



**Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

FACT SHEETS & GOOD PRACTICE NOTES

Number 3

FACT SHEET

European Landscape Convention

Another European Directive? No, this is a Treaty of the Council of Europe - not the European Union - that is freely entered into by individual state governments.

This landscape convention builds upon earlier European Conventions, such as Berne (1997) aimed at conserving wildlife and Granada (1985) and Valletta (1992) protecting architectural and archaeological heritage, and the international Rio Convention on biological diversity (1992).

The European Landscape Convention was adopted on 20 October 2000 in Florence (Italy) and came into force on 1 March 2004 (Council of Europe Treaty Series no. 176). It was signed on behalf of the UK government in 2006, and came into force in the UK 1st March 2007.

It starts from the fundamental acknowledgement

"that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas".

Importantly, it defines landscape in relation to people;

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

The aims of the convention are

"to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues."

At a **national** level that means:

- a) Recognising landscapes in law as "essential components of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity,"

- b) Establishing and implementing "landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning",
- c) Establishing procedures for the participation of the public, and local and regional authorities, in defining and implementing landscape policies,
- d) Integrating landscape into "regional and town planning policies and in its environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies".

Doing these things will require specific measures, set out in the Convention, covering

- awareness raising,
- training and education,
- identification and assessment,
- landscape quality objectives, and
- implementation.

International co-operation should include

- landscape dimensions within other programmes,
- mutual assistance and information exchange,
- cross-border landscape programmes, and
- a Landscape Award of the Council of Europe.

It is of particular significance that all landscapes are recognised in this Convention, and not just those that already have some wildlife or natural beauty designation.

The Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty derives much of its beauty from its qualities of tranquillity, remoteness, and cultural heritage. It is also a living and working countryside that is very rural with relatively few householders for such a large area, and with substantial and significant settlements just outside its boundary.

AONBs in general, and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB in particular, are well placed to demonstrate the three pronged approach of protect, manage, and plan of the **Convention in action**:

- the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides a legislative and funding framework for the nationally important AONB landscapes, with a requirement for each AONB to have a Management Plan with policies for conserving and enhancing natural beauty

- the emerging South West and the South East Regional Spatial Strategies both draw attention to the national status of AONBs and their Management Plans
- the composition of this AONB Partnership and its consultative working style enables wide participation of local people and organisations in defining and implementing landscape policies
- this AONB has established a Planning Protocol with its Planning Authorities to facilitate the incorporation of landscape matters into planning policies and practice
- CCWWD AONB is raising awareness that "landscape matters" through our Landscape Character (2003) and Landscape Sensitivity (2007) assessments, our Management Plan covers policies for landscape protection, management, and planning, and our publicity and events
- the Historic Landscape Characterisation has been completed and steps are being taken to implement the Historic Environment Action Plans

There are, however, still more things to be done!

The full text of the Convention, and further information about European Conventions can be found on the web at:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/default_en.asp

The rules for the European Landscape Award can be found at:

<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/Prix/Anglais.pdf>

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