

OUR FUTURE PROFESSION:

SETTING A STRATEGY FOR THE LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE

A - Introduction

In June 2010 the Landscape Institute asked members to share their experiences of working life and their views on the future of the profession. Council reviewed the responses and this document summarises both members' responses and Council's contributions. To ensure the work of the Institute is relevant to its members, this must now be translated into a deliverable programme of action.

B - Summary of Questionnaire Responses and Challenges for the Future

1. What changes have had the greatest impact on your work over the last 5 years?

Many members reported changes to the nature of their work, and new challenges as a result. There was reference to the increasing importance of environmental issues, climate change, biodiversity and sustainability, and the increasingly widespread adoption of the green infrastructure agenda. Landscape Character Assessment; Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; BREEAM; Design Review; DDA Regulations/D&A statements, the Code for Sustainable Homes and CDM Regulations were cited as specific examples of changes which impact members' work. These policies represent both an opportunity and a challenge – they are often what prompts a client to call on the services of a landscape architect in the first place, but the range and complexity of policies and regulations which members need to keep abreast of has grown considerably in a short time.

The responses also highlighted changes in business practice and client expectations. For members in the public sector this was about securing best value for public money; for members in private practice, it was about the continuing drive by clients to bear down on fees, often at the expense of quality. There was also reference to complex and demanding procurement processes, particularly in the public sector, which make it harder to secure work. The design and build process was cited as one example of this. There was a strong suggestion that clients' behaviours and expectations had changed over this period – with mention of sudden fluctuations in business, and of clients being increasingly erratic in their scheduling and project programmes. Clients themselves are subject to increased time and delivery pressures, and therefore often looking for 'one stop shop' solutions.

While on the one hand clients may want fast and effective solutions, they often also seem to be less willing to be directed by their landscape architect than in the past. Respondents commented that the age of 'the professional knows best' was definitely over, and that clients expected a collaborative approach with 'informed consent' on their projects. One commented that more public consultation was expected to a higher level of detail than they felt well equipped to deal with.

Implications

The body of knowledge which landscape architects have to have under their command seems to grow relentlessly even as the rewards for mastering it become more elusive. The process of securing work

continues to become more demanding and the expectations of clients are harder to meet once it is secured.

Challenges for the Future

- i. How can the LI most effectively help members identify and assimilate the growing body of knowledge they need to operate effectively?
- ii. How can the LI most effectively help members be better equipped to deal with changing client demands?
- iii. Landscape architects could be more effective if they had better project management skills and could more effectively integrate themselves into multidisciplinary teams. How can the LI most effectively help with this?

2. How has the role of the Landscape Architects in your team changed over the last 5 years?

The main message was that traditional work designing and implementing schemes is harder to come by, although this was not universally agreed. Around a third of respondents said that in their experience there had been no major change of role for landscape architects during the period. A smaller minority still reported that the role of the landscape architect was decreasing. The majority of responses indicated that members are searching out new areas to develop in and taking on an increasing number of more complex and challenging jobs. This includes, for some, a move 'upstream', playing a greater role in masterplanning. This points to a growth in advisory roles and advocacy, working within multidisciplinary teams on green infrastructure and other large-scale projects at a more strategic level. Similarly, there is a growth in assessment work rather than design and implementation. There is also a recognition of the growing need to engage with the public, but some members feel they lack the skills and techniques to do so effectively.

Implications

Respondents suggested that the implications for the profession are that landscape architects need to present themselves as a group of holistic environmental specialists rather than focusing mainly on aesthetic aspects of design. There is also a need to take a lead in driving forward sustainable development. A move 'upstream' suggests the profession to some extent away from traditional design skills. But if these skills are eroded what is the distinctive value of the strategic advice a landscape architect can offer?

Challenges for the Future

- i. Are landscape architects in fact 'holistic environmental specialists' or is this a role that can be equally well filled by other professions?
- ii. How should the LI respond to the diverse and changing roles landscape architects are increasingly taking on? How can the LI most effectively represent a profession which is growing beyond its traditional boundaries?

3. Have there been changes in the way in you work with professionals from other disciplines?

The changes in the nature of the landscape architect's work are having an impact on how they work with other professionals, but here again the picture is not uniform. About a quarter of respondents indicated no significant change in their working relationships. One observation was that there was now less direct interaction with professionals from other disciplines or indeed directly with clients. Instead, there was much more interaction with contractors, who had a different set of expectations from traditional clients.

A second group of respondents reported an ever-harder struggle to convince other professionals that landscape architects have more to offer than just 'filling in the gaps' left by others in the final stage of a design, or 'detailing the green bits'. Engineers and other built environment professions often have little idea of what landscape architects can offer.

The majority of respondents however felt more positive. Whereas some reported work traditionally done by landscape architects being lost to other professions, others reported that the contemporary emphasis on urban design had opened up new doors for them. They reported a greater amount of respect from both fellow-professionals and clients. If there is an initial lack of understanding of what a landscape architect can bring to a project, this can be overcome and once a landscape architect has been used, their value is always appreciated. As members become involved in an increasing number of collaborative projects, landscape is receiving greater consideration at a strategic level and many members find they are working well with other disciplines. They appreciate being involved in a scheme from inception rather than just being involved in 'decoration' near the end.

One obstacle mentioned is the often excessively risk-averse approach which some other professionals can bring to a project. The increasing bureaucratisation of many aspects of professional life and a growing 'tick box' mentality does not generally lend itself to the strengths most landscape architects have.

Developments in technology continue to have an impact on the way members interact with professionals, particularly internationally. There are fewer face to face meetings so there is greater time efficiency but some important elements of communication can easily be lost. There is less direct personal interaction with other professions and this can make it harder to establish the kind of relationship you might have had in the past. What this means is that IT skills and the effectiveness of how members present themselves using new technology are increasingly important. They affect the way they come across and have a significant impact on relationships with other professionals.

Implications

Overall there seems to be rather less interaction with other professionals and more with contractors. This means that some of the traditional ways landscape architects negotiate their work are becoming less valid and new approaches are restricting how they work. There is also less face-to-face interaction which means effective use of IT is of paramount importance. Overall members often continue to feel hampered by poor understanding by other professionals of what they have to offer and the lack of opportunity to explain properly the value they can add to a scheme.

Challenges for the Future

- i. It is clear that there is greater pressure than ever before for landscape architects to adapt, move forward, and stay flexible. Does the LI encourage and support this at present? How could it do this better in future?

- ii. If landscape architects move towards merely being facilitators rather than implementers, will the profession just become a generic middle-management field? Is it essential that members remain 'at the coal face' in relation to the profession's core skill areas?
- iii. If so, what can the LI do to ensure that the profession both retains its core skills and adopts and develops newer ones? How can members best develop the full range of their skills at a time when they are under severe pressure and have little time or money available to undertake this kind of personal development?
- iv. The traditional assumption in much of the LI's approach is that the main working relationship will be between the landscape architect and their client. If the relationship is increasingly not with the client but with a contractor, what changes does that imply? What are the implications for how the profession pitches its offer and negotiates solutions? What could the LI do to better support members in their dealings with contractors?

4. Have you seen changes in the kind of work your practice gets over the past five years?

Changes Observed

- ❖ 8 respondents said no or few changes
- ❖ Practices are taking on a more diverse range of projects.
- ❖ More international work
- ❖ More strategic level assessment work, design & build work, less traditional design and contract work
- ❖ Larger tender processes, shorter select lists, reduced understanding of the role of the LA
- ❖ OJEU being ignored in some cases and used inappropriately in others
- ❖ There is a move away from traditional forms of engagement
- ❖ Practices need more aggressive business strategies
- ❖ Marketing is not about simply having a website – you need to find ways to connect with people

Many respondents in the private sector reported that they picked up work in the traditional way – through their networks of contacts and by word of mouth. Many practices are investing more time than before in cultivating their existing networks and expanding them. To an extent this kind of networking represents a continuation of what many members have always done – perhaps now with a greater sense of urgency. The conflicting demands on time for sole practitioners and small practices are certainly becoming more acute as there is a pressing need both to maximise chargeable hours with ongoing work and to invest in future opportunities through promotion and networking. For a minority of respondents however having to promote themselves was a somewhat unfamiliar experience. One or two respondents said they were having to market themselves for the first time in a decade; others said that they had never done any marketing or promotion before, but were doing so now for the first time. Some reported investing more time in developing their websites as a showcase for the practice, as they expected to attract more work by that means in the foreseeable future.

The majority of responses focused on ways in which members are trying to cultivate the contacts through which work will come. This includes maintaining good relations with fellow professionals to ensure they want to contact a landscape architect when there is work available; developing partnerships with other firms and professionals; and online networking. Several mentioned entering ore competitions and bidding for more work directly. Several made reference to seeking a much wider range of work than they would have looked for before.

Implications

Landscape architects cannot afford to be too 'touchy feely'. In the past the profession has often attracted people who see it as a moral quest. Today's environment demands a more proactive businesslike approach. The profession needs to be more international in its approach. Increasingly, UK practices are

pitching their services overseas but they can easily underestimate the associated difficulties and get into disputes with their clients. The result can sometimes be that they risk bringing the profession into disrepute internationally. Practitioners need to better understand the complexities of procurement and the demands of marketing and promotion – an increasingly large part of practices time and resources will be spent on this area. Traditional design work is not ‘drying up’. There will always be a demand and growth will return when the economy recovers. Regardless of how the professional’s remit changes in the future, a high degree of design competence will always be needed

There would be a valuable role for experienced professionals in mentoring their younger peers. There is also a need to improve the marketing skills and capacity of landscape architects generally and to cultivate a more robust businesslike approach. The unique selling proposition of landscape architecture is that it is the only profession which can design, deliver and implement landscape solutions. No other profession can offer this full range of service. There is a need to get more landscape architects onto local design review panels to ensure that a landscape-led approach becomes the norm for all kinds of projects.

There is an expectation among some members that the LI will ‘promote’ them, though it is difficult to pin down exactly what this means. The belief that the LI can undertake some kind of blanket national marketing which will be relevant to the full range of members’ professional roles and have a significant impact on the amount of work available to members does not really bear serious examination. There are three main roles the LI can fulfil in terms of promoting the profession:

- a. Through policy and public affairs work, fostering a legal regulatory and legal framework within which landscape architecture has the best possible chance of flourishing. This includes advocacy for the role of landscape architects in the public sector, particularly in local government.
- b. Assisting practices to promote themselves through the Registered Practice scheme, offering the highest levels of assurance to the public and allowing registered practices to promote their work on the online directory by means of case studies
- c. Making marketing material available to practices for them to use. This will take the form of the client guide to be produced in late 2010.

Challenges for the Future

- i. There is a clear need to improve skills in the area of specification and procurement. What would the best ways of approaching this be?
- ii. There is a clear need to improve IT and presentation skills in the profession. What would the best ways of approaching this be?
- iii. There is a clear need to improve general business and financial planning skills in the profession. What would the best ways of approaching this be?

5. What kind of work would you most like to get but can't? Why not?

What kind of work would you like?

- ❖ Art led projects and prestigious international ones
- ❖ Green infrastructure planning work
- ❖ High quality design work for large fees
- ❖ Projects we can see to completion on site rather than being used just to get planning permission
- ❖ Public housing, education and local authority parks
- ❖ Open space, play areas
- ❖ School ground design work
- ❖ Sustainability strategies to underpin placemaking approaches. This area the reserve of planners or economic development consultants but continues to drive the quality of design. It continues to exclude 90% of the LI's membership unless they are one of the handful of new super companies.
- ❖ Urban design
- ❖ Masterplanning and public realm/parkland
- ❖ Historic parks./gardens, public realm, urban design

Why Not?

- ❖ Building Schools for the Future seemed like a closed shop
- ❖ Local authority procurement rules
- ❖ Architecture practices taking public realm/civic/urban landscape works
- ❖ Public sector wants established track record on similar projects rather than evidence of necessary skills
- ❖ Public sector procurement through framework contracts
- ❖ We are expected to weigh in after the engineering has been completed and magically resolve their environmental design mistakes
- ❖ Golf club mentality of the LI
- ❖ Local authorities and developers seem afraid to think outside the box
- ❖ Attitude and lack of education of other professionals and clients about what landscape architects can do
- ❖ Political lobbying and undercutting
- ❖ Local authorities see green infrastructure as more of a planning role

Implications

Public sector procurement processes are one clearly identified obstacle to landscape architects getting work of the range and value they want. A degree of risk-aversion on the part of the client also plays a role. Professionals such as architects and engineers put themselves forward as offering solutions to clients and landscape architects need a clearer and more articulate case for why they have much more to offer.

Challenges for the Future

- i. The LI is challenging local government procurement and working for changes which will make it discriminate less against small local firms. What specific aspects of local government procurement should it focus on?
- ii. Planning departments in English local authorities are going to be significantly reduced in size over the next couple of years. Similar moves are underway in Northern Ireland and can be expected in Scotland and Wales). What impact will this have on landscape architects?

- iii. For many years the backbone of the profession has been its medium-sized private practices. The existence of distinct landscape architecture practices of substantial size has helped to give the profession a clear sense of self-awareness. If such practices are increasingly absorbed by mergers, landscape architects will be individuals or small specialist teams in much larger entities and it could be much more difficult for them to maintain a distinct identity and voice. Conversely the relatively small size of many practices has perhaps presented a barrier in the past to landscape architects taking on more influential and strategic roles, and the current trend towards mergers with larger firms could lead to landscape architects playing more significant roles. What can most usefully be done to ensure that a trend towards mergers can be turned to the advantage of the profession wherever possible?
- iv. Medium-sized practices have not only comprised the majority of members in practice, they have also traditionally been the main source of volunteers for LI committees and activities. Members who run their own practices have been able to be generous both with their own time and with the time of colleagues and employees. In a large multidisciplinary practice members' time may be much less their own. How should the LI adapt to this changed circumstance?

6. What are your views on competitions?

- ❖ OK if they are truly open. The shortlist system is too restricting.
 - ❖ Competitions are part of the procurement process. Clients get lots of ideas and consultants have the opportunity to be inspirational.
 - ❖ Good for landscape-centred design projects but becoming less and less frequent
 - ❖ Good when appropriately organised e.g. German or French public works competition. Most British competitions dismal
 - ❖ Good, love them. It's a shame this method of procurement isn't more widely used.
 - ❖ I find it quite inspiring and I think all practices should do it once in a while.
 - ❖ In terms of practices and individuals, winning can be a great self esteem builder
 - ❖ Competitions are an acceptable means of getting work – not necessarily better or worse than other methods. It has its place. It shouldn't be the standard way of getting work
 - ❖ It is good for the LI to run them. It means that they are run properly, in accordance with best practice, standards are raised. LI run competitions add to the profile of the LI and the profession, and helps extend the LI's influence.
-
- ❖ Often seen as wasteful, abortive work. We rarely enter.
 - ❖ Bad system. One wins with ideas that potentially can't be delivered
 - ❖ Competitions do well for the client, little for the consultant and rarely attract significant PR
 - ❖ Some small practices think they are unfair because of prequalification requirements, but that is not because they are competitions, that is because of the procurement rules for that particular authority.
 - ❖ I am aware of clients who run the competition as a mechanism to lever in funding
 - ❖ Only groovy graphics win competitions
 - ❖ Open competitions are a lottery. In most cases they generate ideas for free, often with no go ahead for the winning design team and loss of copyright.
 - ❖ Time consuming, labour intensive and high-risk
 - ❖ We should be encouraging them but with some wariness in that 9/10 don't lead to work and are used as a free way of generating ideas. Competitions must be a real work opportunity.

Challenges for the Future

- i. Despite some views opposing competitions, the LI should continue to run them on behalf of clients and to promote this service. It should also ensure that any competitions the LI is involved in are not speculative and that the client has the funding in place to deliver the scheme with the winning practice. It should also continue to oppose restrictive procurement parameters and insurance requirements, whether in the context of competitions or more generally.

7. Has the performance of graduates changed? What would you like them to do more/less of?

There were mixed views on this, and the number of respondents was not as large as on some other topics – in part a reflection of the fact that small firms and public sector members may not have taken on many graduates recently. The broad view was that although the abilities and performance of graduates have probably not declined, they do not show much sign of improvement either. There was a general recognition that graduates today have better IT skills than was commonly the case in the past. Some respondents commented that there was a need for greater depth of knowledge of landscape sciences and environmental impact assessments. There was an indication that some current graduates, while strong on the output skills (computer graphics) are not so strong on the ‘inputs’ – knowledge of the construction sector, landscape and horticulture practices and business skills. A few respondents indicated that they wanted new graduates to have better design skills but this was certainly not a common complaint.

There was also a feeling that while many graduates had a very broad grounding in landscape architecture they had limited practical knowledge of construction and planting design, and of working within budgets with clients. It was observed that the design quality of graduates from UK schools is poor relative to their peers in architecture or landscape graduates from US or Europe, and it was suggested that if landscape architecture courses were harder to get into, they would produce more focused graduates. Several respondents mentioned that they would like less emphasis on esoteric or ‘cosmetic’ design. Also called for were a stronger interest in minerals/waste/reclamation and better plant knowledge. In addition members would like graduates to have better communication and collaboration skills, greater facility in hand sketching for quick concept and ideas, stronger professional ethics and a sense of professional pride.

Some of the recent graduates who responded to this question observed that university education provides landscape architects with experience of truly creative thinking, but the grinding lack of responsibility in a graduate role and the narrowness of the Pathway to Chartership turns new graduates into cynics. One commented that having graduated four years ago they expected to spend nearly all their time designing, but currently spend only 5% of their time doing so. The remainder is taken up with project management and technical matters. Some of the employers lamented that ‘everyone wants to be an urban designer or planting guru’ and that ‘too many think they will be designing the Olympic site on day one’. Some of the employers were quite blunt – they want graduates to work longer hours for less money and they want university education to focus more on the technician-level functions which will be of greatest use when a graduate first starts work - computer literacy and planting knowledge.

In broad terms there were two main areas of disagreement. This first was between respondents who wanted graduates to be prepared to function as CAD technicians and those who expected them to be much more rounded in their knowledge and professionalism. Within the latter group, there was a second disagreement about what kinds of knowledge and skill were most desirable. For some respondents this was about much more about conceptual knowledge and understanding of science, the environment and

similar contexts. For others it was much more about practical business awareness to do with planting, procurement and business practice.

Implications

In part this range of opinions mirrors the divergence of views about the future of the profession. If graduates are better versed in environmental legislation and green infrastructure they will be better equipped to take on more strategic roles at an early stage in the planning process (this is highly contested space as both architects and planners are also trying to move in the same direction). If they are better grounded in planting and the practicalities of business they may more effectively be prepared to work within the current scope of landscape architecture, but may also be less equipped to take on the roles many respondents say they want to take on.

Challenges for the Future

- i. Can universities be expected to prepare both specialists and generalists? Is there a choice to be made and if so how should it be approached?
- ii. Few respondents suggested that graduates needed better training in design. Does this mean that in general their design skills and understanding are meeting expectations?
- iii. What could be usefully learned from university courses in the USA, the EU and elsewhere?

8. What do you see as the major opportunities and threats to your future?

The main opportunities identified by members were:

- ❖ Increased recognition from developers that is best to have us on board from the early stages
- ❖ Championing sustainable development that has economic benefits and environmental quality
- ❖ Continuing and increasing client awareness of environmental issues
- ❖ Getting in early and leading on development management issues
- ❖ Establishing landscape architects as the makers of green space and connections
- ❖ Capitalising on regulations and planning policies
- ❖ Climate change policies
- ❖ Green infrastructure
- ❖ Work outside the EU

The main threats identified by members were:

- ❖ Double dip recession and government cuts
- ❖ Strong downward pressure on fees
- ❖ Although clients are often more aware of environmental issues than before, these can sometimes be seen as a 'consumer product' not as a quality, durable longterm sustainable public asset
- ❖ Failure to position the profession to promote the non-design aspects of landscape architecture
- ❖ Cut quality work damaging our profession and reputation. Landscape architects offer value-added work but increasingly clients want what is fast and cheap – if landscape architects are prepared to take this approach, others may be able to do it faster and cheaper
- ❖ Potential loss of roles in local government and outsourcing of services currently delivered in house
- ❖ Large multidisciplinary practices monopolising public sector work, largely due to procurement processes
- ❖ Relaxation of planning standards and other policies to the detriment of long term sustainability

- ❖ Teaching in universities not adequately directed to the needs of the profession
- ❖ Large numbers of graduates entering the market
- ❖ Reduced levels of research to inform future practice, which means the profession may lose its leadership role
- ❖ Being squeezed by urban designers and architects, who undertake a larger share of the design work and leave only 'decorative' features to landscape architects
- ❖ The expanding role of the environmental scientist/coordinator in many projects
- ❖ The risk of other professions dividing up the work of landscape architects unless we have a clearly-identifiable core set of skills and excellence in our activities

Challenges for the Future

1. Most of the opportunities listed by respondents seem to imply a move away from 'traditional' design in the direction of a more strategic role in the planning process. Is this correct? If so what are the implications for the profession, for training needs and for university courses in landscape architecture? What should the LI be doing as a result?
2. How well equipped are UK landscape architects for international work? What could the LI usefully do to improve their chances of obtaining work outside the EU?
3. What would most effectively persuade a client to use a landscape architect rather than an architect or an urban designer?
4. What is the 'clearly-identifiable core set of skills' which is the unique selling point of the profession?

9. What changes do you expect to see to your practice over the next five years?

Looking towards the future, the main thing on everyone's mind is the prospect of a double-dip recession. While many local government departments and private practices were able to adapt to the first round of recession in 2008-9, few have much capacity left for further downsizing or adaptation. Some made reference to cutting posts, downsizing and reducing overheads, but most have already done this. The impact of redundancies, combined with increasing workloads and sweeping public sector cuts are creating a very hostile working environment for the foreseeable future. A few members indicated that they were thinking of closing their practices down or retiring; others were intending to offer freelance design services to other companies. One spoke of a group of professionals forming a new network to offer a variable range of services to clients, with diverse expertise but a single offer of quality.

Since for many members the option of continuing to work in current ways seems increasingly unfeasible and there is little left to cut, the emphasis for many is on identifying and securing new kinds of work. For some, this means developing a unique specialist knowledge which will give them a competitive advantage. If large scale projects such as windfarms go ahead there will be masterplanning work associated with them. The continuing impact of green legislation and regulation means that there is likely to be more work in the field of landscape and visual impact assessment and environmental impact assessment for future projects, albeit that the number of projects will be drastically reduced. Similarly, other legislatively-driven sectors such as waste strategy and management and energy are considered likely to remain reasonably active.

Implications

The common theme in these diversification efforts is of landscape architects taking an increased role in leading, joining up and championing sustainable development opportunities that can be presented in a way which emphasises value for money as well as wider social benefits.

Challenges for the Future

- i. If some practices 'stretch' into new areas of work during the recession are they likely to 'spring back' when it ends, or remain stretched? Is this a way of carving out new professional space for the future or a distraction from core professional activities?
- ii. If some practices are squeezed 'up' into more advisory and consultative roles, doing less design work, while others are squeezed 'down' into small-scale garden design, where does that leave the profession as it emerges from the recession? How will the LI be able to adequately embrace and represent the full range of the profession?
- iii. If landscape teams disappear from local authorities, what will the impact be on private practice? Should supporting those local authority teams be a key priority for the LI?

10. What will clients expect the landscape architects of the future to be able to do?

Expectations

- ❖ More work for less pay - 5 times as much work for half the cost
- ❖ Not sure if I am equipped to find a way of continuing to offer a high quality service when that is not what the majority of clients want
- ❖ Build & Design process
- ❖ They don't know what the profession can provide for them
- ❖ Landscape architects expected to provide a lot more information at early stages of planning applications
- ❖ Surface water management and green issues
- ❖ One stop shop – dump everything at our feet and expect a finished product
- ❖ Deliver instant landscape
- ❖ The whole package – landscape design, planning issues, BREEAM, ecology, arboricultural issues
- ❖ Visualise exactly what our designs will look like and take clients through digital landscapes of increasing sophistication
- ❖ Today they already want more than most landscape architects can offer. The future is about LA meeting expectations, becoming the voice of the environment sector
- ❖ Broader package of environmental expertise
- ❖ Strong outgoing people and leadership skills
- ❖ Get them planning permission on contentious sites. Without a planning regime I expect there would be very few landscape architects in employment
- ❖ Masterplanning, urban design, landscape design and ecology

Implications

- ❖ LAs have to accept that clients no longer want a well designed area of benches and flower beds.
- ❖ Development control demands surface water attenuation, native species and fancy paving too.
- ❖ Will clients still use landscape architects, or just go to the constituent professions that have prospered – urban designers, ecologists etc.
- ❖ Understand how landscape architecture delivers other agendas and ability to make the case for funding
- ❖ Almost all our projects are design/build, so I think traditional landscape contract work will almost entirely disappear in its current form

Challenges for the Future

- i. Many respondents feel there is less demand for 'traditional' design, so why does everyone think urban design is prospering?
- ii. If clients want a 'one stop shop' are they more or less likely to use professionals with narrower specialisms (e.g. ecologists)
- iii. How well equipped is the profession to deal with changing client expectations?

C - Conclusions

As landscape architecture continues to grow and change even in very challenging times, the Landscape Institute needs to ensure that it is supporting the profession as it moves onto some fairly unfamiliar ground. Some of the Institute's established ways of working are less relevant than before, but the need to

Some of the roles the Institute can play in support of the profession are clear – working to create landscape-friendly public policy; monitoring government policies and keeping members up to date with opportunities and likely future trends. There is a major role for expanded CPD, whether offered centrally or regionally by branches. Above there is a need to articulate the benefits landscape architecture brings to the public in clear succinct layman's language.

The question for the Landscape Institute is how we can best deploy our small stock of resources and capacity for the advancement of the profession. If we are to be effective we have to be focused on a clear set of priorities. It is possible to understand what is driving change in the profession and to forecast its consequences, but it is not possible to have a solution to everything.

On 20 September 2010 the Board of Trustees will meet to consider the future strategy priorities for the Landscape Institute, and their proposals will be put before Council on 20 October. In your view, which of the issues highlighted in this paper should be the top priorities for the next 3-5 years?

Please send your top priorities to alastairm@landscapeinstitute.org before 15 September.