The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015 -2025

What Next? – Starting to implement the National Landscape Strategy

Workshop Outcomes Report

November 26th 2015

Supported by

An Roinn Ealaion, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council
# Table of Contents

1. **Background** .......................................................................................................................... 2
   1.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 2
   1.2 Workshop Attendees ........................................................................................................... 3

2. **After the Publication of the National Landscape Strategy – What’s next?** .......................... 4
   2.1 The mind map ................................................................................................................... 4
   2.2 Prioritising topics for further detailed discussion .............................................................. 6
   2.3 The collective agenda ........................................................................................................ 7

3. **Outcomes of group discussions** ......................................................................................... 8
   3.1 National Landscape Character Assessment, Scale, etc...................................................... 8
   3.2 Community and Local Authority Capacity ....................................................................... 8
   3.3 Resources and phasing of National Landscape Strategy ..................................................... 9
   3.4 Raising awareness, education, involvement ..................................................................... 10
   3.5 Guidelines and Methodologies ........................................................................................ 10
   3.6 Wider Drivers / Policy hooks .......................................................................................... 12

4. **Next Steps to effective implementation of the NLS in Ireland** ................................. 13
1 Background

1.1 Introduction

On 26th November, 2015 a seminar was held in the Beresford Hotel, Dublin, with the aim of exploring new developments in Landscape Character Assessment and ways of implementing the National Landscape Strategy. The open invitation seminar was organised by the Irish Landscape Institute.

With the launch of the National Landscape Strategy (NLS) in May 2015, Ireland has a valuable opportunity to enhance and expand the use of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) as a useful guide to strategic land-use decision-making in Ireland - north and south. We are presented with an opportunity to ensure that the new methodologies and standards are useful to planners, infrastructure developers, landscape and urban managers and those involved in heritage and tourism.

In Ireland, LCA – using a range of approaches – has informed county development plan policy for strategic rural land use (renewable energy particularly), in development management, and at a local level through community-led village design statements. However, with no robust national guidelines on methodology or use of LCA in place, this potentially useful decision-making tool has had limited further impact or reach within the planning system, particularly within urban and peri-urban areas and also outside of planning.

Northern Ireland is about to launch an updated Regional LCA, which requires a response along the border counties within the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and there are many examples across Europe of LCA being used effectively, with countries evolving methodologies to suit their particular needs based on unique forces for change. Their progress and experience can be utilised as a catalyst for the next phase of LCA in Ireland, now set in motion by the publication of the NLS (and its 19 specific actions) by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
1.2 Workshop Attendees

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nameeta Baviskar-Bruton</td>
<td>Cunnane Strattan Renoylds / ILI</td>
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<td>Darren Burke</td>
<td>Kerry County Council</td>
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<td>Richard Butler (^2)</td>
<td>Cunnane Strattan Renoylds / ILI</td>
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<td>Willie Cumming (^3)</td>
<td>Dept of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</td>
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<td>JJ Digby</td>
<td>Digby Brady</td>
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<td>Helena Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Blackstairs Farming for Conservation Group</td>
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<td>Karen Foley</td>
<td>UCD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willie Cumming (^3)</td>
<td>Dept of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Waldvogel</td>
<td>Landscape Architect Forestbird Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art McCormack</td>
<td>Passive House Academy/Mosart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Merkle</td>
<td>SLR Consulting Ireland</td>
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<td>Ruth Minogue</td>
<td>Minogue and Associates</td>
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<td>Darragh Mullen</td>
<td>Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Murray</td>
<td>South Dublin Co.Co.</td>
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<td>Kinta Oakes</td>
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<td>Eoin O’Brien</td>
<td>DLRCoCo</td>
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<td>Eimear O’Connor</td>
<td>SLR Consulting</td>
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<td>Terry O’Regan</td>
<td>Landscape Architect, FILI</td>
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<td>Nicki Slattery</td>
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<td>Carol Smyth</td>
<td>Kildare Co Co</td>
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<td>Christina Todd</td>
<td>Landscape Architect AECOM</td>
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<td>Ciaran Treacy (^4)</td>
<td>Leitrim County Council / Irish Planning Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Tudor (^5)</td>
<td>Natural England</td>
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<td>Mary Tubridy</td>
<td>Irish Uplands Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Waldvogel</td>
<td>Landscape Architect Forestbird Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Williams (^6)</td>
<td>Transport Infrastructure Ireland / ILI</td>
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**Workshop facilitators:** Deirdre Black, *Deirdre Black Associates*, Alison Harvey \(^7\), *Heritage Council*

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\(^1\) Some names are yet to be gathered

\(^2\) Speaker during the morning session – *Introduction*

\(^3\) Speaker during the morning session – *The National Landscape Strategy, Fundamentals and Implementation*

\(^4\) Speaker during the morning session – *LCA and the Planning System*

\(^5\) Speaker during the morning session – *LCA methodology, latest developments in the UK*

\(^6\) Speaker during the morning session – *LCA Applied in Northern Ireland*

\(^7\) Speaker during the morning session – *Public Participation and LCA*
2 After the Publication of the National Landscape Strategy – What’s next?

2.1 The mind map

To start, responding to the question of “What’s Next?” people voiced their ideas and these were captured graphically on the mind map.

The following is a summary of the topics of discussion during the 30 minute mind-mapping exercise:

National Landscape Character Assessment
Need to appraise where we are now
Need a clear Project Manager approach to National Landscape Character Assessment
Be clear about who will use it
Set out how to do a NLCA – and at what scale?
What guidelines or methodology should be used?
It’s urgent
Look to Northern Ireland approach
Set an agreed language – borrow and adapt
Procurement – the brief needs to be clear
Can be done with GIS by public agencies
Do only to Landscape Character Type at this point?
The National Landscape Character Assessment is a starting point – a Framework
Use 3D GIS
Include technical aspects e.g. field drainage
A National Landscape Character Assessment provides a national cultural heritage context
Cultural heritage important at local level
Landscape is not just rural
Music, literature, art, poetry and site work

Community involvement
European Landscape Convention recognises community groups as essential
Needs investment in civic structures to be meaningful
Concerns about quality and capacity at Local Authority level - are there enough Landscape
Architecture professional resources?
Need for capacity building
Identify barriers to participation
Landscape change does not mean sterilization

Resources
Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) are coordinators of the National Landscape
Strategy – they have to find resources
DAHG will carry out a National Landscape Character Assessment in 2016
Lack of National Spatial Strategy a problem and an opportunity
National Planning Framework (NPF) underway- complete within 3 years. The National Landscape
Character Assessment a key resource for the NPF
Roadshow – link to policy hooks? Encourage people to make submissions?
Role of Regional Assemblies to be confirmed
Utilise existing resources e.g. Office of Public Works and flood mapping, e.g. MyPlan
Resources at Local Authority level can be converted – good project management needed
Phasing linked to resources
Need co-ordination, champion
Need for landscape architects in DoECLG/DAHG

“Mainstreaming” Landscape
Streamlining policy
Policies and laws – can contradict each other, e.g. tree felling/forestry/1946 Act
A legislative review of all policy required
Climate Change considerations

Drivers and facilitators of NLS implementation
A need to accommodate radical character change?
Rural development, or lack of.....
Public discourse and development pressure
Purpose needed
Agri-environmental targets
Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment
Flooding and coastal erosion
Local Authorities – understanding impact of development on character
Need for policy ‘hooks’ – “the strategy says” e.g. An Bord Pleanála is more bound by National Landscape Strategy than County Development Plans
Mandatory legislation is required – e.g. trees are not legally protected in relation to Strategic Infrastructure Development
References to landscape in Planning Bills are slight
Translate National Landscape Strategy into law – need for Landscape Act?
Take advantage of Planning Amendments to legislation
SEA, EIA, AA and UNECE Aarhus Directives drive National Landscape Strategy implementation

Increased public awareness and involvement
Landscape Observatories
One way to give everyone a voice
Not only about the visual but about the landscape resource
Landscape not just rural
Education
EU best practice?

2.2 Prioritising topics for further detailed discussion........

Attendees then, using sticky spots, prioritised what they felt were the most important aspects of National Landscape Strategy Implementation to prioritise for further discussion through in-depth group work.
2.3 The collective agenda

These are the key topics that the room voted to explore in more detail in smaller groups over the course of 45 minutes – many stayed longer to continue the discussion. The conversations were recorded on boards and are summarized in the following “Outcomes” section.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>National LCA, scale brief / NI connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community; Local Authority capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Resources + phasing of NLS implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A roadshow? – raising awareness + involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Guidelines / methodologies</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Wider drivers / policy hooks?</td>
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3 Outcomes of group discussions

3.1 National Landscape Character Assessment, Scale, etc.

- Do NLCA! Asap (within 12 months)
- National Landscape character Assessment at 1:50,000 or 1:100,000
- Use Landscape Character Types
- Collaborate fully with Northern Ireland and UK/Europe
- Use Northern Ireland LCA brief and methodology and outputs
- Prepare and issue National Landscape Character Assessment within 12 months!
- Talk to Northern Ireland and LIFT
- Agree (prelim) Landscape Character Assessment Glossary for Ireland
- Develop and “improve” scope based on Northern Ireland documents
- Marry mapping systems from Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland
- Review Landscape Character Assessment work done to date in Ireland
- DAHG/DoECLG and other Department collaboration
- Facilitate Local Authority and other scales e.g. Landscape Circle
- Champions from Minister to local
- Collect all Irish datasets – OPW/NPWS/GSI etc.

3.2 Community and Local Authority Capacity

- Relationship between National Landscape Character Assessment and Local Landscape Character Assessment – translate people’s values
- Social impact assessment
- Local Authorities; consultation vs. participation
• NOT “business as usual”!
• Public perception and trust – is Local Authority structure/planning appropriate?
• Landscape describing character and areas
• Roadshow – use existing groups; ICA, GAA, IFA, Chambers, Youth Groups
• Education, building capacity – generic terms and understanding
• National – larger scale
• Local Character Areas – Local scale
• Support for Upland Partnership groups
• How to deal with Landscapes on County boundaries?
• Role of National Landscape Character Assessment - what defines the character?
• Knowledge retention and transfer
• Consistent typologies for character areas
• Local Authorities mentoring other Local Authorities
• How to train relevant persons in Local Authorities?
• LCEP Framework
• EU Funding – training/facilitators?
• Regional Authority – structural funds?
• Partnership approach? – Local Development Agencies

3.3 Resources and phasing of National Landscape Strategy

• Do National Landscape Character Assessment –
  1. Define Scope
  2. Desk Study
  3. Field Study
  4. Classification and Description
• Identify Champion/lead
• Identify need for LCA
• Lead – set up a project team – identify and pull in funding
• Set up Advisory Group of experts to inform brief
• Knowledgeable team – identify skills needed
• Advisory → Project Team → BRIEF → decide if done in house or tender → Identify resources (people/finance)
• Skills required: landscape architect, planner, biodiversity, GIS, Linguist, community
• In house (national and local government), External (private) - all together
• Rural and Urban – Northern Ireland LCA brief as staring point
• Identify all necessary databases
• GIS, historic, cultural, agri, soils, planning, geology, community, landscape, language, Gaeltacht
• Identify literature, poets, artists

December 2015
• Phasing depends on who does the work
• EU funding? Lottery? €?
• Draft NLCA → Stakeholder engagement
• Once done – who manages NLCA?

3.4 Raising awareness, education, involvement

• Stakeholder “overseers”
• Reinvent Tidy Towns
• Engage with Transition Year “Landscape Module”
• Social media and crowd sourcing information to capture local knowledge
• How to record information and opinions in consistent manner?
• Public consultations, world café
• Social structures e.g. GAA local clubs
• Explain local knowledge is important – e.g. field names, holy wells, farming methods and landscape management
• 1916 – National Landscape Character Assessment and public involvement opportunities?
• Sell/value landscape and townscape and streetscape (Fáilte Ireland)
• Engage Teagasc etc.

3.5 Guidelines and Methodologies

Priorities

• Methodologies and guidelines to be prepared for 3 levels of assessment:
  - National LCA
  - County (or regional, or river basin?) LCA
  - Local/town/neighbourhood LCA

• For each level (particularly lower 2 levels), methodology and guidelines must define:
  - Method
  - Data sets & sources
  - Output – content, themes, format
  - Stakeholders and public participation
  - Stipulate who should be involved, e.g.
- Local Authority Planners, Heritage Officer, County Architect
- Landscape Architects
- Landscape Archaeologists and Historians

• **Considerations for drawing up guidelines:**
  - *Collaborative guidelines* – non-administrative boundaries
  - *Other resources/capacity/data?*
    - Geological Institute
    - River Basin District
  Potential roles for
  - Academic Research informing guidelines / ongoing research
  - Landscape Research groups / Universities and Institutes of Technology
    Landscape Research universities – role (data, focus, resources to contribute/lead)

**1a: National Landscape Character Assessment**

*Process:*
- 2-D mapping process, GIS based – the necessary starting point
- Use Northern Ireland method as baseline
- Likely data sets:
  - Topography
  - Hydrological pattern
  - Landcover
  - Urban centres & geodirectory
  - Geology
  - Drainage
  - CORINE land maps
  - FIPS (Forestry)
  - Roads infrastructure
  - Other?

**1b: County Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines (Section 28)**

– if not County, then regions, or river basins (for which data centres and sets will already be available)?

*Process:*
- 3-D mapping
- Visual Units
- Visual Perception of form
- Spatial Character (Local and Regional)
- Historic land ownership – factor in landscape evaluation
- IMAGE UNITS e.g. Slieve na Mon forming a unit around itself
• Townscape
  o Fringe belts/zones edge
  o Suburban fragment
  o Urban morphological character

1c: Local, Town, Neighborhood Landscape Character Assessment
(Reference Kevin Lynch for urban character)

3.6 Wider Drivers / Policy hooks

• Public opposition to change / development pressure
• Large infrastructural developments
• Fáilte Ireland – looking for landscape advice
• Multi-functional landscapes
• Signatory of European Landscape Convention
• Agriculture – Local and National I:D
• SEA – Landscape an SEA parameter
• National Planning Framework
• FOOD PRODUCE - “Achill lamb” – West Cork Fuchsia brand
• Recreation
• Management response founded on character
• Other directives – WFD, Floods, Marine, Renewables
• Tidy Towns, sense of place, landscape and local level
• Vulnerable landscape → Baseline Landscape Character Assessment
• Landscape champions
• National Landscape Strategy Booklet
• Education Primary /Secondary – landscape relevant
4 Next Steps to effective implementation of the NLS in Ireland

The seminar and workshop has identified and prioritised a range of projects, approaches and collaborations which will progress the roll out of the 19 Actions within the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland. Events such as these are effective in harnessing the collective intelligence of the room, clear debate of the influencing factors as well as facilitating information sharing and capacity building amongst participants.

We recommend a key next step is a similar facilitated event including DAHG and key government departments, agencies, core partners and stakeholders. The aim of this event would be to collectively devise and agree an Implementation Programme in line with Action 19 of the NLS which sets out the approach to implementation;

Action 19: The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, with the active assistance of other relevant departments, agencies, core partners and stakeholders, will co-ordinate and set in place an implementation programme to assist in the delivery of actions as set out in the Strategy.

DAHG/Other Departments and Agencies

Participants would be given enough time and resources to prepare in advance of the event, so that input on the day is robust. The key to success for this event will be to have a variety of participants who have:

- the authority to act;
- resources of time,
- access and influence;
- expertise in the topic;
- information that others need, and
- a real stake in the outcome

The Irish Landscape Institute is keen to collaborate with the DAHG and other relevant organisations and partners in the planning and facilitation of such an event – an important step in the effective, joined-up and timely delivery of the National Landscape Strategy for the benefit of Irish citizens and the sensible management of landscape change.

Workshop Outcomes Report collated by Deirdre Black, MILI on behalf of the Irish Landscape Institute

For further information on future Irish Landscape Institute events please see www.irishlandscapeinstitute.com