

PRESS RELEASE

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UK Landscape Award finalists announced

Six world-class UK landscapes are announced today as final contenders for the first-ever UK Landscape Awards. The finalists are:

- A twenty-five-year campaign to improve the Mersey Basin
- Restoration of the Durham Heritage Coast – previously an industrial wasteland
- Creation of spectacular spaces and streets in the heart of Sheffield
- Community-led rebuilding of Baxter Park, Dundee in Scotland
- Conservation of the hill forts and heather moorland of Denbighshire in Wales
- Regeneration of Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland

All are vying for the title of UK Landscape of the Year. The winner will represent the UK in the European Landscape Award which takes place in Strasbourg in March 2011.

Natural Environment Minister, Richard Benyon said: “Whether you’re in a town or in the countryside there are areas around us that we should rightly be proud of. A good landscape makes us feel part of a community and gives a sense of pride in where we live.

“This award celebrates the best landscapes in the UK and I would like to congratulate all the finalists and wish the overall winner luck in representing the UK at the European competition next year.”

Helen Phillips, Natural England Chief Executive says, “All landscapes are important. They form the link between human society and the natural world and provide vital natural support services – such as food, clean water, climate change regulation, flood prevention and, of course recreation. The variety of landscapes included in today’s Awards - from the transformed heritage coastline in Durham to a bustling city-based network of green spaces in Sheffield -

showcase what can be achieved when communities and partners come together to support the landscapes around them.”

Professor Keith Nicholson, a board member of Scottish Natural Heritage says, “We are really pleased to see the Dundee project win the Scottish heat of the award, getting the recognition it deserves. This project has demonstrated real commitment to sustainable landscape in the local community. It has transformed a local facility in a way that will benefit people for many years. Looking after our landscapes is a responsibility shared by everyone. The Dundee project has embraced that responsibility wholeheartedly and we wish it every success in the finals.”

The overall UK winner will be announced at the *UK Landscape Conference* to be held in Liverpool from 8 November. The winner will go forward as the UK’s entry to the ‘Landscape Award of the Council of Europe’ which will be decided by the Council of Europe in March 2011.

Full details of all schemes are available: www.uklandscapeaward.org/results

FINALISTS

Mersey Basin Campaign submitted by Healthy Waterways Trust



After being established in 1985 the Mersey Basin Campaign successfully completed its 25 year programme in March 2010 having achieved a profound impact on the landscape of the North West of England through its dedication and commitment to its three key aims: to improve water quality across the Mersey Basin; to stimulate attractive waterside developments; and to encourage people to value and cherish their watercourses and waterfront environments. MBC has been exemplary in realising sustainable development through brokering public/private partnership and engaging directly with communities.

Durham Heritage Coast submitted by Durham Heritage Coast Partnership



From Sunderland to Hartlepool, the Durham Heritage Coast has emerged from its industrial past to an area worthy of Heritage Coast status with one of the finest coastlines in England. Where previously colliery waste was tipped onto the beaches in enormous quantities, a coastal path now leads you through a wonderful landscape mosaic of great natural, historical and geological interest with dramatic views along the coastline and out across the North Sea. New gateways encouraging people to explore this fantastic coast have been created

with the active involvement of the local communities with art and artistic interpretation a key feature.

Gold Route, Sheffield submitted by Sheffield City Council



Sheffield's 'Gold Route', a series of spectacular spaces and streets, centred on the Heart of the City project, has come to symbolise the city's economic and cultural renaissance. This network of spaces, takes a visitor arriving at the station to the cultural and commercial core of Sheffield City Centre through one of the largest corridors of high quality public realm in the country. These spaces include the Sheaf Square 'gateway' at the Station, Howard Street, Hallam Gardens and Hallam Square, the Millennium Galleries, Winter Garden, Millennium Square, the Peace Gardens, and Barkers Pool and the proposed new retail quarter.

Baxter Park, Dundee submitted by Dundee City Council



The Baxter Park Project was the restoration of a "Paxton" park, landscape and facilities. It is considered the most complete Paxton Park in Scotland, retaining the Victorian ethos of a green lung for the people while suiting 21st century needs. At heart of the project is the involvement of the community in the project and the lasting legacy that the community will bring to the on-going evolution of the park. The Friends of Baxter Park sit at the centre of the complex framework of facilities and park users.

Heather and Hillforts submitted by Denbighshire County Council, Wales



The Heather and Hillforts Project is a partnership that strives to maintain the upland historic and natural heritage of north-east Wales as a sustainable landscape for the future: to conserve and restore the heritage of the hillforts and heather moorland, demonstrating sustainable agriculture in harmony with a landscape of outstanding historic and biodiversity value; to reconnect people to the uplands and to increase people's enjoyment of their heritage through education, interpretation, events and access projects; and to increase our understanding of the landscape as a foundation for management, interpretation and restoration projects.



Over the past six years Lough Neagh Partnership has identified and worked with strategic and local stakeholders to understand the needs of Lough Neagh and those of the communities living around its perimeter. By creating strong relationships with a range of private and public organisations, the Partnership has managed a £3.8m regeneration programme, developing over 140 projects on the Lough and attracted a further £6.4m of leverage funds which has resulted in the provision of major new infrastructure, increased protection for the waterway along with increased awareness and increased visitor numbers.

- ENDS -

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Notes to Editors

1. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) established a *Council of Europe Landscape Award* to recognise quality stewardship of landscapes. Council of Europe member states run national competitions to identify national winners who are then put forward for the European-level award. The Award has only been run once before. This is the first time that the Award has been run in the UK. Entries for the Award closed on 27 August 2010. The winner will be announced on 8 November 2010 at the European Landscape Convention Conference in Liverpool. The UK winner will then be submitted to the Council of Europe's European Landscape Award which will be announced in March 2011.
2. The ELC is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape, and is dedicated exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. The ELC became binding from 1 March 2007. The convention highlights the need to recognise landscape in law, to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies.
3. The European Landscape Convention is championed by DEFRA, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Scottish Government, the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland and their agencies.
4. The Award is being managed in the UK by the Landscape Institute, the professional body for landscape architecture.

