

PRESS RELEASE

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Landscape Institute tells government ‘planning system must deliver greener cities’

The Landscape Institute, which campaigns to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for public benefit, has called on the government to make green space in our towns and cities a reality for all. As the Coalition’s three month consultation on the draft planning framework comes to an end, the professional body, which represents landscape architects, has met with civil servants at the Department for Communities and Local Government and pressed them to create a planning framework that helps to deliver greener cities.

Jo Watkins, President of the Landscape Institute, said “So far the planning reform debate has focused exclusively on the countryside – no-one has said much about how we develop in urban areas. Given most people in Britain live in cities and towns this is quite extraordinary. Any change to the planning system will not only have an impact on the countryside but on how we develop in our towns and cities too.”

It is becoming widely known that increasing green space can generate wide-ranging benefits for the environment, the economy and wider society. The Landscape Institute, which recently published a document explaining the benefits of Green Infrastructure, can point to a series of model projects from around the UK that have brought about multiple benefits. In the densely urban area of Victoria in London green roofs and walls are planned to provide much-needed rain catchment and reduce the cost of surface water flooding to local businesses. In Towcester the restoration of the 11th century Bury Mount has created much-needed public green space and attracted private investment for wider regeneration. In Manor Fields Park in Sheffield the transformation of a patch of derelict land in an area of high deprivation has brought about positive social change.

Alastair McCapra, Chief Executive of the Landscape Institute said: “Protection of the countryside is vital but we need to start focusing on how we make our cities and towns greener. Green spaces improve air quality, add value, cut pollution and energy costs, and make our cities more liveable. Harnessing green infrastructure is the way forward. The government is making all the right noises but we want to see it fully integrated into the planning system.”

A commitment to green infrastructure will have multiple benefits now and in the future. The Landscape Institute’s full consultation response can be viewed online by visiting http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/consultation_responses.php

Local Green Infrastructure: Helping Communities make the most of their Landscape is available to download at www.landscapeinstitute.org/gi

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For further information, interviews and images please contact Sarah Harrison on 07768 372892 or email sarah@sarahharrisonpr.com

Notes to Editors:

Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. In rural areas this can include fields, woodlands, hedgerows, country parks, rivers and lakes. In urban areas it can include domestic gardens, street trees, sports pitches, civic spaces, green roofs and walls. By thinking about the potential offered by the natural environment and integrating this into the way places are planned, designed and managed we can:

Reduce our contribution to climate change

Make our villages, towns and cities more liveable

Reduce the risk of flooding

Enable wildlife to flourish

Clean our air and water

Deliver multiple economic benefits

The Landscape Institute is the royal chartered body for landscape architects. It is a professional organisation and educational charity working to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the public benefit. It accredits university courses and promotes professional development to ensure that landscape architects deliver the highest standards of practice. It works with government to improve the planning, design and management of urban and rural landscape. Through its advocacy programmes and support to its members it champions landscape, and the landscape profession, in order to inspire great places where people want to live, work and visit.

Visit www.Landscapeinstitute.org for more information or follow the Institute on twitter: @talklandscape

The Landscape Institute is part of the government's Green Infrastructure Partnership. The Partnership, which was launched as part of the Natural Environment White Paper, is made up of bodies representing Local Government, landscape and planning professionals, environmental interest groups and organisations such as Natural England, Environment Agency, and the Forestry Commission.