



# Research Networking Highlight Notice for Changing Landscapes: Towards a new Decision Making Framework for UK Landscapes and Land Assets

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## II. Introduction

This highlight notice is intended to encourage the development of research networking proposals which explore and develop the important and distinctive contributions that arts and humanities research can make to cross-disciplinary, collaborative research exploring the ways in which we make decisions about the future of landscapes and land assets in the UK. The highlight notice invites applications which seek to develop capabilities, dialogue, collaborations and/or partnerships to inform decision-making about landscape, land-use and land assets. Applications will need to cut across disciplinary boundaries as well as the boundaries between academia and stakeholder groups with an interest in decision-making about landscape. These stakeholder groups are varied but could

include: land-owners; professional and practice groups; policy-makers, planners and regulators; the historic environment, agricultural, tourist/recreation, transport and other relevant sectors; heritage /visitor site managers; environmental, cultural and conservation groups; landscape user groups; local communities; voluntary groups; businesses. .

Research Networks funded through this AHRC-led call are intended to develop the contribution of arts and humanities research to the wider UKRI cross-disciplinary programme on "[Landscape Decisions: Towards a new framework for using land assets](#)", led by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and funded through the first wave of the UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund. The Programme aims to support moves towards a more holistic framework for land-use decision-making and the emergence of a new community from the diverse research base, capable of articulating and underpinning a new decision framework. As part of this, successful networking projects funded under this highlight notice will be required to work closely with the Programme Coordination Team (PCT) to ensure integration with the wider initiative and contribute to the development of inter-disciplinary approaches to landscape decision-making in collaboration with relevant stakeholder groups.

### III. Context

As a society, we are required to make multiple decisions at different scales about how to use and manage the landscapes around us. The challenge of delivering better, evidence-based decisions about UK landscapes requires the development of inter-disciplinary decision-making frameworks and research collaboration with policy and land management partners. Overarching key questions include:

- How can land be managed to realise benefits for the environment, culture, society, communities, and individual creativity and well-being, both now and in the future?
- How can research and innovation provide more holistic approaches to support effective (real world) land-use decisions that reflect the diverse heritage and cultural values associated with landscapes and deliver improvements to culture, health, well-being and the economy?

Landscapes and the values we place upon them are highly dynamic. They shift in response to natural and human processes on timescales ranging from daily and seasonal rhythms through to the historical (across deep, modern, and contemporary histories). We are only now developing the capacity to fully understand the ways in which the cultural values placed on landscapes (including the cultural ecosystem services they provide) change over time and a wide range of spatial scales. We still have some way to go to fully capture the distinctive significance and character of landscapes as a part of natural and cultural heritage, their role in respect to cultural values, beliefs, sense of place, community, and identities, and their wider contribution to human experience, creativity, spirituality and well-being. There is also much further work to do if we are to more fully incorporate these considerations into future decision-making, despite the increasing recognition of their importance.

Recent reports and information from across the constituent parts of the UK (see Annex A), as well as the European Landscape Convention, note the importance of these varied aspects of landscapes and the need to use a holistic and integrated approach to decision-making. For example Defra's 25 year vision for the environment recognises the value of landscape beauty and heritage. Landscapes are also priority areas in the strategies of organisations such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), National Trust, and Historic England (see also Annex A). At a regional and local level there are also a broad range of different stakeholder and decision-making groups with interests in this area including local government, voluntary, heritage, cultural, and community groups and organisations.

Arts and humanities research can make an important and distinctive contribution to landscape decision-making for example through exploring intertwined questions such as:

1. How are landscapes shaped, over time, by the interaction of natural resources, environmental processes, and human land management decisions?
2. How is land used and valued within wider social, cultural, and political contexts?
3. How can critical reflection, creativity, and innovation enhance the ways in which we make decisions about how landscapes are managed?

The integration of complex cultural, heritage, community, aesthetic, and symbolic values into policy-making and participatory decision-making, alongside complex environmental, economic, and social factors, poses considerable challenges. However, in the absence of integrated approaches, impact assessments tend to provide only partial assessments. This can lead to circumstances where policy decisions in one 'silo' can impact on others, often with unintended consequences. Moreover, insufficient attention can be paid to trade-offs, conflicts, and co-benefits as well as to changing cultural, heritage, and aesthetic values and the distribution of costs and benefits across diverse user groups. This can be further complicated by governance, planning, institutional, and decision-making roles and structures which vary across the UK, depending on location as well as on landscapes types and designations. Often decision-making can also be distributed between different organisations creating further challenges for integrated decision-making but also opportunities to compare, learn, and share experience between organisations.

There are a broad range of inter-disciplinary opportunities which could start to bring together consideration of the varied benefits from land-use, how we might live with the dynamics of landscape change, and how decisions are made around this. AHRC has a history of funding research in this area through specific initiatives, such as the Landscape and Environment Programme (2005-12), through individual grants funded through our open calls or within broader Themes such as 'Science in Culture and Care for the Future, and through cross-Council programmes such as those on Connected Communities and Valuing Nature (for example the Valuing Nature Programme jointly sponsored a workshop in February 2018 on [Arts and the Artist in Landscape and Environmental Research Today \(AALERT\)](#)). There are also links to current work such as the AHRC's Heritage and Design priority areas. The [updated AHRC Heritage Priority Area Future Directions](#) published in 2018 identifies inter-disciplinary opportunities with the environmental sciences in respect to natural and environmental heritage and includes some relevant exemplar questions: how can landscapes be sustained, while respecting historical integrity and taking into account changing societal needs?; what counts as natural and cultural heritage, how is it chosen, how does this change in increasingly diverse/plural societies, how does it shape identities, how and when are different types of heritage recognised, experienced, embraced, contested, represented or ignored?; what is the relationship between natural and cultural heritages? This, alongside the development of environmental humanities (see AHRC [Environment Portfolio](#) page and [A unique contribution; arts and humanities research and the environment](#)) as an emerging cross-disciplinary field, provides strong foundations upon which applications under this highlight notice could build, extend and innovate.

In order to further support the contribution of arts and humanities research to this inter-disciplinary programme, a parallel highlight notice is also being issued within AHRC's Follow-on Funding scheme for Impact and Engagement. This will provide additional opportunities to enhance impact and engagement in relation to decision-making related to landscape, land-use, and land assets directly emerging from this diverse existing AHRC and UKRI portfolio. This is intended to complement this networking scheme highlight notice with its emphasis on developing new / wider boundary-crossing collaborations and partnerships and on exploring innovative research agendas and emerging

research opportunities.

## IV. Aims of the Call

This highlight notice is open to research networking proposals which seek to develop the distinctive contributions that arts and humanities research can make to cross-disciplinary, collaborative research with the potential to contribute to decision-making about the future of landscape and land assets in the UK.

### A. Scope

This highlight notice invites arts and humanities led applications which seek to develop capabilities, dialogue, collaborations, and/or partnerships to inform decision-making about landscape, land-use, and land assets. Applications will need to cut across disciplinary boundaries as well as the boundaries between academia and other stakeholder groups with an interest in decision-making about landscape. These stakeholder groups are varied but could include: land-owners; professional and practice groups; policy-makers and regulators; the historic environment sector; heritage / visitor site managers; environmental, cultural and conservation groups; landscape user groups; local communities; voluntary groups; businesses.

Where possible, proposals under the highlight notice are expected to provide evidence that engagement or consultation with relevant partners has taken place and has informed the development of the networking proposals.

This highlight notice is focused on landscapes in the UK. Landscape in this context is broadly defined, building on the [European Landscape Convention \(2000\)](#) definition of landscape as “part of the land, as perceived by local people or visitors, which evolves through time as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings”.

It is recognized that landscapes:

- are the product of environmental processes, human decisions and social and cultural requirements and values, and the ecosystem services associated with them;
- change continually across multiple scales through natural systems such as water, air, climate and biodiversity, and their interaction over time with human behaviours and multiple-uses;
- acquire distinctive significance as a part of natural and cultural heritage as they evolve.

However, the interactions between and impacts of such considerations will vary in different contexts and over time. The complexity of these interactions makes this area particularly suitable for cross-disciplinary research approaches.

Within this broad framing of landscape, we welcome applications which explore a wide range of concepts and ideas about landscape across many different UK landscape scales, forms, and time horizons. Cross-cultural and cross-national comparative and learning perspectives which can inform UK Landscape decision-making will also be considered.

This highlight notice is open to any innovative, cross-disciplinary arts and humanities research approaches to landscape with implications for landscape decision-making. Applications that seek to develop new collaborations, perspectives, or agendas across boundaries and which seek to build inter-disciplinary and decision-making capabilities, including proposals from, or involving, early career researchers and practice-based researchers, are encouraged under this highlight notice. Some

examples are provided below but applications from beyond these are welcome.

## 1. Exemplar areas of focus

Inter-disciplinary applications under this highlight notice could include innovative arts and humanities research from a wide range of fields including (but not limited to):

- cultural values, valuing and/or connecting with nature, natural capital, ecosystem services, health & well-being, community assets, & the cultural and heritage practices and traditions associated with landscapes;
- participatory decision-making, and integration of different approaches (e.g. creative, critical etc.), perspectives and data in decision-making, inclusion of diverse communities and addressing conflicts;
- landscape histories and change over time, including for example, the histories of landscape design, use and protection and the ways communities adapt to changing landscapes;
- the management of historically and culturally important/ significant landscapes, natural heritage and associated intangible heritage in changing social, economic, environmental and cultural contexts;
- landscape experience, the experience economy, sensory experience, innovative use of digital, mobile and other technologies (e.g. mapping & visualizing changing landscapes);
- landscape beauty and aesthetics;
- affective, emotional and performative dimensions to landscape decision-making;
- spirituality and beliefs linked to landscapes;
- representation of landscape, landscape in the creative arts and media, symbolic, imagined and inspirational landscapes;
- land-ownership, access, legal and regulatory frameworks for land management.

The above list is intended to be illustrative and not exclusive or to constrain research innovation. Proposals drawing on the arts and humanities (in combination with other disciplines where appropriate) to address other themes of central relevance to aims of the landscape decision-making programme will be welcomed.

Notwithstanding the opportunities through this call to build in innovative, cross-disciplinary ways on the existing AHRC and wider UKRI portfolio, applications to develop new teams, collaborations, perspectives or agendas, or from early career researchers, are encouraged under this highlight notice.

## B. Additional Requirements

To be eligible for consideration under this highlight notice proposals must meet the requirements for the highlight notice as outlined in this document as well as the standard eligibility requirements for AHRC's Research Networking Scheme.

Awards funded under this highlight notice will form a part of the wider cross-Council Landscape Decisions Programme and will be expected to collaborate with the Programme Co-ordination Team as outlined in section X below.

## V. Eligibility

Unless otherwise stated, the eligibility criteria as published in section 3 of the [AHRC Research](#)

[Funding Guide](#) will apply.

In order to be considered under this highlight notice applications must draw significantly on relevant arts and humanities research literature, context and concepts or approaches and include significant research expertise within the remit of the AHRC.

This highlight notice seeks to support inter-disciplinary boundary-crossing proposals. This includes proposals that cross, or are on the boundaries between, the AHRC's and other Research Councils' remits. Where proposals extend beyond the AHRC's subject remit, they should ensure that they bring arts and humanities research expertise and distinctive arts and humanities research concepts, ideas and/or approaches centrally into the development of relevant cross-disciplinary fields.

Applicants who are unsure of AHRC's remit can find more information in [sections 7.3 and 7.4 of the AHRC funding guide](#). There is also a [remit query form](#) which can be used to contact AHRC if you are still unsure.

## **VI. Guidance on Costs and Project Timescales**

Unless otherwise stated, project costs, minimums, maximums and timescales as published in the AHRC Research Funding Guide will apply.

For applications under this highlight notice the maximum amount which can be applied for is £45,000 at 100% fEC (to which the Research Councils will contribute 80%).

The standard allowance for an additional £15,000 to support international costs does not apply to proposals submitted under this highlight notice. However, international costs may be requested within the overall £45,000 limit. There is no ring-fence or expectation about the proportion of funding within the £45,000 limit which should be devoted to international costs. This has been done to provide applicants with greater flexibility to support cross-disciplinary working, engagement with landscape decision-makers and wider communities and/or international collaboration.

All applications under the highlight notice are expected to start no earlier than 1st November 2019 and no later than 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

Proposals addressing areas relevant to the highlight notice may continue to be submitted after the closing date but they will not be eligible to access ring-fenced funding for the highlight notice. Moreover, such applications would have to apply through the standard networking call route on J-eS and fall within the standard funding limits and requirements of the Networking Scheme.

## **VII. Application Process and Format**

In addition to meeting the standard requirements for applications to AHRC's research networking scheme (as stated in the AHRC's Research Funding Guide), in order to be considered under this highlight notice applications must also include a statement at the top of the case for support outlining how the proposed networking activities fit within the aims and scope of this highlight notice. In particular, this statement should outline how the proposed activities will contribute to the aims of the highlight notice "to develop the distinctive contributions that arts and humanities research can make to cross-disciplinary, collaborative research with the potential to contribute to decision-making about the future of landscape and land assets in the UK".

The aims and focus of the highlight notice should also be reflected in other sections of the case for

support and application (e.g. impact plans) for example in relation to relevant non-academic collaborations and potential to inform landscape decision-making.

Unless otherwise stated, the application process and format as published in the AHRC Research Funding Guide will apply.

Applications should be submitted through the Je-S system at the latest by **4pm on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July**, and will need to go through the appropriate institution submission process. You should submit your proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>).

To prepare a proposal form in Je-S:

- log-in to your account and choose 'Documents' from the menu;
- then select 'New Document';
- 'AHRC' as the Council,
- 'Standard Proposal' as the Document Type;
- 'Research Networking' as the Scheme;
- 'Research Networking Highlight Notice Changing Landscapes 11 July 2019' as the Call/Type/Mode and
- 'Create Document'.

Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the relevant section headings. Using the 'Help' link at the top of each section will provide guidance relevant to that section of the form.

Note that selecting 'Submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to AHRC. ***Please remember to allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the Call closing date.***

Applications should address the aims of the Call as listed in Section IV.

The following are a list of attachments that are permitted for this Call. Please see Section 4 of the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) for further information about these attachments.

Attachment	Requirement and page limits (sides of A4)
Case for Support	Compulsory. Maximum 4 sides of A4.  <b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> In addition to the standard requirements set out in section 4 of the AHRC Research Funding Guide, all applications to this Highlight Notice must include a statement at the top of the Case for Support outlining how the proposed networking activities fit within the aims and scope of this highlight notice.
Curriculum Vitae	Compulsory for the PI and Co-I (if included). No more than 2 sides A4 for each.
Publication Lists	Compulsory for the PI and Co-I (if included). No more than 1 sides A4 for each.
Justification of Resources	Compulsory. Maximum 2 sides of A4.

Pathways to Impact	Compulsory. Maximum 2 sides of A4.
Project Partner Letter of Support	Only required (and compulsory) if the application has a named Project Partner. Maximum 2 sides of A4.
International Co-I Head of Dept. Statement	Only required (and compulsory) if the application has a named International Co-Investigator. Maximum 2 sides of A4.
Visual Evidence	Optional. Maximum 2 sides of A4.

The attachments should be in an Arial font (use of Arial Narrow is not permitted) no smaller than size 11 and must use normal margin sizes of 2cm.

## VIII. Assessment Process and Criteria

Proposals will be considered by a cross-disciplinary expert assessment panel drawing on members of the AHRC's Peer Review College plus members of other Research Councils' peer review colleges and/or other experts as appropriate. There will not be a separate stage of individual peer review for each application prior to consideration by the Panel and therefore applicants will not receive feedback on their applications in the form of individual peer reviewers' comments. The assessment panel will agree grades for each proposal, agree a ranked priority list of applications, and make funding recommendations to the AHRC. AHRC will report on outcomes of this highlight notice to the cross-Council Landscapes Decision-Making Programme Board.

Proposals submitted under the highlight notice will be assessed on their quality and individual merits according to standard networking scheme criteria but with panelists also asked to consider issues of fit to the highlight notice, including inter-disciplinary innovation and engagement with stakeholders in landscape decision-making. The panel may also take into account issues around the balance of the portfolio of funded projects in agreeing priority rankings amongst proposals given the same grade on quality. Ring-fenced funding through the Strategic Priorities Fund has been allocated to support applications under this highlight notice. As a result, applications addressing the highlight notice may have an increased chance of funding, but only if they meet the excellence criteria for the networking scheme as judged through peer review. Subject to the quality and fit of the applications received, we anticipate funding in the region of 10-15 research networks through this highlight notice

## IX. Call timetable

Activity	Date
Application forms available on je-s	Late April 2019
Deadline for submissions	16.00 hours; Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Panel meeting	Early September
Funding decisions to be issued	Late September 2019
Start date of awards	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2019 – 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2020

## X. Scheme Requirements and Post Award Reporting

Unless otherwise stated, the scheme requirements and post award reporting as stated in the AHRC Research Funding Guide will apply.

Award holders will be required to submit outputs, outcomes, and impacts that arise from AHRC's funding through the Researchfish system. Information can be added to Researchfish at any point



once the award has started but award holders will also be required to 'submit' this information to AHRC at one 'Submission Period' each year. Award holders will receive an email with log-in details shortly after their award has started. More details on Researchfish are available on the RCUK website here: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/research-outcomes1/about-researchfish/>

Applicants should note that award holders funded under this highlight notice will form part of a wider UKRI cross-disciplinary programme on "[Landscape Decisions: Towards a new framework for using land assets](#)", led by the NERC and funded through the first wave of the UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund. Award holders will be encouraged to explore opportunities to collaborate and exploit synergies across the portfolio of AHRC research networks funded through this highlight notice as appropriate. In addition, they may be invited by the AHRC, NERC or other participating Research Councils, and/or by the Programme Co-ordination Team (PCT) to be appointed in 2019, to contribute to building a cross-disciplinary research community through, for example, participation in cross-disciplinary and collaborative partnership events, workshops, reports, knowledge exchange and synthesis activities organized as a part of the wider programme. Networks funded under this highlight notice will be expected to keep the PCT informed of major events or outcomes relating to their projects and to respond in a timely way to requests from the PCT for updates on progress.

## **XI. Contact Information**

For queries about this call such as eligible activities and costs or remit of the call please contact AHRC at [enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org) or telephone: 01793 416060 (available Monday to Friday 8:30-16:30)

For queries on using Je-S such as creating and submitting the application form or Je-S account creation, please contact the Je-S Helpdesk on 01793 444164 or [jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org) (available Monday to Friday 08:30 – 5:00).

## XII. Annex A: Reports and Information on Landscapes

Below we have highlighted some recent documentation and strategies from across the UK referred to in the context section above that informed the development of this highlight notice and the wider programme it sits within. Applicants may find these useful in shaping and framing their applications but reference to them in applications is not required and it is recognized that there is a much broader policy and practice context than that referenced below.

There is increasing recognition of the importance of more integrated approaches in decision-making. [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#), published by Defra in 2018, includes as one of its six goals “Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment” including “Safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage”.

The [common statement prepared by the Strategic Historic Environment Forum](#) in Scotland (2016) emphasises the importance of a ‘holistic approach’ and notes that “Change is a normal part of our how landscapes evolve. To enable clear, informed decision-making on the type, extent and acceptability of change that delivers most public benefit, our policy frameworks need to recognise and better integrate the many values that are contained in our landscapes, including the historic dimension. These policies should be driven by the significant contribution that the landscape and the historic environment can make to outcomes for the economy, health, place-making, and sense of identity”.

The [Future Landscapes: Delivering for Wales’](#) report (2017) comments that “Landscapes in all their forms (rural, urban, coastal, marine, industrial, etc.) shape the feelings and identity of individuals, communities and the nation. Landscapes help people to understand their past. They inform the present and help express society’s collective hopes for the future”. In addition, the report notes the importance of collaboration and working beyond boundaries “to enhance their social, economic, environmental and cultural resources; delivering the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations whilst enhancing the very qualities that make them both distinctive and cherished”

The website of [Northern Ireland’s Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#) notes that “Landscape in itself is difficult to value objectively. Much of what is valued in a landscape is a blend of natural features and social and cultural history, which is highly evocative and therefore important to people. The poignancy of this is outwardly reflected in art, poetry and song and inwardly in a sense of pride, belonging and comfort, all reinforcing this feeling of ‘value’. Increasingly this value is also being realised in economic terms with the overt marketing of landscape for tourism and as a pleasant place for recreation or to live in”.

The [European Landscape Convention](#) puts people at the heart of landscape policy and encourages the public “to take an active part in its protection, conserving and maintaining the heritage value of a particular landscape, in its management, helping to steer changes brought about by economic, social or environmental necessity, and in its planning, particularly for those areas most radically affected by change, such as peri-urban, industrial and coastal areas”.

[Historic England’s Research Strategy \(2016\)](#) notes that even familiar landscapes may be “poorly understood and undervalued” and there is an important role for research in “identifying, defining and communicating the most significant aspects of the historic environment”. Landscape features significantly across a range of themes within the accompanying [Historic England Research Agenda](#) and a number of specific research questions are identified such as: how can we use and

communicate enhanced understanding of our rural historic environment to encourage communities to engage more actively with the character of their rural places and landscapes?

The [National Trust's Research Strategy](#) highlights the importance of: working at 'landscape scale'; climate change and infrastructure; and, the need for research to enhance understanding of "[l]andscape character, the balance of components inherent within it (e.g. natural, historical, archaeological, visual) and how this balance informs land management choices". It also identifies issues such as how landscapes "can reveal the social, cultural, creative and political history of their makers, users and owners" and how "radical landscapes" can be important symbols of moments of protest or change to people's rights.

The [National Lottery Heritage Fund \(NLHF\) Strategic Funding Framework](#) (page 26) lists landscapes and nature as one of only two priority areas of focus and seeks to encourage projects which explore connected issues such as: increasing people's understanding of the cultural value of landscapes and nature; reconnecting people with the importance of and value of nature to their daily lives; and, increasing and broadening collaboration particularly where it engages organisations which may have a direct impact of the futures of landscapes and nature.