

Technical and Research Committee **Terms of Reference 2010 as agreed by Board of Trustees**

The Technical and Research Committee shall provide expertise and advice on technical issues relevant to the Institute's objectives and development plan.

Technical issues are defined as those requiring specialist skills, experience or knowledge of an applied, practical, scientific or professional area or topic of relevance to the objects of the Landscape Institute and the interests or concerns of its members. The committee will promote an evidence-based ethos within the landscape profession by facilitating the translation of landscape research into technical guidance, enabling the LI to progress its Development Plan and policy objectives on the basis of sound evidence, and developing the knowledge base of the profession.

Terms of Reference

The Technical and Research Committee will work within the following terms of reference:

Objectives

The committee will aim to:

- Strengthen the links between landscape research and practice, to help develop evidence-based technical landscape knowledge, and to advise on the implications of research findings for professional landscape practice
- Provide guidance, advice and responses on matters within its remit and in accord with the objects of the Charter
- Advise on the effective translation of research into evidence-based policy statements and technical advice, and ensure that LI policy and guidance on professional practice are clearly informed by sound research

Work within the LI

The committee will:

- Promote the role of the Landscape Institute and its members in contributing to issues in accord with the objectives of the Charter
- Provide guidance, advice and responses on matters within its remit and in accord with the objects of the Charter
- Develop and review annually a work plan outlining how the committee will meet the objectives set out in the Development Plan and report on progress to the Board of Trustees twice a year
- Contribute to the annual review of the Development Plan, informing the Board of Trustees, Advisory Council and Secretariat of priority areas for the coming year
- Consider and respond to material passed to it from the Board of Trustees, other committees, members of the Institute and the Secretariat. Similarly, the committee will raise issues of priority with these groups. The committee will prioritise any identified issues and apportion tasks accordingly
- Monitor and review the content of all Landscape Institute material relating to technical matters, including all relevant policy or position statements, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment guidance and contract documents. advising on updates and other changes as required
- Act as an advisory board for policy development, advising the Policy Committee on technical aspects of policy development and drafting or advising on accompanying technical guidance as appropriate
- Set up sub-groups to deliver specific projects, and coordinate their activity, including receipt of reports and making recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval
- Set the Institute's standards for technical practice in landscape and promote the Institute as the leading Chartered body for landscape assessment, design, planning and management-related matters
- Endorse technical guidance produced by other bodies where appropriate
- Promote, disseminate and, where appropriate, seek to initiate research on topics within its remit
- Recommend to the Board of Trustees topics for LI events in the upcoming financial year (April – March), no later than September, and assist the Secretariat in developing conference and seminar programmes, as appropriate
- Prepare and draft details of delivery of the action plan for use in the Landscape Institute annual report no later than June

- Liaise with the LI branches in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on technical and practice matters relevant to the devolved nations
- Approve, monitor and review the process for engaging LI members on technical and research issues, particularly in responding to public consultations, developing guidance for the Institute and disseminating information both internally and externally.
- Advise on the effective translation of research into evidence-based technical advice, and ensure that LI policy and guidance are informed by sound research
- Assist in developing and promoting the LI's technical knowledge resources and advising on content, dissemination and development
- Strengthen the links between landscape research and practice, in order to develop good practice and raise professional standards

Work with LI committees

The committee will:

- Work closely with Policy Committee, advising on technical aspects of policy development and producing or advising on technical guidance to translate policy statements into practice.
- Work closely with Education Committee, in order to strengthen links between academic research and landscape practice
- Nominate one committee member to be a corresponding member on Policy Committee, and one committee member to be a corresponding member on Education Committee, to facilitate communication, joint working and co-ordinated responses

Work with external bodies

The committee will:

- Coordinate and approve, with the Secretariat, the Institute's response to relevant consultation or other documents or statements on technical matters issued by Government departments and other external bodies.
- Liaise with external bodies dealing with technical issues within its remit and in accord with the objects of the Charter, in particular building links with government departments and agencies, voluntary organisations, universities, think-tanks, and other organisations who undertake, commission or disseminate relevant research
- Set up work groups as appropriate, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, and coordinate their activity, including receipt of reports and making recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval).

- Promote, disseminate and, where appropriate, seek to initiate research on topics within its remit.
- Recommend to the Board of Trustees topics for LI events in the upcoming financial year (April – March), no later than September, and assist the Secretariat in developing conference and seminar programmes, as appropriate.
- Prepare and draft details of delivery of the action plan for use in the Landscape Institute annual report no later than June.

Delegated authority

- The Technical Committee will have the authority to make written and verbal statements on behalf of the Landscape Institute. In order that the committee may do so with confidence, the Board of Trustees will ratify the membership of the Committee.
- Where necessary in the interests of expediency, such authority may be exercised by the Chair of the Committee.

Chair

- The LI's Advisory Council's Appointments and Selection Committee. will appoint a Chair and a Vice Chair who will each serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of two years unless in exceptional circumstances and on the recommendation of the Council the Chair or Vice Chair is elected for one further consecutive term of a maximum of two years.
- The Chair will sit on the Board of Trustees

Membership

- The Committee will not exceed 12 members in total, including co-options.
- Committee members can be from the Chartered Member or Fellow grades.
- Members will normally sit for a maximum of two consecutive terms of two years unless in exceptional circumstances Advisory Council recommends that they remain for one further term of a maximum of two years.
- The Committee will elect one member to sit on the Advisory Council. This may not be the Chair.
- The Chair may delegate authority to one member of the Committee, usually the Vice-Chair, to attend Board of Trustees meetings on his/her behalf. On these occasions the representative will not have the authority to vote.

- Prospective committee members will be to submit a statement in support of their application, setting out their professional experience, areas of expertise and reasons for applying. A selection panel, which will include the Chair, will carry out the selection process. Appointments will be made on the basis of technical expertise, academic or practical knowledge of relevant research and policy areas, and commitment to the aims of the committee.
- The Director of Policy and Communications will attend and participate in meetings but will not vote.
- The Institute's Head of Library and Information Services will provide administrative and project support to the committee and any subgroups, and will attend and participate in meetings but not vote.

Quorum

A meeting will be quorate when five members or more are present.

Sub-groups

Any sub-group will include a member of the Technical Committee. The Committee will establish the terms of reference for any groups formed and will monitor and review the progress of such groups at each of its meetings.

Co-options

If required, and with the consent of the Board of Trustees, the Committee may make co-options to the Committee to take forward its work. Such co-options will be for a term of one year only, with an option for a further one-year period, if agreed by the Board of Trustees. A maximum of 2 co-options may sit on the Committee at any one time.

Corresponding Members

The Committee may identify a number of corresponding members of people who take an interest in the work of the committee and may, from time to time, contribute to particular pieces of work. These members will receive a copy of the minutes of each meeting. The Chair will review the corresponding members list on an annual basis.

Accountability

The actions of the Committee are directly attributable to the Landscape Institute, therefore all members of the Technical Committee have a general duty to act in the best interests of the Landscape Institute and to adopt the following standards for Committee members and trustees, which are based on the principles of the Nolan Committee:

1. Selflessness

Committee members and trustees of the Landscape Institute have a general duty to act in the best interests of the Landscape Institute as a whole. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, their friends or the organisation they come from or represent.

2. Integrity

Landscape Institute committee members and trustees

- Should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their role;
- As well as avoiding actual impropriety, should avoid any appearance of improper behaviour;
- Should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement.

3. Objectivity

In carrying out their role, including making appointments, awarding contracts, recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, Landscape Institute committee members and trustees should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit.

4. Accountability

The Landscape Institute's committee members and trustees:

- Have a duty to comply with the law on all occasions in accordance with the trust placed in them and in such a way as to preserve public confidence in the Landscape Institute;
- Are accountable for their decisions and actions to members, the public and funders. They must submit themselves to what scrutiny is appropriate to their role.

5. Openness

The Landscape Institute's committee members and trustees:

- Should ensure that confidential material, including material about individuals, is handled in accordance with due care;
- Should be as open as possible about their decisions and action that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider interest clearly demands

6. Honesty

The Landscape Institute's committee members and trustees:

- Have duty to declare any interests relating to their role as a committee member and to take steps to resolve any conflicts that may arise. Where private interests of a committee member/trustee conflict with their duties, he/she must resolve this conflict in favour of the committee member role;
- Must make relevant declarations of interest in the different circumstances and roles they play both within and outside of the Landscape Institute.

7. Leadership

The Landscape Institute's committee members and trustees should:

- Promote and support the principles of leadership by example;
- Be supportive of the role of the Chief Executive and Secretariat staff.