory definition of ‘*historic landscape*’ and recognition of that landscape based on specific criteria.

Two levels of protection are anticipated: the first would encompass a small number of iconic landscapes, to be known as ‘*Outstanding Historic Landscapes*’ and the second would be comprised of ‘*Special Historic Landscapes*’ which would be more locally based complexes of archaeological monuments.

Our archaeological, architectural, historical and cultural heritage – from the spectacular to the ordinary - connects us in a tangible way to the long period of human settlement on this island. I am confident that the new legislative proposals in their totality, when approved by Government and enacted by the Oireachtas, will provide the appropriate framework for the identification, conservation and appreciation of that heritage.

TARA SKRYNE PILOT

In the years since the enactment of the 2000 Planning and Development Act, there has been no opportunity to test the provisions in the Act on landscape conservation.

This gap is being addressed and a Landscape Conservation Area Plan is now under development for one of our most precious landscapes, the Tara-Skryne Valley. I know that this has already been set out in detail by Dr Loreto Guinan of Meath County Council.

This pilot is a partnership between Meath County Council, my Department and the Heritage Council, working with the local community and stakeholders in a collaborative and participative manner.

The Tara Skryne Landscape will continue to evolve over time and the challenge is to influence and manage this change in a positive manner while ensuring that future generations have the opportunity to learn from, appreciate and enjoy the character and values of this special place.

The overall aim of the project is to develop a framework to manage change in a manner which will safeguard the character and heritage values of this landscape. Most importantly the project will work to identify the benefits to be derived from landscape management for all who live in, work or visit Tara-Skryne.

Planning Bill

One of the most significant engines of change in our environment is the Planning system.

This system has not always worked in the way I believe it should. I have stated recently in the Dáil and Seanad my firm belief that Ireland has suffered from chronic over zoning with the attendant, social, environmental, economic and cultural consequences this entails. I am determined that we will have an evidence based rationale for future development – what needs to be done, where it should be done and why it should be done.

Strong action to deal with this issue is contained in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill. The Bill requires much tighter management of land zoning to ensure that the location and quantum of land zoned for development is in line with regional and local targets for growth over the period of the development plan.

Guidance on issues such as sustainable residential development, wind farm development and flood risk management also have much greater legal force under the Bill.

I will also provide for a legislative definition of ‘landscape’ in the Bill based on the definition set out in the European Landscape Convention.

WORLD HERITAGE

I see from the conference programme that you have had the pleasure of presentations on the importance of landscape and world heritage. We are blessed with two wonderful World Heritage sites in Ireland – Brú na Bóinne and Skellig Michael.

The reality is that our World Heritage programme has been in abeyance for a number of years, a situation that I am now rectifying.

As a first step, I appointed an Advisory Group last year to carry out a review of Ireland’s World Heritage Sites Tentative List which was last reviewed in 1992. This list sets out the sites that will be considered for nomination to the World Heritage List.

The draft Tentative List has now been finalised and I will publish it shortly.

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON ARCHITECTURE 2009-2015

Last week, I launched the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015, *Towards a Sustainable Future: Delivering Quality within the Built Environment*.

While the primary focus of this new policy is on sustainable development of the built environment and urban design, there is a strong recognition in the policy of the relationship between architecture and the wider environment. It also highlights the value of the creation and support of communities by integrating urban and landscape design, urban and building conservation and architectural quality criteria at every level in the planning process.

INVENTORY OF HISTORIC GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

At a recent European awards ceremony in Sicily the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in my Department was awarded a prize in the Research category of the Europa Nostra Awards for an “*Inventory of Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes*”.

The jury’s report on the project commented “*The methodological approach toward Irish landscape and gardens has generated much interest among the Jury. This research permitted the setting up of an identification and classification system for gardens that could be used as a prototype for a general inventory of European parks and gardens.*”

This inventory is the first stage of a project that attempts to develop our understanding of Ireland’s historic gardens and designed landscapes. The scientific data gathered recording the extent and features of this great national asset will help inform our decision-making into the future.

National Landscape Strategy

It is clear that a number of key building blocks have now been put in place and are sufficiently advanced to allow us to push forward with developing a National Landscape Strategy. The Steering Group charged with overseeing this process has been reconstituted under my Department’s Chairmanship. The aim is to ensure the delivery of a draft National Landscape Strategy for public consultation by the middle of next year at the latest. While this is a challenging target I am confident that it will be achieved.

National Landscape Character Assessment

I am also pleased to announce this morning that in parallel with the preparation of the National Landscape Strategy, work will now also proceed on the development of a National Landscape Character Assessment. This will provide baseline data at national and regional level and provide a reference framework to inform the implementation of the National Landscape Strategy.

The Steering Group and its wider Consultative Panel will be meeting in plenary session here this afternoon to take this initiative forward.

CONCLUSION

We are making significant changes to the way we, as a people, approach the management of our landscape.

I am confident that through the changes to our National Monuments and Planning legislation we will have a strong legal code needed to protect our landscapes. The other key measures I have outlined culminating now with the development of the National Landscape Strategy, will ensure that Ireland is in the best possible position to promote landscape management and planning and to ensure that generations to come will continue to enjoy this precious gift.

Thank you.

**Appendix D: European Landscape Convention (ELC) – Summary of
General and Specific Measures**

Article 5 General Measures	Article 6: Specific Measures	Article 7: Policies and Programme
A. Recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity.	a. Awareness-raising: Each party undertakes to increase awareness among the civil society, private organisations, and public authorities of the values of landscapes, their role and changes to them.	The Convention shall allow international and programme more accessible. To that end, awareness of the problem shall be an active part of their ideas in the composition of Expert Article 10 Convention Council shall engage landscape other international in particular European as well as government
B. To establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning through the adoption of specific measures set out in Article 6	b. Training and Education: Training for specialists in landscape appraisal and operations; Multidisciplinary training programmes in landscape policy, protection, management and planning, for professionals in the private and public sectors and for associations concerned; and school and university courses, which in the relevant subject areas, address the values attaching to landscapes and the issues raised by their protection, management and planning.	
C. To 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	c. Identification and Assessment: 1. With the view to active participation of the interested parties, as stipulated in Article 5.c., and with a view to improving knowledge of its landscape, each party undertakes: a to identify its own landscapes throughout its territory to analyse their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them to take note of changes b. to assess the landscapes thus identified, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by interested parties and the population concerned. 2. International co-operation will encourage countries to take action, pool knowledge and experience concerning landscape, landscape value and current problems and policies, and identify the landscape or problems that warrant international attention	
D. to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.	d. Landscape quality objectives: Each party undertakes to define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation in accordance with Article 5.c.	
	e. Implementation: To put landscape policies into effect, each party undertakes to introduce instruments aimed at protecting, managing and/or planning the landscape.	

**Appendix E: Analysis of Tullamore Conference Papers in the context
of the European Landscape Convention (ELC)**