A Local Authority Performance Indicator for Biodiversity

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NI

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NI 19

NI 197
Local Authority Performance Indicator for Biodiversity

Background

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- end of Comprehensive Performance Assessment of Local Authorities
- introduction of Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements
- 1200 LA performance indicators replaced by c. 200 national indicators of Local Authority performance
- LAAs to include 35 improvement targets

Why have a Local Authority Performance Indicator for Biodiversity

- Local Authorities have a responsibility for biodiversity
- Biodiversity is a significant area of activity for Local Authorities
- LA performance for biodiversity would not be reflected within another LA performance indicator
- Performance Indicator for biodiversity would be a meaningful indicator for performance relating to wider environmental quality
- A biodiversity indicator could reflect performance in number of areas of service delivery
Local Authority Performance Indicator for Biodiversity

Why have a Local Authority Performance Indicator for Biodiversity

- risk and consequences of not having one

Local Authority Performance Indicator for Biodiversity

Is it possible to develop an indicator of Local Authority performance for biodiversity?

- Biodiversity performance is measurable and that a single measure can be derived as an effective surrogate to reporting all activity for biodiversity
Local Authority Performance Indicator for Biodiversity

Is it possible to develop an indicator of Local Authority performance for biodiversity?

The proposed indicator would comply with the criteria:

- Measurable
- Outcome focussed
- Relevant
- Reliable/comparable over time
- Attributable to Local Authority
- Not act as a perverse incentive
- Not impose significant cost implications
- Must not be a ‘composite’ indicator

Potential indicators

- SSSI condition within area of Local Authority
- Proportion of Local Authority owned/controlled land managed for biodiversity
- Impact of development control decisions on biodiversity
- Provision of accessible greenspace
- Farmland/woodland bird populations
- Delivering biodiversity through Local Sites
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Delivery of biodiversity through Local Sites

✓ Measurable
✓ Outcome focussed
✓ Relevant
✓ Reliable/comparable over time
✓ Attributable to Local Authority
✓ Not act as a perverse incentive
✓ Not impose significant cost implications
✓ Not a composite indicator

Local Sites

• More than 37,000 Local Sites delivering UK and Local BAP and GAP targets
• Comprehensive rather than representative suite of sites
• Part of networks provide buffering and connectivity contributing to resilience to climate change
• Represent local character and distinctiveness
• Contribute to quality of life and well-being, providing opportunities for appreciation of nature, research and education
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Local Sites

- ‘Grass-roots’ designation
- recognised in national guidance
- partnership of Government, voluntary and private sectors
- leadership role for Local Authorities
- extensive national coverage
- well-established, good track record

Local Sites Guidance
one of three pillars of local partnership

Local Sites

Local BAP/GAP
one of three pillars of local partnership

Local Sites

Local Records Centre

Local BAP/GAP

one of three pillars of local partnership

Local Sites

Local Records Centre

Local BAP/GAP
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• Performance is a simple percentage calculated as follows:...

\[
\frac{X}{Y} \times 100 = \% 
\]

where..  \( X \) is the number of sites in the LA area where positive conservation management is being or has been implemented during the last five years.  
\( Y \) is the total number of Local Sites within the LAs administrative area at the time of reporting.

Assessing ‘positive conservation management’

• **Management Plan** – a plan has been written and has been/is being implemented

• **Management Schemes** - the site is being managed in accordance with an environmental management scheme such as Environmental Stewardship, Countryside Stewardship, Woodland Grant Scheme

• **Biodiversity Action Plan** - management activity carried out in accordance with a Biodiversity Action Plan, including HAP, SAP, LBAP (or GAP where relevant)

• **Advice** – advice on conservation management has been provided by the local sites partnership and has been/is being acted upon
Assessing ‘positive conservation management’

How much of site needs to be managed?

- A site should score if the management is considered substantive and contributes to the conservation of the features for which the site was selected.

- Management should be at a level or rate in order to conserve the features in the long-term

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Successes

- secured a national indicator for Local Authority performance for Biodiversity

- 26 Local Area Agreements have improvement targets based on NI 197

- catalyst to promote join up between LBAPs, Local Sites, LRCs

- greater engagement between Defra, GOs, LAs, WTs and others over biodiversity

- a means of demonstrating commitment toward S40 duty
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The Future

- performance management for Local Authorities?
- an indicator for biodiversity and geodiversity?
- an indicator based on Local Sites?
- an indicator worth having?

Thank you

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