
LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE COUNTS

A HANDBOOK FOR A MENU OF LOCAL INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Chapter 1

Summary

“Improving the quality of life for people in this country is perhaps the most important duty of Government” “[Indicators] measure how we perform on the big important things, such as people’s health, the state of the economy, employment, transport, crime and the environment.” *John Prescott, in the foreword to Quality of life counts: the core set of sustainable development indicators for the UK. December 1999.*

This handbook offers some ideas for measuring sustainable development and quality of life¹ in local communities. It gives a menu of 29 indicators, developed jointly² by DETR, the LGA, IDeA, Audit Commission, local authorities and Local Agenda 21 groups, and tested in about 30 local authorities. The indicators are based on local versions of some of the national indicators of sustainable development, including some of the 15 ‘headline’ indicators, and also on a number of other indicators developed by local authorities and LA21 groups.

The guidance in the handbook needs to be seen in the context of the new duty on principal local authorities to prepare **Community Strategies**, for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and so contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. The duty to produce a community strategy is similar to the process of producing strategies under LA21. The Community strategy will provide a framework for streamlining and rationalising the existing planning framework and tying together a wide range of local initiatives – including LA21, the New Commitment to Regeneration, local transport plans, local crime and disorder strategies, Health Improvement Plans, local environment strategies or plans. The Government would expect local authorities to **build on their existing LA21 partnerships** and other strategic initiatives, when establishing the partnerships to prepare the community strategy, and **authorities and their partners may wish to consider using all or a selection of the indicators in this handbook for reporting on their community strategies.**

Local authorities, LA21 groups and their partners are encouraged to select and use those indicators from the menu, which are most appropriate to their local experiences, needs and circumstances. Additional locally chosen and developed indicators may of course be used to supplement those selected from the menu.

Where possible, indicators from the **Best Value** set have been recommended, but the Best Value indicators reflect largely only those services and activities which are under the direct control of the authority. These sustainable development indicators are intended to reflect a broader view of quality of life of the local community, so they cover issues where the influence of the local authority may be indirect or shared with other partners in the community.

The indicators will change and evolve as understanding develops and priorities change. These proposals have been assembled through a considerable amount of work. Credit must go especially to members of Central Local (government) Information Partnership (CLIP) Task Force on Sustainable Development and to the pilot Local Authorities who tested the indicators, and helped to develop this handbook.

¹ Quality of life is a term used by government synonymously with sustainable development, because it is felt to be more easily understood by the general public. However, care needs to be taken in using it - quality of life for people today must not be achieved at the expense of people in the future.

² Developed by the Central Local (government) Information Partnership (CLIP) Task Force on Sustainable Development.

1.1 Context and background

WHAT IS “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”?

Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. Sustainable development means recognising that **our economy, environment and social well-being are interdependent**. It means protecting and, where possible, enhancing the environment, for its own sake and also because a damaged environment will sooner or later hold back economic development and affect people's quality of life. It is about ensuring we satisfy people's basic needs, such as providing warm homes and safe streets and giving people the opportunity to achieve their potential through education, information, participation, good health and employment. And it requires a robust economy to create the wealth that allows needs to be satisfied, now and in the future.

The national sustainable development strategy and indicators

In May 1999 the Government published its strategy: *A better quality of life*³ which sets out the key issues and priorities at national scale. The strategy says:

Sustainable development means ensuring a better quality of life for everyone now, and for generations to come. It requires us to meet four objectives at the same time, here in the UK and in the world as a whole:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources;
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

In December 1999, the strategy was followed by a report, *Quality of life counts*⁴, setting out some 150 indicators of sustainable development, including 15 “headline” indicators, which will be used to monitor and report on progress, nationally.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

We all are. Central government nationally, and international organisations like the UN and the EU have important roles to play. So too does big business and industry. But sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for people, and what matters most to people are their local communities and environments. Each one of us as a citizen, an employee or someone running a small business, also has a contribution to make, as do voluntary and community groups. Local government, as the natural focus and

³ A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development for the UK. Cm 4345. Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. TSO May 1999.

⁴ Quality of life counts: indicators for a strategy for sustainable development for the UK. Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. DETR Dec 1999.

leader of the local community, has a key role. Achieving sustainable development is central to the modern local government agenda and reflected in the new duty (in Part I of the Local Government Act 2000) to prepare **Community Strategies** for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and so contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

THE ROLE OF INDICATORS

Indicators are tools that measure, simplify and communicate important issues and trends. They are valuable in providing a benchmark against which future progress can be measured. Indicators can help people understand the breadth of sustainable development issues and the relationships between them.

Those using indicators have found that they are invaluable not just as a means of **measuring progress**, but as a tool to **raise awareness** of the key issues among the public and policy-makers, and to **help people understand what they themselves need to do**.

BACKGROUND TO THIS PROJECT

Since the Rio Summit in 1992, most local authorities and LA21 groups throughout the UK have been developing Local Agenda 21 strategies; many have proposed or developed indicators to raise awareness and promote understanding, and to monitor and report on progress. The Prime Minister has challenged all local authorities to have a Local Agenda 21 strategy in place by the end of 2000.

In May 1998 the Central and Local (Government) Information Partnership (CLIP) set up a task force to investigate how the existing indicator work at local and at national levels could be built on and co-ordinated. The remit of the Task Force was to develop a menu of 20 – 30 indicators which local authorities might use in the future on a voluntary basis, and to produce a handbook setting out sources of existing data and methods for collecting new data. This work had been requested by the local authority organisations because they recognised that it would be useful for local authorities to **share experiences** in this field, and that there are several advantages to local authorities **measuring common issues in a consistent manner**.

1.2 How to use this guide

Measuring quality of life is a key element not just of LA21, but also of the Community Strategy process, which need to be closely integrated (see section 1.3 below). It also touches on issues which are the subject of a number of other initiatives, including crime and disorder strategies, Health Improvement Plans, local environment strategies or plans, local transport plans, the land use planning system and the New Commitment for Regeneration, for many of which indicators are being developed. Those responsible for producing sustainable development indicators are **strongly advised to make contact with the relevant liaison officer(s)** in these other areas, to avoid duplication of effort, or inconsistency in the choice of indicators between this and the other related initiatives.

Those involved in developing indicators at local scale, and the authorities who helped to pilot the indicators in this guide, agree that the **process of developing indicators** is at least as important as the indicators themselves. The indicators proposed in this guide could be used as a **starting point** to help to stimulate discussion and debate within the authority and with its partner organisations, and with the community. Experience shows

that presenting people with a menu of indicators stimulates, rather than stifles, debate. Presenting people with a menu of indicators can help people to understand what sustainable development means, and how wide is the scope of the issues we need to address to ensure a truly sustainable community.

The indicators should therefore be used as a **menu or checklist of issues**; an authority may choose not to use some of these indicators - it may be possible to develop better ones in consultation with local partners. The number of indicators in the menu has been deliberately kept small, so local authorities can supplement them with locally chosen indicators. But an authority will wish to consider carefully the reasons for excluding any of the issues from its own set of indicators, and will need to ensure that it **maintains a balance** between economic, social and environmental issues.

Appendix C (available in the internet version of this handbook at www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/index.htm) sets out some ideas on a process for agreeing and discussing indicators.

HOW WE SELECTED THE INDICATORS

The indicators have been selected following extensive consultation with local authorities and LA21 groups (see appendix D), building on the experience of those authorities and groups already using indicators. They are consistent with the 15 headline and some of the 132 wider national sustainable development indicators, but in some cases it is not practicable to compile the national indicator at local scale.

There is a great deal of international work on indicators, both at national and community scale, within other countries, and work sponsored by international bodies like the EU, OECD and UN. There is as yet, however, no international consensus, particularly on local indicators which need to reflect local circumstances, although a number of common issues have been identified in all the initiatives. In developing these indicators, the Task Force also took account of ideas emerging from a number of international initiatives.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD INDICATOR?

Much has been written on this elsewhere – a particularly good guide has been produced by the Audit Commission, “Aiming to improve the principals of performance measurement”. However, a few key points are worth making here.

There is a danger that **indicators can distort priorities** – those things which are being measured and reported are viewed as more important, while things which are less readily measured are omitted and given lower priority. So it is important to ensure that the indicator set covers the main issues. In particular, it is important to ensure that the indicators represent a **balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions** of sustainable development – it is only when we are making progress in all of these areas at the same time that we can consider our development to be sustainable.

Indicators can also **distort actions** – people can find ingenious ways of improving the measure, without improving the actual performance. In general, it is better to focus on measurement of outcomes, rather than of process, though the latter is often easier to measure.

The indicators should also be **meaningful, credible and resonant** with local people.

As well as measuring where we are today, it is important to be able to track changes over time, so the indicators should ideally be replicable in future, and should be sufficiently robust that changes can reliably be detected. There can be a tension here. As discussed above, indicators are used for different purposes, one of which is to raise awareness. Some of the pilot authorities found that **involving members of the local community in collecting data** (for example, in the school survey of how children get to school) is important as it **can help to raise awareness**. However, such involvement may also mean that results are less standardised and so less comparable over time or with those of other authorities - participation of schools, ages of children surveyed etc will all affect the results. Using the local authority's own data on municipal waste is cost effective and reliable, but does not engage the local community in monitoring how much waste they produce.

In some cases, we were able to find a readily measurable indicator which all authorities could use with common methodology and definitions. In other cases, there are two or more alternative ways of measuring the indicator, none of which is clearly better, so we have presented more than one option. There is a third group of indicators which we felt should be represented in the set because the issue itself is considered important, but there is not yet a consensus from the consultation or the pilots about how it should be measured. Some possible options which have been explored by the pilots are included for consideration.

TARGETS

The national sustainable development targets are set out in A better quality of life and reflected in the relevant national indicators. In most cases, these are not applicable locally – local targets need to be set to reflect local circumstances. The process for doing this is likely to be in the context of preparing the community strategy. The draft guidance on developing a community strategy (see below) sets out the need to establish a long-term vision of the future, which will reflect the community's aspirations, but will also need to include some hard-edged outcome targets.

Targets and target-setting are therefore not discussed further in this handbook.

1.3 Related initiatives

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES AND BEST VALUE

The guidance in the handbook needs to be seen in the context of the new duty on principal local authorities to prepare **Community Strategies**, for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and so contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. In taking forward community planning, local authorities will be building on what has been achieved through LA21. A growing number of local authorities are merging their LA21 strategies with community strategies.

The community strategy will provide a framework for streamlining and rationalising the existing planning framework and tying together a wide range of local initiatives – including LA21, the New Commitment to Regeneration, local transport plans, local crime and disorder strategies, Health Improvement Plans, local environment strategies or plans. The duty to produce a community strategy is similar to the process of producing strategies under LA21. The Government would expect local authorities to build on their existing LA21 partnerships and those in other areas, when establishing the partnerships to prepare the community strategy.

Community planning partnerships will be considering how they will monitor and report on progress with their Community Strategies. Monitoring systems should involve the local authority, other partners and the wider community, and the **draft guidance on preparing a Community Strategy⁵ suggests that authorities and their partners may wish to consider using all or a selection of the indicators in this handbook.** The local community planning partnerships may need to supplement them with additional locally chosen or developed indicators.

The development of a comprehensive community strategy is inextricably linked to the delivery of a local authority's duty of **Best Value**. Best Value and the Best Value Performance Indicators reflect largely the services and activities which are under the direct control of the authority. Sustainable development indicators, like the Community Strategy, reflect the wider perspective of long term economic, social and environmental well-being of the community, and are focused on outcomes, rather than service provision. They therefore include indicators where the influence of the local authority may be indirect or shared with other partners in the community. In this handbook we have recommended Best Value indicators where possible, to ensure coherence and to avoid collecting slightly different information for a very similar purpose – eight of the recommended local sustainable development indicators are also in the national Best Value set⁶.

Pilot authorities' views on the link between the community strategies, Best Value and the sustainable development indicators are set out in Appendix A.

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

The aim of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal will be to turn around poor neighbourhoods, reducing the gap between those neighbourhoods and the rest. Eighteen Policy Action Teams were set up to address the problems identified in the Social Exclusion Unit's 1998 report on deprived neighbourhoods. PAT 18⁷ has produced a set of proposals for bringing together data useful for monitoring deprivation in local areas – some of the information is already available, some will be collected in a longer term programme of improving local area information. Some of the recommended PAT 18 measures are already in this recommended set of local sustainable development indicators – in the future, implementation of the PAT18 proposals may provide an alternative source of local information on these issues.

1.4 Local reporting

Reporting the indicators widely is an important part of the process. Reports should, ideally, show where we are now, and whether things are getting better or worse for each indicator. They should also report progress against any targets, which have been set. The Government is committed to reporting annually the progress it has made against the 15 national headline indicators. It has said that its **aim is for all of the headline indicators to move in the right direction over time**, and that where they do not, it will adjust policies accordingly and look to others to join it in taking action. It is hoped that local authorities will approach their own quality of life indicators in the same spirit of willingness and transparency.

⁵ Para 76, page 18 of the draft guidance, Preparing Community Strategies, available from DETR Free Literature PO Box No 236 Wetherby LS23 7NB - order on tel : 0870 1226 236 and on the DETR Web site at www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/consult/lgbill99/pcsdraft/index.htm

⁶ Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2000/2001. Audit Commission, DETR and Home Office, December 1999. (<http://www.local.detr.gov.uk/research/bvpi.htm>)

⁷ National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal; Report of Policy Action Team 18: Better Information. TSO, April 2000.

There are many good examples of local indicator reports – for example those for Birmingham, Lancashire, Somerset, Surrey and West Devon.

It will be important to track changes in the future – although some of the indicators may be tracked annually or even quarterly, many of the issues measured will change relatively slowly. It may not be useful or necessary to report on them all every year. The local community planning partnership will decide with what frequency to report on the Community Strategy. The next full review of the national sustainable development strategy and indicators will be in 2004.

1.5 The future and improving the guide

As more local authorities start to use indicators, we will want to amend and improve this guide. We propose to review the usefulness of the indicators themselves, and continue to ensure that where possible they remain consistent with those being used in related initiatives. The CLIP Task Force is likely to continue to carry forward this work.

If users of this handbook have questions or problems, please contact the IDeA [helpline](#):

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Any comments on the handbook, the recommended indicators or alternative indicators found useful locally can be e-mailed to:

local_qolc@detr.gov.uk

Chapter 2

The recommended indicators

The set of indicators recommended in this handbook emerged from a much larger set of proposals. Following consultation and testing by pilot authorities, the number of indicators has been trimmed to a menu of 29 indicators. Local Authorities and LA 21 groups may choose to use any or all of the indicators in the menu. It will probably be necessary to supplement them with additional locally relevant indicators. As discussed in section 1.2, authorities will need to ensure a good balance between indicators reflecting social, economic and environmental issues.

2.1 Framework and indicators

The full list of indicators is given in the framework below in Table 2.1, which links the indicators with “Characteristics of a sustainable society”. These are taken from the checklist in ‘*Sustainable local communities for the 21st century*’⁸. The framework also reflects some linkages to the national framework used for the ‘Quality of life counts’ national sustainable development indicators. Definitions and further details on how to collect or compile data for each indicator are explained in the individual indicator sheets in Chapter 3.

⁸ Taken from Sustainable local communities for the 21st century – Why and how to prepare an effective Local Agenda 21 strategy (January 1998), adapted from LGMB (1994b) – The sustainable indicators research project: indicators and LA21, a summary.

Table 2.1: The framework and menu of local indicators	
Characteristics of a sustainable society	Local quality of life indicators in the menu
(PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT)	ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use energy, water and other natural resources efficiently and with care • Minimise waste, then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery and finally dispose of what is left 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Prudent use of resources △ Energy use (gas and electricity) (1) △ Domestic water use (2) △ Household waste arisings (3) △ Recycling of household waste (4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit pollution to levels which do not damage natural systems • Value and protect the diversity of nature 	Protection of the environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Number of days of air pollution (5) △ Rivers of good or fair quality (6) △ Net change in natural/semi-natural habitats (7) △ Changes in population of selected characteristic species (8)
(MEET SOCIAL NEEDS)	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect human health and amenity through safe, clean, pleasant environments • Emphasis health service prevention action as well as care • Maximise everyone's access to the skills and knowledge needed to play a full part in society 	Better health and education for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Mortality by cause (9) △ Qualifications of young people (10) △ Adult education (11)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to good food, water, housing and fuel at a reasonable cost • Encourage necessary access⁹ to facilities, services, goods and other people in ways which make less use of the car and minimise impacts on the environment • Make opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation readily available to all • Meet local needs locally wherever possible 	Access to local services and travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Homes judged unfit to live in (12) △ Homelessness (13) △ Access to key services (14) △ Travel to work (15) △ How do school children travel to school? (16) △ Overall traffic volumes (17)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create or enhance places, spaces and buildings that work well, wear well and look well • Make settlements 'human' in scale and form • Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness and strengthen local community and cultural identity 	Shaping our surroundings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ New homes built on previously developed land (18) △ Public concern over noise (19) △ Recorded crime per 1,000 population (20) △ Fear of crime (21)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower all sections of the community to participate in decision making and consider the social and community impacts of decisions. 	Empowerment and participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Social participation (22) △ Community well being (23) △ Tenant satisfaction/participation (24)
(PROMOTE ECONOMIC SUCCESS)	ECONOMIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national or global environment • Value unpaid work 	Sustainable local economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ Employment/unemployment (25) △ Benefit recipients (26) △ Business start-ups and closures (27) △ Companies with environment management systems (28) △ Social and community enterprises (29)

⁹ Included under 'promote economic success' in original list.

2.2 Other initiatives using the same indicators

Table 2.2 below shows where indicators in the menu are used elsewhere, either in the Government's set of sustainable development indicators (headline or other) in 'Quality of life counts' or as part of the Best Value set of performance indicators. This offers LAs the opportunity to put these local indicators in context and avoid duplication of effort, where the data for the indicator are available from local or national sources.

Table 2.2 Other initiatives using the same or similar indicators

Indicators	Best Value	Headline national indicator	Other national QOLC indicator
Environmental			
1. Energy use (gas and electricity)			✓
2. Domestic water use			✓
3. Household waste arisings	✓	(✓)	
4. Recycling of household waste	✓	(✓)	
5. Number of days of air pollution		✓	
6. Rivers of good or fair quality		✓	
7. Net change in natural/semi-natural habitats			
8. Changes in population of selected characteristic species			
Social			
9. Mortality by cause			✓
10. Level 2 qualifications of young people		(✓)	
11. Adult education	✓		
12. Homes judged unfit to live in	(✓)	✓	
13. Homelessness			(✓)
14. Access to key services			✓
15. Travel to work			(✓)
16. How do school children travel to school?			✓
17. Overall traffic volumes		✓	
18. New homes built on previously developed land	✓	✓	
19. Public concern over noise			
20. Recorded crime per 1,000 population	✓	✓	
21. Fear of crime	(✓)		(✓)
22. Social participation (local voluntary action)			(✓)
23. Community well being			(✓)
24. Tenant satisfaction/participation	✓		
Economic			
25. Employment/unemployment		✓	
26. Benefit recipients			
27. Business start-ups and closures			(✓)
28. Companies with environment management systems			(✓)
29. Social and community enterprises			

✓ Same indicator used

(✓) Similar indicator used

2.3 Additional points about data

The **time period** covered by data is important – for example, unemployment, water use, energy use are all seasonally variable. If it is not possible to collect data covering a whole year, it can be important to ensure that the same period (month or quarter) is surveyed each time to avoid distorting comparisons over time. Where data are collected annually it is recommended that they be collected by calendar year or by financial year. The latter may be preferred because this is the period generally used for Best Value indicators. The period of time covered by the data should be made explicit.

Many of these indicators will change only relatively slowly over time – it may not be worth collecting data every year, and large samples may be necessary to reliably detect small changes. For many of the indicators, a 3 or even 5-year cycle of data collection may be more appropriate.

A number of the indicators are expressed in terms of **local population** figures. It is suggested that the most recent mid-year estimates available from the Office for National Statistics are used for this purpose. These can be found on the National Statistics Internet site, www.statistics.gov.uk under Statbase, publication datasets, and then population estimates for the relevant year.

There are a number of indicators in the menu for which data might be collected via a single **local household survey**. It is likely that many authorities are already carrying out such surveys, for example in the context of Best Value, and combining the questions recommended in the handbook with another questionnaire might provide a cost effective manner of collecting data. **Guidance** on carrying out surveys for Best Value is available on the internet at: <http://www.local.detr.gov.uk/research/bvpi.htm>.

The guidance covers the strengths and weaknesses of different types of surveys, such as postal, face to face and telephone surveys. Many of the Best Value consultation responses suggested that postal surveys might be the recommended method, however, the guidance recognises that for many authorities and situations postal surveys may not be the most appropriate option.

While postal surveys are less expensive than face to face surveys, their response is typically only 25-30%. Results will need to be interpreted with care – respondents may not be fully representative of the local population. The results may be quite satisfactory for some purposes – for example, ascertaining more qualitative information on people's views and attitudes. However, they will be less reliable if used to estimate quantitative information like average distance travelled to work, particularly if changes are to be tracked over time. Since the changes being measured are likely to be quite small, large samples would be needed to detect significant differences.

Face to face surveys are more expensive, but have higher response rates and are more representative of the local population than postal surveys. They may, therefore, be more appropriate if authorities wish to generate certain indicators such as number 21 covering fear of crime.

Chapter 3

Methodology sheets for each indicator

The following pages give detailed methodological sheets for each of the 29 indicators in the local menu in Table 2.1.

Indicator 1 – Energy use (gas and electricity)

Why does this matter?

The generation and use of energy has widespread environmental impacts including the release of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas. One element of a sustainable energy policy should be the reduction of energy use through efficiency and conservation measures. Households are responsible for nearly 30 per cent of final energy use, and a quarter of carbon dioxide emissions.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Use energy, water and other natural resources efficiently and with care.

Indicator

Household energy use (gas and electricity) per household.

How to compile the indicator

Data on energy use at a local scale is difficult to collect. Local power supply companies should be able to help but may not wish to give out commercially sensitive data. It may be easier to obtain data for one quarter, rather than for the whole year, as this is less burdensome and possibly less sensitive. The number of households is required for the denominator of this indicator.

Frequency of collection

Annual – because of the seasonal nature of energy use, it is important to collect data on an annual basis. If data for only one quarter are feasible, they should be for the same quarter each year. Changes from year to year should be interpreted with caution because they will be affected by temperature variations – this is particularly so for quarterly data.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Emissions of greenhouse gases' is a headline national sustainable development indicator (H9). 'Energy use per household' is a core national sustainable development indicator (A3).

National trends

Emissions of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, fell by 7 per cent between 1990 and 1998. However, energy use per household changed little in this time. In 1998 it was around two tonnes oil equivalent per household in GB.

Comments

Climate change is an important issue. Piloting local authorities felt it necessary to reflect this indicator despite the difficulties in obtaining data. DETR are assessing the feasibility of estimating CO₂ emissions at regional scale, but it is unlikely this will be possible at a more local scale.

Limitations: The indicator does not consider the use of solid fuel and oil or energy used in industry, services or transport sectors. Owing to the number of companies involved in supplying power to a particular area it may be very difficult to monitor accurately. It may not be possible to separately identify electricity used from renewable sources. The indicator does not provide a standardised indication of contribution to global warming such as CO₂ produced per head of population.

Indicator 2 – Domestic water use

Why does this matter?

Water is a vital renewable resource but there are bounds to freshwater availability. Low rainfall and over use can place pressure on existing supplies in vulnerable parts of the country. This reduces availability and affects wildlife and habitats. Purification for drinking water is also energy intensive.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Use energy, water and other natural resources efficiently and with care.

Indicator

Household water use per person per day (litres).

How to compile the indicator

The sources for this data are local water companies or OFWAT. Water company boundaries tend to be at a regional level and data at local authority level are often not available. The most recent water company figures are available in the OFWAT report 'Leakages and Water Efficiency 1998/99' available on the Internet at www.open.gov.uk/ofwat/ under publications and then reports on water companies.

A local (or regional) population figure is required for the denominator of this indicator. Population figures can be found on the National Statistics Internet site, www.statistics.gov.uk/ under Statbase, publication datasets, and then population estimates for the relevant year.

Frequency of collection

Water use is seasonal and is affected by weather. Annual figures should be used, but changes from year to year may be weather-affected and should be interpreted with caution.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Household water use and peak demand' is a national core indicator of sustainable development (D7).

National trends

Between 1992 and 1997 water consumption in households increased by 6 per cent to 149 litres per person per day in England and Wales.

Comments

There are difficulties in obtaining data for local authority areas but piloting authorities thought this issue was important and should be covered if possible.

Indicator 3 – Household waste arisings

Why does this matter?

The types of waste we produce, all forms of waste management, and the transport of waste, have impacts on the environment. Waste is a potential resource and increased levels of reuse, recycling and energy recovery will contribute to sustainable development.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Minimise waste, then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery and finally dispose of what is left.

Indicator

Household waste collected per person (kilograms).

How to compile the indicator

The information is readily available. The weight data is collected in all local authorities for the Municipal Waste survey.

Frequency of collection

Annual, the data is normally reported for each financial year.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

This indicator is a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 84). The equivalent national indicator of sustainable development is 'Household waste and recycling' (A5).

National trends

In England and Wales, amounts of household waste generated have increased steadily to nearly 500kg per person per year in 1997/98.

Comments

Limitations: The indicator does not consider waste from industrial and commercial properties. The Environment Agency is conducting a survey that should provide data every 3 years on industrial and commercial waste, but it is not ready yet and will not be accurate at local authority level.

Indicator 4 – Recycling of household waste

Why does this matter?

The amount of waste we produce is an indicator of the volume of resources we are consuming. Increasing recycling and recovery of waste would lead to a reduction in the environmental impact of waste disposal.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Minimise waste, then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting or energy recovery and finally dispose of what is left.

Indicator

Recycled household waste (including composting) expressed as a percentage of total tonnage of household waste arisings.

How to compile the indicator

The information is readily available. The weight data is collected in all local authorities for the Municipal Waste survey.

Frequency of collection

Annual, the data is normally reported for each financial year.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

Recycling of waste is measured in Best Value Performance Indicators BVPI 82a and b. The equivalent national indicator of sustainable development is 'Household waste and recycling' (A5).

National trends

The household waste recycling (including composting) figure for England and Wales in 1998/99 was 9.4 per cent.

Comments

As with indicator 3, waste from industrial and commercial properties is not considered.

Indicator 5 – Number of days of air pollution

Why does this matter?

A key sustainable development objective is to control air pollution in order to reduce the risks of harm to human health, the natural environment and quality of life.

The following pollutants have been associated with potential health impacts:

- nitrogen dioxide(NO₂): is thought to have both acute and chronic effects on airways and lung function, particularly in people with asthma;
- sulphur dioxide (SO₂): affects the lining of the nose, throat and airways of the lung, in particular among those who suffer from asthma and chronic lung disease;
- ozone (O₃): affects breathing and lung function;
- carbon monoxide(CO): reduces the capacity of the blood to carry oxygen and deliver it to the tissues and can block important biochemical reactions in cells.
- PM₁₀: particulate air pollution episodes are responsible for causing excess deaths among those with pre-existing lung and heart disease.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Limit pollution to levels which do not damage natural systems.

Quality of life counts objective

Reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve through the longer term.

Indicator

Average number of days per site when air pollution is moderate or higher for NO₂, SO₂, O₃, CO or PM₁₀

How to compile the indicator

Data for this indicator are available from AEA NETCEN (www.aeat.co.uk/netcen/airqual/) or Local Environmental Health Departments.

To calculate an average figure across monitoring sites it is recommended that data from at least four sites should be used. If this is not feasible then individual sites could be reported separately. It is advisable to collect and present urban and rural sites separately, as in most areas a limited range of pollutants is measured at rural sites.

Frequency of collection

Although these data are updated continually they are only validated in three-month blocks in arrears - it is recommended to use validated data. The seasonal nature of this indicator suggests a sensible reporting period would be annual; this also allows comparison with the national indicator.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Days when air pollution is moderate or higher' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H10) and 'Concentrations of selected air pollutants' is a core national indicator of sustainable development (P1).

National trends

In urban areas, the annual average number of days per site when air pollution was recorded as moderate or higher fell from 59 days in 1993 to 30 days in 1999. In rural areas the average number of days per site fluctuated between 21 and 50 days per year between 1987 and 1999.

Comments

For further information on national air quality objectives for promoting human health at the local level refer to the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – Working Together for Clean Air, published January 2000. This can be accessed on the Internet at www.environment.detr.gov.uk/airquality/index.htm.

The National Society for Clean Air is a key resource organisation in this field.

Limitations: To collect data for this indicator automated monitoring equipment at a permanent location is required. The indicator reflects peak concentrations rather than background concentrations and does not consider lead, benzene or 1,3-butadiene which all have associated national air quality objectives.

The predominant cause of air pollution in rural areas is ozone. This is strongly influenced by national and continental pollution and local measures would have a limited effect.

Indicator 6 – Rivers of good or fair quality

Why does this matter?

River water quality is important because rivers are a major source of water used for drinking and by industry. Rivers also support a wide variety of wildlife and are used extensively for recreation. Abstraction from and discharges to rivers and from the ground waters that support them, affects their flow and their quality.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Limit pollution to levels which do not damage natural systems.

Quality of life counts objective

Improving river quality.

Indicator

Percentage of length of rivers and canals falling into the good or fair quality grades of the Environment Agency Chemical and Biological GQA.

How to compile the indicator

Data at local authority level is expected to be available from the Environment Agency's National Centre for Environmental Data and Surveillance from September 2000. Summary data for individual sampling sites can be accessed by map selection on the Environment Agency Internet site – www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Frequency of collection

Data are available annually for chemical quality but currently only every five years for biological quality. Data are available back to at least 1990.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Rivers of good or fair quality' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H12).

National trends

Nearly 95 per cent of the river network in the UK was assessed as being of good or fair chemical quality in 1998, and nearly 95 per cent as good or fair biological quality in 1995.

Comments

The chemical assessment in this indicator is based on ammonia, dissolved oxygen and biochemical oxygen demand which are generally indicators of sewage pollution. The chemical assessment does not specifically include metals, organics or sediments although the biological GQA should present a more integrated picture.

Indicator 7 – Net change in natural/ semi-natural habitats

Why does this matter?

We value wildlife for its own sake and because it is an integral part of our surroundings and our quality of life. We therefore wish to conserve and enhance the wide variety of our wildlife species and habitats in the UK for future generations.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Value and protect the diversity of nature.

Indicator

Net change in the quality and/or quantity of locally important natural/ semi-natural habitats (eg woodland or grassland)

How to compile the indicator

This indicator will vary in content and availability of data depending on the habitats of local importance. The Broad Habitats classification used in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan is a good framework to use. Suggested sources of data are: Local authority nature conservation officer, local wildlife trust, local British Trust for Ornithology, RSPB, English Nature and other local wildlife groups. The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology is preparing Land Cover Map 2000, which will provide an overview of broad habitats for the whole country using satellite images. This should be available early in 2001.

Frequency of collection

This will vary depending on the information being gathered and the source.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

Related core national indicators of sustainable development are 'Trends in plant diversity' (S3), 'Biodiversity action plans' (S4), 'Landscape features'(S5) and 'Extent and management of SSSIs' (S6). Estimates of the national extent and quality of broad habitats will be provided by the Countryside Survey 2000 which is due to be published later this year.

National trends

Significant declines in plant species diversity were recorded in infertile grassland, upland wooded and moorland grass habitats between 1978 and 1990. By the end of 1999, biodiversity action plans for all 45 agreed priority habitats had been costed and for many of them action had started. The length of managed hedgerows decreased by nearly a third between 1984 and 1993 in England and Wales. Assessments of SSSIs suggest that just over half of English sites were in a 'favourable' condition in 1997/98.

Comments

Local Biodiversity Action Plans, produced in response to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, aim to ensure that national targets for habitats and species are achieved. In addition to addressing national priorities at the local level, they will promote the conservation of species and habitats characteristic of local areas.

Local Quality of Life Counts

Issue: Protection of the environment

Pilots felt that the information required for this indicator is needed for planning and directing their nature conservation efforts and would be welcomed by an interested and concerned public.

Limitations: The variable quality of data and different priorities mean that comparisons between local authorities are difficult. Data are more likely to be available at county level than district level. The collection of local habitat data tends not to be standardised and is not well suited to monitoring because the data are generally collected for conservation assessment purposes. There are many local initiatives - as part of the development of the National Biodiversity Network - which aim to improve access to information through local biological record centres.

Indicator 8 – Changes in population of selected characteristic species

Why does this matter?

We value wildlife for its own sake and because it is an integral part of our surroundings and our quality of life. We therefore wish to conserve, as far as reasonably possible, the wide variety of our wildlife species and habitats in the UK for future generations.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Value and protect the diversity of nature.

Indicator

The occurrence of one or more characteristic species (to be determined locally).

How to compile the indicator

The species selected for this indicator and availability of data will vary depending on the locality of the local authority. Suggested data sources are: Local authority nature conservation officer, local wildlife trust, local British Trust for Ornithology, RSPB, English Nature or other local wildlife groups. The National Biodiversity Network is being established to provide access to local biological records and many areas already have a local biological records centre.

Frequency of collection

The time of the year for collection is important. For comparison from year to year, collection should be at the same time of year. Data could be averaged over more than one year to reduce the impact of natural volatility.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Populations of wild birds' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H13). Progress of 'Biodiversity action plans' is a core national indicator of sustainable development (S4).

National trends

Farmland and woodland birds have generally been declining from the mid-1970s to 1998. By the end of 1999, biodiversity action plans for all 391 agreed priority species had been costed and for many of them action had started.

Comments

Local Biodiversity Action Plans, produced in response to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, aim to ensure that national targets for habitats and species are achieved. In addition to addressing national priorities at the local level they will promote the conservation of species and habitats characteristic of local areas.

Pilots found this indicator useful as a means of stimulating public interest. Some species monitoring provides an excellent opportunity for community involvement in data collection and many wildlife groups run regular public participation surveys. Some existing sets of sustainable development indicators include a species indicator collected by the public e.g. Oldham and the number frogs and newts in ponds.

Local Quality of Life Counts

Issue: Protection of the environment

It is important not to underestimate the potential for technical rigour associated with this indicator.

Limitations: The local nature of this indicator means that data will not be suitable for comparisons across local authorities. Data may be collected for site assessment as opposed to population monitoring. Data are more likely to be available at county level than district level. Data collected by volunteers need careful quality control.

Indicator 9 – Mortality by cause

Why does this matter?

Improving people's health is a key sustainable development objective. This means ensuring better health for everyone – the worst off in society as well as the more affluent, men and women. The Government's White Paper, 'Our Healthier Nation', sets out to reduce mortality by 2010, from the following four main causes:

1. Heart disease, stroke and related illnesses amongst people under 75 by at least 40 per cent
2. Cancer amongst people under 75 by at least 20 per cent
3. Suicide and undetermined injury by at least 20 per cent
4. Accidents by at least 20 per cent.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Protect human health and amenity through safe, clean, pleasant environments.

Indicator

The death rate per 100,000 residents in the four categories above averaged over three years.

How to compile the indicator

Your local health authority should be able to provide data for this indicator and explain the local situation. Figures may only be available for local health authority areas, which may not correspond exactly to local authority boundaries - this should not significantly effect the indicator.

The International Classification of Diseases ICD-9 are:

Cancer: 140 to 209 inclusive

Circulatory diseases: 390 to 459

Accidents: E800 to E949

Suicides: (E950 to E959) + (E980 to E989) less E988.8

The figure calculated for each of the four categories is intended to compare local death rates with those that might be expected, taking into consideration age profiles. This is the ratio of actual numbers of deaths to expected numbers, expressed as a percentage (Standardised Mortality Ratio). The figures are then expressed as a three- year rolling average. For cancer and circulatory disease, the rates are for people under 75. For accidents and suicides the rates are for people of all ages.

A figure for death rates by cause can be given for England and Wales. This can be assigned a value of 100. If your area outperforms England and Wales as a whole then the figure will be below 100; if the local situation is worse than that in England and Wales as a whole then the value will be over 100.

Frequency of collection and reporting

A three-year moving average is used to smooth out short-term variations. (E.g. average of 1995, 1996, 1997 then average of 1996, 1997, 1998 etc.)

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Death rates from cancer, circulatory disease, accidents and suicides' is a core national indicator of sustainable development (F1).

National trends

Death rates from cancer, circulatory diseases (people under 75), accidents and suicides (all ages), have been declining - for cancer, circulatory diseases, and accidents, rates have been falling over the period 1970 to 1996, and for suicides the rate has been falling over the period 1981 to 1996.

Comments

The national headline health indicator is 'Expected years of healthy life' (no. H6). It is not currently feasible to produce this at a local level.

Limitations: There may be other significant local causes of death. Some causes of death stem from genetic predisposition.

Indicator 10 – Qualifications of young people

Why does this matter?

Educational qualifications help to provide people with the skills to make a contribution to the economy and society. Learning also has a wider contribution to make - promoting active citizenship and combating social exclusion.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Maximise everyone's access to the skills and knowledge needed to play a full part in society

Indicator

Proportion of pupils aged 16 achieving 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (or equivalent qualifications) during the academic year in schools maintained by the authority.

How to compile the indicator

These data are readily available from Local Education Authorities.

Frequency of collection

Annual

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Qualifications at age 19' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H5). Note - the national indicator is at age 19 rather than 16.

National trends

There has been a steady improvement in the proportion of young people gaining formal educational qualifications. In 1999, 49 per cent of 16 year olds in the UK had achieved 5 GCSEs at grade C or above.

The figure for the national headline indicator in 1999 was 74 per cent of 19 year olds in the UK had achieved a 'level 2' qualification (i.e. 5 GCSEs at grade C or above, or equivalent).

Comments

The Government has set new National Learning Targets. These include a target for the proportion of 19 year olds achieving a 'level 2' qualification - 85 per cent in England by 2002, 75 per cent in Wales by 2002, and 85 per cent in Northern Ireland by 2001.

Age 16 rather than age 19 is recommended for a local indicator as these data are considerably easier to collect.

Limitations: This does not show the broader value added from schools or take into account socio-economic factors that influence educational attainment. It also excludes pupils in schools not maintained by local authorities.

Indicator 11 – Adult education

Why does this matter?

Just as new skills are important for the young who are starting out in the world of work, so the same is true of others. As the nature of work changes, people have to be adaptable and update their skills. Adult education also contributes to a broader sense of well being.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Maximise everyone's access to the skills and knowledge needed to play a full part in society.

Indicator

The number of enrolments on all adult education courses provided and secured by the local authority per 1,000 adult population.

How to compile the indicator

Local Authorities have the number of enrolments data readily available as part of their 'AE1 omnibus form', which is then forwarded to the DfEE. Adult population figures are required for the denominator of this indicator.

Frequency of collection

Annual

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

This is a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 142). The equivalent national indicator of sustainable development is 'Learning participation' (C3).

National trends

In the first year of the National Adult Learning Survey in 1997, 26 per cent of respondents in England and Wales (equating to about 8.5 million people) said they had done no learning in the previous three years, or since leaving full-time education if that was more recent.

Comments

This does not distinguish between take up of courses by residents and non-residents. It omits private provision. The limitations of the indicator reduced its popularity amongst pilot local authorities.

Indicator 12 – Homes judged unfit to live in

Why does this matter?

The issue of housing is an important one for quality of life. Poor quality housing can lead to health problems, and is often associated with other social problems.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Ensure access to good food, water, housing and fuel at a reasonable cost.

Quality of life counts objective

Reduce the proportion of unfit housing stock.

Indicator

Percentage of housing stock judged unfit to live in by tenure (privately rented, owner occupied, registered social landlords and local authority).

How to compile the indicator

Local authorities, through local stock condition surveys, may already collect these data. Guidance on specifying stock surveys will be issued by DETR in summer 2000.

Frequency of collection

Local authorities decide when and how frequently to undertake stock condition surveys. The results of surveys are used for a number of purposes.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Homes judged unfit to live in' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H7). One of the national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI 162) requires authorities to report their performance in reducing unfitness in the private sector.

National trends

In England, the percentage of homes judged unfit to live in decreased from 8.8 per cent in 1986 to 7.2 per cent (about 1.5 million homes) in 1996. There have also been improvements in the quality of the housing stock in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Comments

Limitations: Local authorities carry out stock surveys at different times and in different ways, therefore it is not possible to compare unfitness rates across authorities.

The current fitness standard is currently being reviewed and it is likely that a new health and safety rating will replace it. This will encompass important health and safety risks in the home and distinguish between the varying severity of those risks. This indicator may need to be changed in future to reflect the new statutory standard.

Indicator 13 – Homelessness

Why does this matter?

Housing is a key component of a decent quality of life. Living in temporary accommodation can bring uncertainty and instability. Local authorities have responsibilities to provide or arrange shelter for households who are homeless.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Ensure access to good food, water, housing and fuel at a reasonable cost.

Indicator

Homelessness acceptances in the most recent period 1 April to 31 March.

How to compile the indicator

These data are routinely collected for the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) on the Operational Information (OI) form completed by local authorities for the DETR. Data are reported on a quarterly basis on the P1E return. Annual figures for each local authority are available on the DETR website [www.detr.gov.uk].

The indicator shows the numbers of households accepted by local housing authorities under Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless (or threatened with homelessness) and in a priority need group.

In the great majority of cases the LA provides or arranges temporary accommodation for the household. The number of these acceptances therefore broadly correspond with those of households being given temporary accommodation for the first time in the period.

An alternative indicator, which might be used is the 'number of people living in temporary accommodation at the end of the financial year'. This is also collected on the HIP OI form by local authorities but was not pilot tested.

Frequency of collection

Information on homelessness acceptances are collected on annual basis through the HIP OI form and quarterly through the P1E return.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

This indicator is already in use in LAs.

Temporary accommodation /rough sleepers is a related core national indicator of sustainable development (no. J5).

National trends and figures

The number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need increased in England throughout the 1980s, reaching a peak of 138,700 in 1992. Between 1992 and 1997 the number decreased steadily, and since then there has been a small rise to 104,800 in 1999.

Comments

In most cases of homelessness acceptances, the authority accepts a duty to secure suitable temporary accommodation for up to 2 years. This duty ends if the household is allocated a permanent social tenancy through the housing register or if they voluntarily leave the temporary accommodation for any other reason. In areas where demand for accommodation is low, households accepted as statutorily homeless may be allocated permanent social accommodation very quickly; in other areas with heavy demand households may have to remain in temporary accommodation for longer than two years.

The number of homeless acceptances will vary according to council policy and other factors, therefore comparison across areas is difficult but the pilots nevertheless judged the indicator to be important.

Limitations: This HIP indicator does not capture the reason for the homelessness and does not cover some categories of people, e.g. persons sleeping rough, most asylum seekers, etc. Reasons for homelessness are recorded on the quarterly P1E return.

Indicator 14 - Access to key services

Why does this matter?

Communities need good access to key local services, from post offices to medical care. The less accessible these are the greater the disadvantage of vulnerable groups e.g. the poor, the ill and the elderly.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Encourage necessary access to facilities, services, goods and other people in ways which make less use of the car and minimise impacts on the environment.

Quality of life counts objective

Need better access to services.

Indicator

Ease of access to key services.

How to compile the indicator

Data at local scale can be collected in a variety of ways. The possibilities below include a local survey or a desk-based exercise.

Option 1

A local survey. This one may be particularly useful in rural areas where it is less likely that services are within walking distance. Knowledge about access to a car is important to understand the disadvantage faced by non-car owners.

Question 1 - Is there a car or van normally available for use by you or any other member of your household? (Include transport provided by employers if it is available for private use. Exclude vehicles used solely for the carriage of goods.)

Options Yes or No

Question 2 - From your household, how easy is it for you to get to the following using your usual form of transport?

- a. corner shop b. medium to large supermarket
- c. post office d. doctor
- e. local hospital f. green space e.g. park
- g. public transport facility h. recycling facility

Options: Very easy; Fairly easy; Fairly difficult; Very difficult; Does not apply.

Option 2

Again a local survey. This one is perhaps more suitable in urban areas.

Question: Are you within 15 minutes walk of the following amenities?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. corner shop | b. medium to large supermarket |
| c. post office | d. doctor |
| e. local hospital | f. green space e.g. park |
| g. public transport facility | h. recycling facility |

Options: Yes or No

Option 3

A desk-based exercise similar to Option 2. Instead of a 15-minute walk substitute a distance of say 600 metres. The information can then be collected using local maps.

NB. The distance of 600 metres is used by a number of local authorities in their Local Plan. However, at least one local authority uses half a mile (i.e. about 800 metres) and the European Common Indicator on access for voluntary use by European cities uses 500 metres.

Limitations to Options 2 and 3: Walking time or proximity-based indicators may be unrealistic in rural areas. They may not reflect the burden that local people feel in reaching services. Elderly or disabled people may not easily walk even short distances. Conversely more distant services may be readily reached by public transport. The ease of access may overplay the role of the car and not encourage closer location of key services.

Frequency of collection

For Options 1 and 2 the data is dependent on a local survey, perhaps repeated every 2 to 3 years. For Option 3 it would be possible to update annually but relatively slow changes in this indicator suggest a longer period would be more sensible.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'People finding access difficult' and 'Access to services in rural areas' are core national indicators of sustainable development (J1 and J2). An access indicator similar to Option 3 covering services within 500 metres is included in the first generation of European Common Indicators for voluntary use by European cities.

National trends

In England in 1997/98, 38 per cent of householders without access to a car said it was difficult to get to a hospital, 17 per cent said it was difficult to get to supermarkets and 16 per cent said it was difficult to get to the doctors.

Indicators 15 - 17

Traffic

There was considerable debate during the consultation on traffic/transport indicators, and perhaps the least consensus about which specific indicators should be selected for the menu. All those consulted agreed that transport is a significant sustainable development issue, but the particular problems and areas for action are dependent on local circumstances.

Three common issues emerged from the consultations and the pilot – traffic associated with travel to work, traffic associated with journeys to school, and overall volumes of traffic, and these are reflected in the indicators 15, 16 and 17 proposed here. But more locally tailored indicators may be more appropriate. All local authorities will be developing local transport plans in the light of their local circumstances, and it is strongly recommended that local agenda 21 co-ordinators talk to those developing the plans, to discuss which indicators best reflect particular local issues.

Indicator 15 –Travel to work

Why does this matter?

A key objective is to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport more and their cars a little less, and to reduce the need for travel through better land use planning.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Encourage necessary access to facilities, services, goods and other people in ways which make less use of the car and minimise impacts on the environment.

Indicator

Mode and average distance of travel to work

How to compile the indicator

1991 Census data can provide a baseline, and the 2001 Census will also allow calculation of this indicator. For more regular updating, data for this indicator will need to be collected via a local survey. There are two options. The first, preferred, option is via a workplace survey. The second is to add questions to a local household survey.

Option 1

Many authorities will be developing work travel plans as part of their local transport plans. Large local employers – including the local authority itself – are encouraged to carry out surveys of their staff. The advantage of this option is that it is also a way of engaging large local businesses with sustainable development issues. As a minimum for this indicator, surveys will need to identify staffs' current main mode of travel to and from work, and how far they travel to work. However, to encourage a switch from car to more environmentally-friendly modes, it is also useful to know whether they may be willing to use another mode, and which measures would be most likely to encourage them to do so. Sample survey forms and advice on carrying out a survey are given in chapter 3 of 'A travel plan resource pack for employers' (January 2000), available on DETR's website at www.local-transport.detr.gov.uk/travelplans/index.htm, or free from the government's Energy and Environment Helpline on Freephone 0800 585794.

Option 2

Questions on travel to work may be added to an existing local household survey, such as those being conducted for Best Value. However, household surveys can give insufficiently reliable information on travel if resources are not available to achieve high response rates and adequate sample sizes. More guidance is given on the CLIP website: http://www.clip.gov.uk/groups/transport/sub_transport.htm

The following format is based on the National Travel Survey and is recommended for use in a local survey. The information might be asked of a selected person in the household, or about all adults in the household:

Question1: What is the distance in miles between your home and your usual place of your work?

- 0 – work is at home []1
- No usual place of work []2
- Less than 1 mile []3
- 1 to less than 2 miles []4
- 2 to less than 5 miles []5
- 5 to less than 10 miles []6
- 10 to less than 25 miles []7
- Over 25 miles []8

Question 2: How do you usually travel to work (main mode)? Tick one box only for the longest part, by distance, of your usual journey to work.

- Work mainly at or from home []1
- Underground, metro, light rail, tram []2
- Train []3
- Bus, minibus or coach []4
- Motor cycle, scooter or moped []5
- Driving a car or van []6
- Passenger in a car or van []7
- Bicycle []8
- On foot []9
- Other []10

Frequency of collection

Organisations developing work travel plans are being encouraged to monitor their impact on a regular basis – at least annually. It is unlikely that a household survey would be worth repeating more frequently than every 2 to 3 years.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

‘Passenger travel by mode’ (G1) and ‘Average journey length by purpose’ (G3) are both core national indicators of sustainable development. Distance travelled to work by mode is proposed for collection in the 2001 Census.

National trends

Between 1985/86 and 1996/98, the average distance travelled to work increased by about a third to 8.1 miles (or 13 km) per journey. For total journeys, car use increased by 20 per cent in the second half of the 1980s but only by around a further 4 per cent in the first half of the 1990s. Journeys by public transport, bicycle and on foot all fell significantly over the period.

Comments

The household survey indicator takes a similar format to the National Travel Survey. The national survey collects more detailed information on shopping, escorting and leisure over a seven-day period using diaries. Owing to the sample size, local information can not be extracted from the national survey.

Limitations: Less than a fifth of total journeys made (by distance or number) are to work. Therefore, changes in this indicator may not be representative of changes for all journeys.

Indicator 16 – How do school children travel to school?

Why does this matter?

A switch of school journeys from the car to walking, cycling or bus would help to improve children's health and independence and reduce road traffic, congestion and air pollution.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Encourage necessary access to facilities, services, goods and other people in ways which make less use of the car and minimise impacts on the environment.

Indicator

Percentage of children travelling to and from school by different modes.

How to compile the indicator

Data for this indicator will need to be collected via a local survey. There are two options. The first, preferred, option is via a survey carried out at local schools. The second is to add questions to a local household survey.

Option 1

Local authorities are being asked to implement School Travel Strategies and plans which in many cases involve local schools carrying out surveys of their students. The advantage of this option is that it is also a way of engaging pupils, teachers and parents with sustainable development issues.

As a minimum for this indicator, surveys will need to identify children's main mode of travel to and from school. However, to encourage a switch from travel to school by car to more environmentally-friendly modes, it is also useful to know how far they travel to school, whether they (or their parents) may be willing to use another mode, and which measures would be most likely to encourage them to do so.

Sample survey forms and advice on carrying out a survey are given in DETR's 'School Travel Resource Pack' (May 2000), available at

www.local-transport.detr.gov.uk/schooltravel/index.htm or free from DETR free publications, Tel. 0870 1226 236. It includes a simple tutor-led form which gives a quick head-count of numbers of children in the class using each mode of travel, and a more detailed form for use by individual pupils, covering attitudes to different modes and other issues.

Limitations: The results are likely to be biased according to schools selected.

Option 2

Questions on travel to school may be added to an existing local household survey, such as those being conducted for Best Value. However, household surveys can give insufficiently reliable information on travel if resources are not available to achieve high response rates and adequate sample sizes. More guidance is given on the CLIP website: http://www.clip.gov.uk/groups/transport/sub_transport.htm

The following format is consistent with the survey being proposed for schools.

Initial questions gather data on the mode of transport used and the later question examines the distance travelled. This means that it is possible to assess how far pupils are travelling according to their mode of transport. For example it may be calculated that walkers travel an average of 1 mile, car users travel an average of 2.5 miles and so on. The questions might be asked about a selected child in the household, or about each child in the household.

Question 1: How does the child usually get to school? (Tick one box only for the longest part, by distance, of the usual journey to school).

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| Walk | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Cycle | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| School bus | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| Other bus | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Train | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Car | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 |

Question 2: How does the child usually return home from school? (Tick one box only for the longest part, by distance, of the usual journey from school to home).

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| Walk | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 |
| Cycle | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| School bus | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| Other bus | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Train | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Car | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 |

Frequency of collection

Schools developing school travel plans are being encouraged to monitor their impact on a regular basis – at least annually. It is unlikely that a household survey would be worth repeating more frequently than every 2 to 3 years.

There may be seasonal patterns e.g. differences between autumn/winter and spring/summer, so it would be advisable for surveys to be repeated at the same time of the year to improve comparability of the results.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'How children get to school' is a national core indicator of sustainable development (G2). It is also an indicator in the first generation of European Common Indicators for voluntary use by European cities.

National trends

Between 1985/86 and 1996/98, the percentage of children (aged 5-16) travelling to school by car nearly doubled from 16 to 28 per cent. The percentage walking fell over the same period but was still the most common mode accounting for 49 per cent of journeys.

Comments

National data are collected from the National Travel Survey through its household diary survey. The sample size is not large enough to allow figures to be produced at local authority level.

Indicator 17 – Overall traffic volumes

Why does this matter?

The key objective is to strike the right balance between transport's role in helping the economy progress and allowing people to travel wherever they need to go, while at the same time protecting the environment and improving quality of life. In the past traffic growth has been associated with economic growth, but the resulting volume of traffic leads to congestion, noise and air pollution and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions which cause climate change.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Encourage necessary access to facilities, services, goods and other people in ways which make less use of the car and minimise impacts on the environment.

Indicator

Traffic volumes or flows on different classes of road by vehicle type.

How to compile the indicator

Option 1

Data on traffic volumes on major roads (i.e. principal and trunk) are available at local authority level from the Traffic Statistics branch of the DETR. Separate information is available for built-up and non built-up areas. (Motorway traffic should be excluded as this carries mostly national not local traffic).

Traffic volume is calculated as traffic flow multiplied by road length and expressed in terms of vehicle kilometres or vehicle miles. For major roads it might be presented by two broad groups of vehicle:

- cars
- other motor vehicles

Minor roads account for 75 per cent of the road length in England and have very variable traffic flows. Accurate estimates of minor road traffic by local authority can not be readily produced. DETR are investigating whether they can produce indicative estimates, based on regional traffic estimates broken down to local authority level; results should be available in autumn 2000. Traffic data for minor roads will be available only for all motor vehicles.

National data are published in quarterly bulletins and annual reports available from DETR Traffic Statistics branch (TSR 2 Division, Zone 2/16, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London S1P 4DR, Tel. 020 7944 3095, E-mail roadtraff_stats@detr.gsi.gov.uk). The latest three quarterly bulletins are also available on the web site under <http://www.detr.gov.uk/statistics/transport/index.htm>.

Detailed information on individual roads may also be available but there is normally a charge for supplying this.

Option 2

Local authorities will be monitoring traffic flows for the requirements of the Road Traffic Reduction Act and for Local Transport Plans. A number of authorities carry out their own traffic counts, mostly using simple automatic, volumetric counters. These can be useful for carrying out special surveys. For example they can be used for cordon surveys of urban areas, or where before and after surveys are needed to assess the impact of specific local measures being undertaken. Guidance on how these surveys should be conducted can be found on the CLIP website: www.clip.gov.uk/groups/transport/sub_transport.htm

It may be most appropriate to use this information, which is clearly related to specific local traffic management objectives, to produce locally relevant indicators.

Frequency of collection

The centrally collated data are produced annually by DETR.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Road traffic' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H11).

'Traffic congestion' is a core national indicator of sustainable development (G4).

National trends

Motor vehicle traffic in 1999 was 14 per cent higher in 1990 and nearly nine times that in 1950, mostly because car traffic was nearly fifteen times as high.

Comments

A review of the traffic network will be completed by Traffic Statistics branch of the DETR early in summer 2000. This will lead to improvements in the quality and availability of local traffic statistics.

Local authority figures are available free of charge. However, costs may be incurred for data requested at sub-local authority level.

Pilots emphasised the importance of this indicator but noted that it would be difficult to collect more detailed information than that produced by DETR.

Indicator 18 – New homes built on previously developed land (including conversions)

Why does this matter?

New development within existing urban areas contributes to the revitalisation of communities and enables people to live near to shops and employment, reducing the need to travel. Use of previously developed land wherever possible is also important for the protection of the green belt and countryside.

Quality of life counts objective

Re-using previously developed land in order to protect the countryside and encourage urban regeneration.

Indicator

Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land (including conversions).

How to compile the indicator

This is a Best Value Performance Indicator so data should be available in the future from Local Authority planning and housing departments. Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing, sets out the need to monitor the re-use of land and can be accessed together with further information on the DETR website: www.planning.detr.gov.uk.

Data for regions and counties are available and published from the DETR's Land Use Change Statistics (LUCS). However LUCS data are not presently robust enough to produce reliable figures for local authority districts or unitary authorities. Local authorities are advised to develop their own indicators using definitions consistent with LUCS. The DETR contact is Bob Garland, E-mail bob_garland@detr.gsi.gov.uk

Frequency of collection

Annual.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'New homes built on previously developed land' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H14). It is also a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 106).

National trends

The Government has set a national target for England to raise the national proportion of additional homes to be built on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings to 60 per cent by 2008. In England, in 1997, about 55 per cent of new homes (including conversions of existing buildings) were built on previously developed land.

Comments

In general the re-use of land for houses will relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites. However, in interpreting this indicator locally, consideration should be given to brownfield sites that may be important to biodiversity or needed as green space for local amenity use. The availability of large areas of land in any particular year can result in considerable variability in the value of the indicator across years.

Indicator 19 – Public concern over noise

Why does this matter?

Noise can have an adverse impact on quality of life. Excessive noise can cause annoyance and stress and may disturb sleep.

Quality of life counts objective

Attractive streets and buildings, low levels of traffic, noise and pollution, green spaces and community safety.

Indicator

Percentage of respondents concerned with different categories of noise.

How to compile the indicator

Option 1

Data for this indicator could be collected via a local survey. The question could ask respondents their level of concern with different categories of noise in their area.

The level of concern could be categorised as in the Survey of English Housing:

How would you rate the following types of noise in your local area?
(Serious problem; Problem, but not serious; or Not a problem)

Suggested types of noise: Road traffic; Aircraft; Trains; Noise from industrial/ commercial premises; Road works, construction/ demolition; Pubs, clubs and entertainment; and Neighbours.

Option 2

An indicator could be compiled from noise related complaints to Environmental Health Officers. These data should be readily available but are subject to limitations.

Limitations: Complaints are mostly limited to things that people feel something can be done about. Previous surveys suggest that people annoyed by transport noise outnumber those annoyed by neighbours by a factor of twenty, yet complaints are almost entirely about neighbour noise. Factors other than noise levels are also likely to affect the numbers of complaints. For example, the promotion of 'complaint' hotlines or persistent callers making several complaints about single incidents.

Frequency of collection

Option 1 is dependent on a local survey perhaps repeated every 2 to 3 years. For Option 2 a reasonable time period would be annual. A longer time period will help to smooth out volatility in the figures owing to specific campaigns/ incidents.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Noise levels' and 'Quality of surroundings' are national core indicators of sustainable development (K8 and K6).

National trends

In 1990, over a quarter of the population in England and Wales were exposed to high noise levels outside their homes (over 60dB) and 5 per cent of the population were exposed to very high noise (over 70dB). In 1997/98, 6 per cent of the population considered noise to be a serious problem in their area.

Indicator 20 – Recorded crime per 1,000 population

Why does this matter?

Everyone has a right to live in a community that is safe. Crime imposes economic costs, reinforces social exclusion and can hasten the environmental decline of neighbourhoods. It can make people reluctant to walk or use public transport or go out after dark. Much acquisitive crime, such as shop lifting and burglary, is committed by drug-misusing offenders to feed their habits.

Quality of life counts objective

Reduce both crime and fear of crime.

Indicator

Crimes recorded by the police per 1,000 population according to:

- Theft of or from motor vehicles
- Burglary in dwellings
- Violent crime

How to compile the indicator

Crime data are readily available from your nearest police authority statistics section. They may also have been collated within the local authority for the Local Crime Audit. Data are collected at both police authority level and smaller basic command units. Although basic command units may not be consistent with local authorities they are likely to provide reasonable estimates.

Population data are required for the denominator of this indicator. Population figures can be found on the National Statistics Internet site, www.statistics.gov.uk/ under Statbase, publication datasets, and then population estimates for the relevant year.

'Violent crime' consists of three offence groups; violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.

Frequency of collection

Annual

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Level of crime' is a headline national indicator of sustainable development (H8). Equivalent Best Value Performance Indicators are (BVPI 126, 127 and 128).

National trends

The level of recorded crime increased substantially over the period 1970-1998/99. Recorded levels of burglary in dwellings and theft of or from motor vehicles declined more recently since 1993, but violent crime continued to rise over most of this period. In England and Wales, in 1998/99, there were 2,053 thefts of or from motor vehicles, 906 burglaries in dwellings and 636 violent offences per 100,000 population.

Comments

This was a popular indicator in the pilot and widely backed for inclusion in a menu of local sustainable development indicators.

Limitations: Recorded offences do not cover all crimes for they exclude unreported crime, and reporting rates may vary over time. Under reporting is a particular issue for violent crime, where many offences are perpetrated by offenders who are known to the victim.

Indicator 21 – Fear of crime

Why does this matter?

Fear of crime can cause real anxiety that affects people's quality of life. It can have a negative effect on behaviour with people reluctant to walk or to use public transport or go out after dark.

Quality of life counts objective

Reduce both crime and fear of crime.

Indicator

Percentage of respondents feeling unsafe or worried about crime by gender.

How to compile the indicator

Data for a Best Value Performance Indicator on 'fear of crime' will be provided for each police force area in England and Wales by the 2001 British Crime Survey. These data should be available towards the end of 2001.

Alternatively data for this indicator can be collected via a local survey. Such data may have already been collected within the local authority for the Local Crime Audit. Collecting data by gender is advised to make this indicator more meaningful. The following format is used in the face-to-face interviews for the British Crime Survey and is recommended for use in a local survey:

Percentage of respondents feeling unsafe or worried about forms of crime according to the responses to the following three questions:

- How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?
(Very safe; Fairly safe; A bit unsafe; Very unsafe; Not applicable)
- How worried are you about having your home broken into and something stolen?
(Very worried; Fairly worried; Not very worried; Not at all worried; Not applicable)
- How worried are you about being mugged and robbed?
(Very worried; Fairly worried; Not very worried; Not at all worried; Not applicable)

Frequency of collection

The local survey could be repeated perhaps every 2 to 3 years.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

A similar 'fear of crime' indicator is a core national indicator of sustainable development (K9). 'Fear of crime' will also be a future Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 121) and be delivered by the 2001 British Crime Survey.

National trends

Fear of crime is common, particularly among women. In 1998, 19 per cent of people in England and Wales were 'very worried' about their homes being burgled and 18 per cent were 'very worried' about physical attack. Levels of fear of crime rose up to 1994 but there is evidence of some falls in recent years.

Comments

Fear of crime is most usefully reported alongside recorded levels of crimes (indicator 20).

Indicator 22 – Social participation

Why does this matter?

Public action and involvement is essential for a truly sustainable community. Voluntary activity can do much to promote social inclusion and cohesion in a community, which benefits the recipients, participants and society as a whole.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Empower all sections of the community to participate in decision making and consider the social and community impacts of decisions.

Quality of life counts objective

Voluntary and community activity can promote social inclusion and cohesion.

Indicator

Percentage of all respondents who are actively involved with at least one local community or voluntary organisation.

How to compile the indicator

Data will need to be collected via a local survey.

Question: Have you been actively involved with at least one local community or voluntary organisation in the last 12 months? (Here 'involved' is taken to mean attended events or helped in an activity at least 3 times in the last year).

Yes or No

Frequency of collection

The local survey may be repeated perhaps every 2 – 3 years.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Voluntary activity' is a core national indicator of sustainable development (L2).

Social participation is recommended as an indicator in the 'Local Community Involvement Handbook for Good Practice', European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

National trends and figures

In 1996/97 around half of all people had either participated in action in the last 12 months or said they would be interested in volunteering. Participation in voluntary work varied by type of area with about 20 per cent of those in affluent suburban and rural areas participating in local voluntary work compared with about 7 per cent of those in council estates and low income areas.

Comments

The definition for involvement carries with it a degree of subjectivity. Pilots felt that 'social participation' can mean different things to different people – giving back to their community through voluntary work (as here) or levels of social interaction or community spirit. Pilots felt that an indicator for social interaction/ community spirit would also be useful.

Indicator 23 – Community well being

Why does this matter?

Community well being is an important feature of sustainable communities. The indicator tries to capture the overall sense of satisfaction with life locally.

Quality of life counts objective

Help build a sense of community by encouraging and supporting all forms of community involvement.

Indicator

Percentage of respondents satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

How to compile the indicator

Data will need to be collected via a local survey. The following question is used in the Survey of English Housing:

- How satisfied are you with this neighbourhood as a place to live?
(Very satisfied; Fairly satisfied; Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; Slightly dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied)

Frequency of collection

The local survey may be repeated perhaps every 2-3 years.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Community spirit' and 'Quality of surroundings' are core national sustainable development indicators (L3 and K6).

National trends

In England in 1997/98, 46 per cent of all households thought their area had a lot of community spirit, almost the same as the proportions reported in 1992 and in 1994/95.

Comments

The indicator does not establish why people are satisfied or dissatisfied with their local area. Pilot authorities found the indicator useful though not necessarily action-orientated because of its breadth. It was suggested that follow up questions could be asked to establish the cause(s) of the satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Indicator 24 - Tenant satisfaction/participation

Why does this matter?

Local issues often stimulate participation in wider issues. This may be in the form of participation by tenants in local authority or other housing issues. The Government is encouraging this type of participation as part of the general drive towards sustainable communities.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Empower all sections of the community to participate in decision making and consider the social and community impacts of decisions.

Two options are given here. The first option considers tenants' satisfaction while the second focuses on the related issue of participation. Pilot authorities tested the second option, but the first option has since been selected as a Best Value Performance Indicator and is therefore recommended – it is also likely to be more readily available in local authorities.

Option 1

Indicator

Proportion of council tenants who are very or fairly satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making.

How to compile the indicator

This requires a local survey of tenants of council housing. It is Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI75), specified in 'Performance Indicators for 2000/2001', DETR/AC/HO, 1999.

Frequency of collection

Local authorities are required to carry out a survey and report the results at least once every three years, starting in 2000/2001.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

Best Value requirement for local housing authorities and RSLs.

National trends

This question will be included in the Survey of English Housing from 2000/01 and national results will then be available annually.

Comments

New policies, such as Tenant Participation Compacts being introduced from 1 April 2000, actively encourage tenant participation through a range of means. The key outcome is whether tenants feel that they can participate in management and decision-making, whatever the organisational structures.

Limitations: This measures satisfaction with housing services as opposed to participation.

Option 2

Indicator

Proportion of tenants currently represented by recognised tenants' associations.

How to compile the indicator

The numbers of formal and informal tenant participation structures and organisations in place are collected through the Housing Investment Programme Operational Information Form. This does not give the number of people belonging to each organisation but those in the local authority completing the form may have access to such information.

Frequency of collection

Annual

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Voluntary activity' is a core national sustainable development indicator (L2).

Comments

Pilot authorities found this indicator important as a signal of community involvement. The indicator has many limitations and pilots felt that improved indicators of local participation should be a priority.

Limitations: The indicator does not pick up alternative means of tenant participation, which are being actively encouraged under new policies, such as the Tenant Participation Compacts introduced from April 2000.

Measuring the number of tenant associations may be less suitable in rural areas or where stock is scattered.

Owing to different interpretations of the percentage of tenants covered by tenant organisations, comparisons between authorities would not be advised.

Only the number of organisations are being taken into account while the status of the organisations (eg how active they are) may be more important.

Indicator 25 – Employment/ unemployment

Why does this matter?

Unemployment is associated with other forms of deprivation and social exclusion as well as representing a waste of human resources. The longer people are out of work the less likely it is that they will return to work because they can lose skills and motivation and become increasingly detached from the labour market.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national or global environment.

Indicators

Two indicators are suggested here. They should both be collected and presented side by side. They are both residence-based measures.

- The proportion of the working age population who are in employment.
- Numbers of people claiming unemployment benefit for more than a year, expressed as a proportion of total unemployment benefit claimants.

How to compile the indicators

Data for the employment indicator are available from the Labour Force Survey.

Data for the unemployment indicator are based on claimant counts. These are available from the National Online Manpower Information System (NOMIS). To access NOMIS a subscription is required (Tel: 0191 374 2468/ 2490).

Frequency of collection

Annually - with an average taken over the entire year to avoid seasonal variations.

Related indicators

'Proportion of working age people who are in work' is a national headline indicator of sustainable development (H3). 'Proportion of people of working age out of work for more than two years' is a core national sustainable development indicator (C6).

National trends

In the period May to July 1999, the national employment rate was 74 per cent.

Comments

The two indicators should be presented side by side as one package. It is advised that time-series data for at least the last five years be presented. Definitions may differ over time because of changes to the benefit system.

Indicator 26 – Benefit recipients

Why does this matter?

Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for every one. The problems of poverty and social exclusion need to be addressed in order to build sustainable communities. Poverty and social exclusion cover a wide range of problems such as unemployment, crime, poor health, housing and education, and degraded local surroundings.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national or global environment.

Indicators:

- Number of Income Support claimants (including partners and dependants) as a percentage of residents.
- Percentage of households receiving Council Tax benefits.

How to compile the indicator

These data should be available in local authorities.

DSS are the source of the Income Support data which have been sent to local authorities by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA).

Local authorities will be also have Council Tax benefits data.

Frequency of collection

Annually - with an average taken over the entire year to avoid seasonal variations.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

These two measures are part of the 'Index of local deprivation', which is a national core indicator of sustainable development (E2). The national set also includes 'Indicators of success in tackling poverty and social exclusion' (H4), and 'Truancies, exclusions from school and teenage pregnancies' (E3).

National trends

Taken as a group, the key indicators of poverty and social exclusion show little change between 1990 and 1999.

Comments

Poverty is hard to define. The DSS has developed a set of over 30 indicators as part of the Government's anti-poverty strategy. Benefits data are the most readily collected at local level. It is accepted that benefits are only a proxy for poverty and do not necessarily reflect the broad range of issues involved. Benefit rules change over time and this reduces comparability; they may also miss some local people in poverty.

Indicator 27 – Business start-ups and closures: VAT registrations and de-registrations

Why does this matter?

A strong and diverse business base is needed so that everyone across the UK in different regions and with different skills can benefit from economic growth. Local businesses are particularly important for local economies.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national or global environment

Indicator

Net VAT registrations (new business start-ups net of closures).

How to compile the indicator

Data are based on Office for National Statistics Business Registrations. These are available for all local authorities – on disc and hard copy - from ONS for £25 (Tel. 0114 259 7538). Net- registrations between 1980 and 1998 are included and time-series over the last 5 to 10 years could easily be drawn.

Frequency of collection

Statistics are published annually but with a 2-year time lag. More up-to-date analysis can be provided on request.

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

This information is also used by DTI. 'New business start-ups net of closures' is a national core indicator of sustainable development (E4).

National trends

In 1998, growth in new businesses net of closures was strongest in the south of England and Northern Ireland, and not evenly distributed across the country. In the UK as a whole growth is concentrated in the financial and business service sectors.

Comments

Several pilots saw the indicator as useful in the planning and evaluation of local economic development.

Limitations: VAT-registrations do not capture many of the small one-person businesses. VAT thresholds are also subject to change, which makes comparison over time difficult.

Indicator 28 – Companies with Environment Management Systems

Why does this matter?

Companies have a key role in helping to protect the environment by adopting sound management practices to safeguard and improve their environmental performance. To this end internationally agreed standards for environmental management have been developed – the international standard, ISO 14001 and the EU's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Participation is voluntary but increasingly business is using these as a means to achieve and demonstrate their commitment to continuing improvements in their environmental performance.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national or global environment.

Indicator

Percentage of local companies with Environment Management Systems.

How to compile the indicator

Experience suggests that data may not be easily collated.

Details of organisations confirmed as meeting the requirements of ISO 14001 are held by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

Address: UKAS, Queens Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0NA
Tel: 020 8943 6494
Fax: 020 8943 7134

Information on those registered under EMAS can be obtained from the national 'Competent Body' (www.emas.org.uk) or from the European Commission (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/emas>). Note that EMAS is used much less than ISO 14001.

The local Chamber of Commerce may also keep a record of companies in the area who have been awarded ISO14001/ EMAS.

Frequency of collection

Annual

Other initiatives using this or similar indicators

'Adoption of environmental management systems (ISO 14001 and EMAS)' is a national core indicator of sustainable development (D4).

National trends

By the end of 1999, some 1,020 UK companies had implemented an ISO 14001 environmental management system and 74 sites had registered to EMAS.

Comments

Limitations: Using formal environment management systems (ISO 14001 or EMAS) as a public commitment to improved performance can only be an imperfect guide. There will be companies who make public commitments in other ways (e.g. producing environmental reports or participating in Making a Corporate Commitment) - these may be equally good if not better.

Indicator 29 – Social and community enterprises

Why does this matter?

Social and community enterprises provide local services and bring people and communities together. These enterprises take numerous forms, from community businesses to informal community groups. Public involvement is a major theme running through the Government's agenda on modernising local government.

Characteristic of a sustainable society

Create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national or global environment

Indicator

The number of social and community enterprises.

How to compile the indicator

This indicator is not straightforward to collect.

For this indicator, a social or community enterprise is defined as one involved in some form of commercial activity, directly or indirectly producing goods or services for which they charge and the resulting revenue is their main (if not only) source of income. Community enterprises also have three additional defining features:

- They are owned and controlled by the local community.
- They aim to serve the interests of that community rather than generate private gain.
- Any financial surplus they produce is used for community benefit, not distributed as private profit.

There are three main types of community enterprise:

- The community business, including local employee co-operatives.
- Community services such as Time Banks, community credit unions, local exchange trading schemes (LETS), and consumer co-operatives.
- Community organisations with a wider remit, such as Development Trusts or community based housing associations (it is their fostering and support role that is relevant here).

Local authority Economic Development departments should be familiar with this sector. Local Development Trusts (where they exist) may also be able to advise. Additional advice on data collection can be obtained from:

- The Industrial Common Ownership Movement (contact Bob Allan on 0113 246 1737/8), whose members include the network of Co-operative Support Organisations (UK) which provides local advice to new social enterprises.
- Association for British Credit Unions.
- LETSLINK.
- The Development Trusts Association.

Frequency of collection

Worth compiling every 2 to 3 years.

Comments

There is no single organisation with responsibility for this sector and the definition covers many different forms and functions: worker co-operatives, common ownership and other types of employee-owned businesses, community-based businesses, consumer, user and buyers' co-operatives, credit unions and LETS. The indicator does not show the impact of the sector or the number of people involved – it is illustrative.

Pilots felt this is an increasingly important area that requires measurement. They felt that while the indicator is adequate for now, it must be further developed in future. The sort of development envisaged was: number of organisations => membership of those organisations (more relevant to some organisations than others) => proportion of the population covered by these organisations => benefit they provide.

The view was that comparability between local authorities was neither possible nor particularly important for this indicator, since the form and size of such enterprises varies so much. The important thing was for authorities to choose a definition which reflects local circumstances.

Appendix A - Sustainable development and modern local government

This appendix reflects the views and local experiences of the piloting authorities. These were discussed in a workshop held to round off the pilot testing phase of the project and were summarised in a paper by Graham Pinfield, the LA lead on the CLIP Task Force on Sustainable Development. This appendix is based largely on his paper, updated to reflect more recent developments.

1. Introduction

Sustainable development and modernisation initiatives in local government have been evolving in parallel, but are now converging. Sustainable development has grown from the international Agenda 21 initiative signed at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and has its own implementation framework through the national strategy, the regional sustainable development frameworks and Local Agenda 21.

Modernisation of local government has developed from the new Labour government programme of constitutional reform and democratic renewal. This too has its own framework for implementation, central to which is the new duty to produce community strategies. Both initiatives, however, have much in common including:

- a new role for local authorities as community leaders
- the promotion of economic, social and environmental well-being and quality of life of the area and the community
- the involvement of and consultation with local people and organisations
- the development of a vision and a plan for the local area with the local community
- the development and delivery of services that enhance the well-being and quality of life of the area and the community

2. Integrating sustainable development and modernisation

Within local authorities, initiatives on both Local Agenda 21 (LA21) and Modern Local Government (MLG) may be proceeding in parallel. There are increasing examples of successful combined efforts. The message from the pilot local authorities is that there is a need for further integration between the two initiatives. However, it is recognised that there are subtle differences between them. For example, Local Agenda 21 might be led largely by the community in a particular local authority, with the council only represented as a partner. Engaging with and consulting the community is central to the MLG programme, but it will be led by the local authority. However, the focus on long term 'quality of life' of the community is central to both initiatives, and the piloting authorities felt that the indicators used in monitoring progress with both initiatives ought to be common. **This has now been reflected in the draft guidance¹⁰ published in June 2000, which suggests that the indicators in this handbook ought to be considered as a starting point for monitoring progress in the Community Strategy (see para 76 under Measuring progress in the guidance).**

¹⁰ *Preparing Community Strategies: Draft Guidance to Local Authorities* available from DETR Free Literature PO Box No 236 Wetherby LS23 7NB - order on tel : 0870 1226 236 and on the DETR Web site at www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/consult/lgbill99/pcsdraft/index.htm

It was recognised also by the pilots that there might be differences in profile of the two initiatives, Modern Local Government being newer and receiving currently a higher profile than LA21. In some authorities, different parts of the authority are working on MLG and LA21. Amongst the pilot authorities roughly half the officers were from LA21-type units and half from Corporate Policy Units. In smaller authorities the same personnel often carry out these initiatives.

Pilot authorities felt that the key in integrating these two processes is liaison between the personnel involved in both Local Agenda 21 and Modern Local Government

3. Community Strategies and Best Value

Modern Local Government, the White Paper of 1998¹¹, set out the role of 'community leadership' for local authorities. The Local Government Bill currently before Parliament will place a duty on principal local authorities in England and Wales to prepare a 'community strategy' for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. This duty to produce a strategy is very similar to the process of producing strategies under Local Agenda 21.

Best value as set out in the Local Government Act 1999 places a duty on local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the way it exercises its functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.¹² Authorities are required to consult with local residents, businesses, local agencies and other stakeholders in fulfilling this duty. They must publish performance indicators annually, together with details of targets for improvement for future years. They must also implement a programme of best value reviews of all services over a five-year period.

Best value is the first MLG initiative to be legislated for, and the general duty of best value was operative from 1 April 2000. All English and Welsh local authorities were required to publish a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) reporting on their performance in 1999/2000 by 31 March 2000. Amongst the pilot local authorities about half had included local Quality of Life indicators in their first Best Value Performance Plans.

Pilots viewed sustainable development/quality of life as part of both community strategies and the BVPP. It was also felt that there was a clear interface between the community strategy and the BVPP where the LA had an influence over wider community issues.

However, pilots saw quality of life as a wider community issue than Best Value. They therefore thought that both quality of life and its 'outcome' focussed indicators belong more appropriately with the Community Strategy than the BVPP. There was some concern also about the inclusion of quality of life indicators in the BVPP where the local authority has no direct control over them.

The pilots' view was that Quality of Life Indicators might most appropriately be allied to the community strategy part of the MLG agenda. However, the local authority contribution to quality of life of an area should be set out in indicators in its BVPP, where they will also provide useful context.

¹¹ Cm4014 Modern Local government – In Touch with the People The Stationary Office July 1998

¹² *ibid.*

4. A performance management framework for quality of life indicators

In the context of sustainable development and MLG it is useful to examine a 'performance management framework' for LAs to illustrate how 'quality of life' indicators would sit with other LA performance indicators.

A typical LA performance management framework might measure inputs (costs, resources and materials); outputs (service quality and quantity); and outcomes (impact and effect of services). These equate broadly to the economy, efficiency and effectiveness objectives of Best Value.

Input and output measures are well covered in the Best Value national performance indicators. However, outcomes (the wider 'quality of life' issues) are not so well covered. The Government intends to introduce more outcome indicators into the Best Value suite and the pilots feel there is a role here for quality of life indicators.

Pilots felt that part of the task for local authorities may therefore be to see whether they can construct an holistic performance management framework that embraces 'quality of life' outcomes as well as input and output measures.

Pilot authorities recognised the complexity of linking inputs to outputs to outcomes. While they could identify with the development of a performance management framework embracing quality of life indicators, it was felt that the outcomes were best dealt with in the context of community strategies through the involvement of other stakeholders.

The Community Strategy will establish the broad and inclusive vision of the local area, including quality of life/outcome indicators, and the BVPP demonstrating how the local authority expects to deliver this vision, in delivering its services.

5. Conclusions

The steer from pilot authorities involved in the project is away from Best Value as the natural 'home' for quality of life indicators and towards the Community Strategy. This was felt to be the most appropriate place for outcome indicators that are:

- Impacted upon by a wide range of stakeholders including the LA
- Not suitable for strict benchmarking exercises such as those carried out on BVPIs

However, it was felt that there was a clear link and overlap between the community strategy and Best Value Performance Plan and the authority should be reporting its 'output' related impact on the quality of life indicators in the BVPP.

The Audit Commission and IDeA are developing a library of Local Performance Indicators and such quality of life indicators might be added to this list.

The passage of the Local Government Bill through Parliament, which contains the power to promote economic, social and environmental well being and the duty to produce a community strategy, makes the type of work outlined in the handbook a priority. This duty to produce a community strategy is similar to the process of producing strategies under LA21. ***The Government would expect local authorities to build on their existing LA21 partnerships, and those in other areas, e.g. the New Commitment to Regeneration, when establishing the partnerships to prepare the community strategy.***

APPENDIX B - Ideas and resources

Throughout the project pilots have been putting forward ideas about what makes for successful indicators and what they might do next on the indicators front. This appendix contains ideas from pilots, details of relevant initiatives and useful contacts.

1. Top tips

As part of the event on 23 March 2000, pilots were asked to draw on their own experience of indicators to give some 'top tips' that might be useful to others taking the indicators road.

THE ROLE OF INDICATORS

- Ensure indicators remain simple and relevant to the public
- Choose indicators that challenge the LA and others to respond
- Indicators can represent the start of a consultation process with local people

THE PROCESS

- A Vision for the LA area is important and can be assisted by indicators
- Get support from a wide group to obtain data and share work
- Indicator development is a long process – up to two years
- Link the indicators to committees that have power to influence
- Organisations/units can take the lead on particular indicators rather than the whole process
- Use the indicators for developing links outside the authority
- Citizen's panels are useful for survey work, but care should be taken to get a representative sample of all the people living in the area concerned.
- It is possible to start on the issues for which the LA has information and then move onto other issues

THE PRODUCT

- Presentation of the indicators is very important. It's worth taking time over the graphics and making sure the text is concise.
- Consider taking the indicators all the way down to the neighbourhood/parish

2. The to do list

Pilots were also asked about their priorities in relation to quality of life indicators. These seemed to divide into two main groups. The first looked at integrating quality of life into other aspects of Council's work. The second was about getting local stakeholders on board.

Integration

Bolton Council

Look at existing indicators and potential for review in light of pilot guidance. Discuss final set with Community Plan (integrate!)

Coventry City Council

Further work to link impact of local authority activity on quality of life. Development of local authority sustainability indicators as part of Best Value.

Gwynedd

Check other users of indicators so as to ensure comparability.

Richmond

The quality of life indicators will form part of the Community Plan and be published separately to act as a snapshot of sustainability for the wider community.

South Gloucestershire

Linking indicators to the vision for the Community Plan.

Consultation

Norwich City Council

Generate discussion with Norwich 21 (LA21 group) and community

Try to get local businesses interested/involved

Walsall MBC

Community consultation process to launch CLIP indicators and develop community based indicators

EURO-PILOT

The first generation of common European indicators for measuring local sustainability was launched at the third European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns in Hanover, February 2000.

The development of this common set of indicators comes from a joint initiative from the European Commission (DG Environment), the European Environment Agency, and from the Expert Group on the Urban Environment created in 1991 by the European Commission. This initiative is intended to support local authorities in their work towards sustainable development, and provide objective and comparable information on progress across Europe. Local Authorities across Europe are now asked to sign up and test a set of 10 indicators (5 compulsory / 5 voluntary):

Core indicators for test (compulsory for participating local authorities)

- Citizen satisfaction with the local community: Citizens' general satisfaction with various features in the municipality
- Local contribution to global climatic change : CO₂-emissions (in the longer term, when simplified methodology has been identified, this indicator will focus on the ecological footprint)
- Local mobility and passenger transportation: Daily passenger transportation distances and modes of transportation
- Availability of local public green areas and local services: Citizen access to nearby public green areas and basic services
- Quality of local outdoor air: Number of days with good and healthy air quality

Additional indicators for test (voluntary for participating local authorities)

- Children's journeys to and from school: Mode of transportation used by children to travel between home and school
- Sustainable management of the local authority and local businesses: Share of public and private organisations adopting and using environmental and social management procedures
- Noise pollution: Share of population exposed to harmful environmental noise
- Sustainable land use: Sustainable development, restoration and protection of land and sites in the municipality
- Products promoting sustainability: Share of eco-labelled, organic or fair-trade products of total consumption

Happily, there is considerable overlap between the Euro set and the CLIP indicators, although methodologies may differ somewhat. For more information, including how involved please check the following web-site at: <http://www.sustainable-cities.org/expert.html>.

3. Publications and people

There are also a number of publications and people that can be useful to draw on through an indicators process, especially at the beginning. A few references are given below.

A FEW USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

Title & details	Description
Quality of life counts. Indicators for a strategy for sustainable development for the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment. DETR, December 1999.	Set of 15 national headline indicators of sustainable development plus around 135 other core national indicators. The indicators support and monitor the UK's sustainable development strategy.
A better quality of life. A strategy for sustainable development for the UK. TSO, May 1999	<i>Covers a new national strategy for sustainable development and includes references and objectives for each of the 150 indicators in Quality of life counts.</i>
Best Value and Audit Commission Performance Indicators for 2000/2001. Audit Commission, DETR and Home Office, December 1999. (http://www.local.detr.gov.uk/research/bvpi.htm)	It sets out the 170 Best Value National Performance Indicators and the 54 Audit Commission PIs for local services for 2000/01.
Aiming to improve and <i>On target</i> . Audit Commission, June 2000	Management papers on the principles of performance measurement and the practice of performance indicators
Preparing Community Strategies: Draft Guidance to Local Authorities. DETR, June 2000 (www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/consult/lgbill99/pcsdraft/index.htm)	<i>Available from DETR Free Literature PO Box No 236 Wetherby LS23 7NB – (tel : 0870 1226 236)</i>
National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal; Report of Policy Action Team 18: Better Information.. TSO, April 2000	<i>Proposals for comprehensive information about deprived neighbourhoods to support the National Strategy of Neighbourhood Renewal.</i>
Communities Count! A step by step guide for community sustainability indicators. NEF, 1998 <i>The LITMUS test</i> , London Borough of Southwark and NEF, (due in July 2000).	<i>The first describes how to develop and use community sustainability indicators and the second is a handbook based on the experience of the LITMUS project. (www.neweconomics.org).</i>
LITMUS project: www.southwark.gov.uk/litmus/	Highlights the experience of the EU funded community indicator project above. The London School of Economics has evaluated LITMUS.
Planning Officers' Society webpages: www.barnsley.gov.uk/planning/ufgrab.html	Useful papers can be downloaded here, including <i>Planning in Best Value – A good Practice Guide</i> .

CONTACTS FROM THE CONTRACTORS AND PILOT STEERING GROUP

Organisation	Contact	Role in project
Improvement and Development Agency	Mark Jeffcote Sustainable Development Adviser Tel: 020 7296 6599 Mark.jeffcote@idea.gov.uk	Key contact for the helpline for this handbook. Was first a contractor and then IDEa member of the Steering Group
Department of Environment Transport and the Regions	Mr John Custance Tel: 020 7944 6514 Fax: 020 7944 6489 John_custance@detr.gsi.gov.uk	Member of the Steering Group (Chair and DETR lead representative)
	Miss Deborah Heenan	Member of the Steering Group (DETR co-ordinator for pilot)
	Miss Emma Snelling Tel: 020 7944 6518 Fax: 020 7944 6489 Emma_snelling@detr.gsi.gov.uk	Member of the Steering Group (Secretariat)
Lancashire County Council	Mr Graham Pinfield Tel: 01772 264 986 Fax: 01772 264 168 Grahamp@env.lancscc.gov.uk	Member of the Steering Group for the project (LA lead)
Local Government Association	Ms Alison Miller Tel: 020 7664 3037 Fax: 020 7664 3008 Alison.miller@lga.gov.uk	Member of the Steering Group for the project (currently on secondment)
Audit Commission	Mr Davy Jones Tel: 020 7396 1282 Fax: 020 7396 1335 Davyjones@audit-commission.gov.uk	Member of the Steering Group for the project
Birmingham City Council	Ms Jane Forshaw Tel: 0121 303 5444/5440 Fax: 0121 303 5436 Jane_forshaw@birmingham.gov.uk	Member of the Steering Group for the project
New Economics Foundation (They are a charity and think-tank, and have been working on practical tools such as indicators for over six years and co-ordinated this CLIP pilot)	Sanjiv Lingayah Tel: 020 7407 7447 Fax: 020 7407 6473 Sanjiv.lingayah@neweconomics.org	NEF were the contractors who jointly co-ordinated the pilot project with Environ.
Environ (They are a sustainable development charity based in Leicester and have also been working on indicators for several years.)	Duncan Bell Tel: 0116 222 0222 Fax: 0116 255 2343 Info@environ.org.uk	Environ were the contractors who jointly co-ordinated the pilot project with NEF.
Further contacts for the piloting authorities are given in Appendix E		

APPENDIX C - Step by step

Looking at numerous local indicators projects around the UK shows that many have certain common features. These can be broken down as follows:

1. Getting started
2. Deciding issues
3. Choosing indicators
4. Gathering data
5. Communicating indicators
6. Galvanising action

Appendix C on the DETR website (at www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/index.htm) gives more details of the issues and considerations for each of these steps. It is based largely on earlier work carried out by the New Economics Foundation and published in 'Community counts'¹³.

¹³ Communities Count! A step by step guide for community sustainability indicators. NEF, 1998
The LITMUS test, London Borough of Southwark and NEF, (due in July 2000). (www.neweconomics.org)

APPENDIX D - A summary of the CLIP project

The work that you see in this handbook is the tip of an iceberg. A large amount of background work has taken place to ensure that the recommended indicators are useful and relevant to local authorities.

1. Context and purpose of the project

Since the Rio Summit in 1992, many local authorities and LA21 groups throughout the UK have been developing local sets of sustainable development indicators as part of their efforts to raise awareness about sustainability issues in their communities and organisations, and in order to start tracking how their areas are changing. The Government has also established a national set of Quality of Life Indicators to undertake a similar role at the national level.

The Central - Local (Government) Information Partnership (CLIP) Task Force on Sustainable Development¹⁴ was set up in May 1998 to investigate how the existing indicators work in localities could be rationalised to create a menu of 20-30 'Quality of Life Indicators' to be recommended to local authorities.

The aim was that this menu of indicators should act as guidance only and would not be prescriptive. It needed to build on the experience of many authorities in developing their own indicators. But it was recognised that there were advantages for local authorities in measuring common issues in a consistent way so that authorities could compare their progress with other neighbouring or like authorities.

The Task Force started to develop a set of ideas and held a Consultation Seminar to engage a wider range of LA21 experience in Birmingham in October 1998. Over 100 representatives from local authorities, LA21 and other groups participated in this seminar. In preparation for this consultation, the CLIP Task Force drew up a paper including more than 70 indicators, covering social, economic and environmental issues. The choice of indicators drew on both local and national work, ie:

- a. the results of the mid-1998 LGMB survey of local authorities which identified many indicators that were already being used by local authorities or Local Agenda 21 groups;
- b. those indicators, from the then emerging ideas for a new national set of indicators, that were believed to be most relevant at the local level.

Linkages with other indicator initiatives, for example, Our Healthier Nation, Crime Audits, Best Value and Lifelong Learning were also taken into consideration.

2. The pilot testing exercise

Following a further period of consultation, a reduced set of 30-40 draft indicators and issues were selected to be tested by pilot authorities in England and Wales. NEF and Environ were contracted to lead this phase of the work and develop a handbook of guidance.

About 60 local authorities volunteered for the pilot testing and of these 30 were selected by the IDeA and LGA. The piloting authorities had a range of experiences - from those who had already developed their own indicators to others who were anxious to start the

¹⁴ The CLIP Task Force is made up of representatives of Government Departments, the IDeA, LGA and Audit Commission, local authorities, LA21 groups and a small number of NGOs.

process. Each pilot agreed to test a selection of the draft indicators as the basis of the trial. A seminar for the pilot authorities was held in September 1999 just before the testing started.

There were four main tasks for each piloting authority:

1. Select a set of indicators from the draft set
2. Gather data on these indicators for the most recent period or in time series if resources allowed
3. Engage with local partners in the work e.g. officers working on Best Value, Health and Education Authorities, etc.
4. Record and share the experience of working on each indicator, including resource requirements and local reaction to them.

Between October 1999 and January 2000, the LAs tested their chosen indicators. The test was supported by a preliminary draft of this handbook as well as telephone and e-mail support from NEF and Environ. There were also facilitated 'area' meetings where neighbouring piloting authorities came together to share lessons learnt and discuss progress.

Following the pilot phase, a second workshop was held in Leeds in March 2000, to report back and reflect on which indicators should be selected for the handbook. On the basis of the feedback and views of the pilots, the guidance in the handbook was updated and this current version produced.

The project has been demanding on all involved. Some pilots felt that the time available for testing the indicators was too short and therefore the testing phase was not as inclusive of the community and other stakeholders as it could have been. But in some authorities the carrying out of the pilot did stimulate successful cross-working with different parts of the council.

It is hoped that the pilot authorities can continue to build on this early work and that their experiences will be useful to them and others. A list of contacts in each piloting authority is given in Appendix E. All have all kindly agreed to share their experiences and answer questions if others wish to contact them.

APPENDIX E - List of the Pilot Local Authorities

(including contacts and indicators piloted in each authority)

Local Authority	Indicators tested
<p>Barnsley MBC Linda Christon Head of Management Development, Management Development Unit, Town Hall, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2TA Tel: 01226 773406 Fax: 01226 773305 E-mail: lindachriston@barnsley.gov.uk</p>	<p>3; 5; 9; 10; 11; 14; 15; 17; 20; 21; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 29</p>
<p>Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council Helen Miller Environment Directorate, Milton House, Wellington Street, Bolton, BL3 5DG Tel: 01204 336659 Fax: 01204 336695 E-mail: helen.miller@bolton.gov.uk</p>	<p>3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 12; 13; 16; 17; 18; 20; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29</p>
<p>Calderdale MBC Steve Bhowmick Env. Services, Northgate House, Halifax, HX1 1UN Tel: 01422 392250 Fax: 01422 392399 E-mail: town.planning@calderdale.gov.uk</p>	<p>1; 2; 4; 5; 8; 9; 10; 11; 14; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 32; 33; 35; 36</p>
<p>Cheshire County Council Mike Armstrong County Clerk's County Hall, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 1SF Tel: 01244 602285 Fax: 01244 603819 E-mail: armstrongml@cheshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 17; 18; 20; 25; 26; 27; 28;</p>
<p>Coventry City Council Adrian West Agenda 21 Co-ordinator, Environmental Services, Broadgate House, Broadgate, Coventry, CV1 1NH Tel: 024 7683 1805 Fax: 024 7683 1831 E-mail: agenda21@coventry.gov.uk</p>	<p>1; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 10; 13; 17; 25; 26;</p>
<p>Cumbria County Council Alex McKenzie / Yvonne Charras Corporate Environment Unit, Citadel Chambers, Carlisle, CA3 8SG Tel: 01228 606313 Fax: 01228 606689 E-mail: alex.mckenzie@cumbriacc.gov.uk</p>	<p>1; 2; 3; 4; 6; 14; 15; 16; 20; 25; 26; 27</p>
<p>Daventry District Council Roger Reeve Building Control & Service Development, Lodge Road, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 5AF Tel: 01327 302470 Fax: 01327 302474 E-mail: rreeve@daventrydc.gov.uk</p>	<p>2; 3; 5; 7; 13; 18; 19; 20; 21; 24; 25; 27; 36</p>
<p>Durham County Council Ben Dellow Environment and Technical Services, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UQ Tel: 0191 383 3721 Fax: 0191 383 4096 E-mail: ben.dellow@durham.gov.uk</p>	<p>3; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 17; 18; 20; 21; 25; 27; 28; 29</p>

Local Authority (<i>continued</i>)	Indicators tested
<p>Eastleigh Borough Council Brian Barker Environmental Coordinator, Civic Offices, Leigh Road, Eastleigh, SO50 9YN Tel: 023 8068 8085 Fax: 023 8068 8257 E-mail: Brian.Barker@eastleigh.gov.uk E-mail: environment@eastleigh.gov.uk</p>	3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29; 31; 34; 35
<p>Gwynedd Council Clive James Chief Executive's, Gwynedd Council, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH Tel: 01286 679501 Fax: 01286 679488 E-mail: clivej@gwynedd.gov.uk</p>	2; 3; 4; 9; 10; 12; 13; 14; 20; 21; 24; 25; 26; 29; 32; 33
<p>Huntingdonshire District Council Alastair Rhind Sustainable Development Projects Officer, Pathfinder House, St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE29 3TN Tel: 01480 388389 Fax: 01480 388383 E-mail: Alastair.Rhind@huntsdc.gov.uk</p>	1; 3; 5; 7; 9; 11; 12; 15; 16; 17; 18; 20; 22; 24; 25; 27; 29
<p>Kingston upon Hull City Council Mike Wistow Strategic Management, Chief Executive's Department, Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street, Kingston upon Hull, HU1 2AA Tel: 01482 613134 Fax: 01482 613340 E-mail: mike.wistow@hullcc.gov.uk</p>	3; 4; 5; 7; 8; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 18; 20; 21; 24; 25; 26; 27;
<p>London Borough of Bexley David Edwards Corporate Policy and Support Unit, Bexley Civic Offices Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7LB Tel: 020 8303 7777 x 2036 Fax: 020 8301 2661 E-mail: david.edwards@bexley.gov.uk</p>	2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 10; 11; 14; 15; 16; 18; 20; 21; 25; 28; 34
<p>London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Alan Benson Principal Policy Officer, Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street, London W6 9JU Tel: 020 8600 4927 Fax: 020 8576 5045 E-mail: policy@lbhf.gov.uk</p>	2; 4; 5; 9; 10; 13; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 25; 26; 27
<p>London Borough of Hounslow Richard Hodson Chief Executive's, Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow Middlesex, TW3 4DN Tel: 020 8583 2463 Fax: 020 8583 2466 E-mail: lbh_rhodson@hotmail.com</p>	1; 5; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 13; 16; 19; 18; 20; 21; 22; 23; 28
<p>London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Sue Duckworth Environmental and Operational Services, Central Depot, Langhorn Drive, Twickenham, TW2 7SG Tel: 020 8831 6334 Fax: 020 8891 7783 E-mail: s.duckworth@richmond.gov.uk</p>	1; 3; 4; 5; 7; 8; 10; 11; 26; 13; 16; 24; 25; 31
<p>London Borough of Sutton Graham Dean/Alison Miller Environment and Leisure, 24 Denmark Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 2JG Tel: 020 8770 6245 Fax: 020 8770 6112 E-mail: graham.dean@sutton.gov.uk</p>	3; 5; 6; 7; 9; 10; 11; 13; 16; 17; 18; 20; 21; 22; 23; 25; 27; 33; 34

Local Authority (<i>continued</i>)	Indicators tested
<p>Liverpool City Council Adrienne Taylor Chief Exec's Office, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool, L69 2DH Tel: 0151 225 4600 Fax: 0151 225 2017 E-mail: adrienne.taylor@liverpool.gov.uk</p>	3; 7; 9; 10; 15; 17; 18; 22; 25; 26; 27; 29; 32; 33
<p>Middlesbrough Council Jeff Duffield Environmental Health, Public Protection & Planning Service, PO Box 65, Vancouver House, Central Mews, Gurney Street, Middlesbrough, TS1 1QP Tel: 01642 264195 Fax: 01642 264199 E-mail: jeff_duffield@middlesbrough.gov.uk</p>	3; 5; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23; 25; 26; 29
<p>Newark and Sherwood District Council Robert Benington Chief Executive's Department, Kelham Hall, Kelham, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG23 5QX Tel: 01636 650000 Fax: 01636 655233 E-mail: Rob.Benington@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk</p>	2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 12; 9; 13; 20; 25; 26; 28; 29; 33; 36
<p>North Kesteven District Council Mark Mason Assistant Environmental Co-ordinator, Environmental Services, PO Box 3, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7EF Tel: 01529 414155 x 500 Fax: 01529 413956 E-mail: Mark_Mason@n-kesteven.gov.uk</p>	2; 3; 8; 13; 17; 18; 19; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26; 32; 35
<p>Northumberland County Council David Brookes Environment Policy Officer, Environment Directorate, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF Tel: 01670 534072 Fax: 01670 534069 E-mail: Dbrookes@northumberland.gov.uk</p>	3; 6; 8; 9; 10; 12; 16; 17; 18; 20; 21; 23; 25; 26; 27; 28; 29
<p>Norwich City Council Bridget Buttinger Internal issues and projects, City Hall, Norwich, NR2 1NH Tel: 01603 212066 Fax: 01603 212010 E-mail: bbuttinger.ncc.ch@gtnet.gov.uk</p>	3; 6; 7; 8; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 18; 20; 21; 22; 24; 25
<p>Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Michele Carr Environmental Services, 3rd Floor, Metropolitan House Hobson Street, Oldham, OL1 1QD Tel: 0161 911 4475 Fax: 0161 911 4162 E-mail: ppr.stratpol@oldham.gov.uk</p>	5; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 14; 18; 20; 21; 22; 25; 26; 32; 33; 36
<p>Portsmouth City Council Ruth Savage Strategy Unit Chief Executive's, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, PO1 2AL Tel: 023 9284 1121 Fax: 023 9283 4886 E-mail: rsavage@portsmouthcc.gov.uk</p>	1; 2; 3; 9; 11; 12; 13; 17; 21; 23; 25; 30; 34
<p>South Gloucestershire Council Jane Thompson Chief Executive's, The Council Offices, Castle Street, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire Tel: 01454 863870 Fax: 01454 863855 E-mail: jane_thompson@southglos.gov.uk</p>	1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 8; 9; 10; 11; 13; 16; 17; 18; 20; 21,23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 32

Local Authority (<i>continued</i>)	Indicators tested
Somerset County Council Alan Watson Sustainable Somerset Tel: 01823 356073 Fax: 01823 355572 E-mail: ajwatson@somerset.gov.uk	2; 5; 9; 10; 11; 14; 17; 18; 20; 23; 25; 26; 27; 29
Telford and Wrekin Council Janet Southern Environment and Economy, Civic Offices, PO Box 212, Telford Tel: 01952 202370 Fax: 01952 293204 E-mail: env.economy@wrekin.gov.uk	1; 3; 5; 6; 8; 14; 15; 16; 22; 23; 27; 28
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APPENDIX F - Other indicators included in the pilot testing

The following seven indicators in Table F.1 were tested in the pilot by Local Authorities but a practical indicator was not found or agreed. A further two indicators (also in the table) were withdrawn from the pilot for practical reasons.

These early ideas have been included here for reference. This information about some of the difficulties may be helpful if authorities wish to develop these or similar indicators for their local use.

Table F.1: Other indicators included in the piloting phase of the project		
Indicator (ref number)	Definition/source	Comments and limitations
Distance travelled by locally produced commodities (30)	Average number of miles, which selected food items travel to reach the local area	Birmingham City Council and Sustain (formerly SAFE Alliance) have used versions of this 'food miles' indicator.
	<i>Local survey of a few, selected supermarkets</i>	Trade is useful in supporting communities elsewhere and therefore closed economies are not necessarily sustainable. The supplier and consumer behaviour in selected supermarkets may not be representative for the whole local area.
Social networks (31)	Percentage of respondents agreeing with the following statement: 'Would you describe the people who live in this neighbourhood as friendly?'	This indicator is used at a national scale in the Housing in England survey 1997/8, which is carried out by the Social Survey Division of ONS for the DETR.
	<i>Local survey of the public</i>	The indicator was not comprehensively tested during the pilot phase, partly because of its broad nature.
Involvement in decision-making (32)	Number of local community representatives or voluntary group representatives who are on partnership committees, or council committees/sub-committees.	There may be many groups run by local authorities that are informal. Difficulties were also found in collecting data covering only representatives of community groups and not all members of the public.
	<i>Survey within the Local Authority</i>	The pilots were not enthusiastic about this indicator, despite the fact that partnership working is increasingly important locally.

Table F.1: Other indicators included in the piloting phase of the project (<i>continued</i>)		
Indicator (pilot number)	Definition/source	Comments and limitations
Minority group representation (33)	Minority group representation as on partnership committees, or council committees/sub-committees, in relation to their ethnic make-up within the community.	There may be many groups run by LAs that are informal. This indicator is relevant in ethnically diverse LAs, however it does not measure other elements of cultural diversity such as gender, religion, or age.
	<i>Survey within the Local Authority</i>	There was limited consensus in the pilots about this indicator and problems categorising ethnicity.
Demonstration of cultural interest (34)	Frequency of use by local people of local cultural resources e.g. museums, libraries, sports facilities, community centres, etc.	The questions give only an impression about interest in local culture. Frequent use of local cultural facilities does not necessarily demonstrate a high level of cultural interest or belonging among the local population.
	<i>Local survey of the public</i>	The pilots regarded this indicator as only exploratory in nature.
Local job opportunities for young people (35)	Percentage of respondents thinking that young people have a good chance of finding work in the local area	The indicator is used in the Survey of English Housing.
	<i>Local survey of young people</i>	In the pilot, conducting this type of survey proved to be difficult for the LAs, partly because of time and resource constraints.
Locally owned business (36)	Ratio of locally owned business in comparison with national/multi-national business.	While local business will tend to increase local money flows, 'outside' business also contributes significantly to local economies.
	<i>Available from Office of National Statistics at a charge</i>	The indicator was not taken up by the pilots partly because of expense relevant to benefit. Approximate data might be available through the local Chambers of Commerce.
Training in employment	This indicator was withdrawn from the pilot and so not tested.	This was excluded as local data are difficult to obtain and there are other indicators about human capital in the menu.
Journeys made by mode	This indicator was withdrawn from the pilot and so not tested.	Experts advised that such an indicator at the local level would be both resource intensive and potentially inaccurate.