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Indicators

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1 www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/indicators.

2 www.countryside.gov.uk/EvidenceAndAnalysis/state_of_the_countryside_reports/nationalsocr.asp.

Heritage Counts is a means of monitoring the condition of the nation's heritage assets, of assessing current and future trends and of evaluating the impact that the historic environment has on people's quality of life. It therefore relies upon the availability of adequate data, and on the extent to which this information can be organised and managed to provide a convincing narrative about year-on-year changes. This year's report is structured around a framework of indicator measures that will form the basis of future editions of *Heritage Counts* and which will, over time, create a rich body of time-series information about a range of different historic environment issues. The aims of this chapter are to explain how the *Heritage Counts* indicator set was chosen and to summarise the picture that the data present. Chapters 3 to 5 provide further detail on the different data series that have been selected, under the headings 'Understanding the Assets' (Chapter 3), 'Caring and Sharing' (Chapter 4) and 'Using and Benefiting' (Chapter 5).

2.1 WHAT ARE INDICATORS?

Indicators provide a straightforward means of interpreting complex data and drawing out key trends and developments. They are commonly used as a management tool in all walks of life, from the financial information displayed in company accounts to public sector funding agreements and local authority performance targets. The best indicators are those data that are robust, easily measurable, and which can be interpreted unambiguously. Indicator data need also to be available at regular points in time, and to be chosen in such a way as to frame a clear narrative of underlying trends and developments. Inevitably, the selection of indicators involves a degree of subjective decision-making, but it ought to be possible to devise a portfolio of measures that cover the full range of issues under analysis and which start to provide a clear picture of the principal trends and developments.

An example of a balanced basket of indicators might be the government's 'Quality of Life Counts' indicator framework. This comprises some 147 measures ranging from economic measures (such as investment as a proportion of GDP) to social measures (such as the proportion of households in

non-decent housing) to measures of environmental quality (such as the level of road traffic). When taken together, the 15 headline indicators from the Quality of Life Counts set comprise a 'quality of life barometer' that gauges government's overall performance in delivering its sustainable development strategy. The government is currently consulting on a revised edition of this strategy, and on changes to the current Quality of Life Counts indicator framework. 1

Other 'condition' indicators used by government include those in the *State of the Countryside* report (produced by the Countryside Agency) and the forthcoming *State of the Cities* report, as proposed by the Urban White Paper (2000). The *State of the Countryside* report in 2004 included the first findings of a long-term research project to devise an indicator of change in the quality of the countryside. 2 The Countryside Quality Counts project was sponsored by the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and led by Professor Roy Haines-Young of Nottingham University. It produced an initial indicator of change in the quality of the countryside showing, for example, that 23 per cent of rural landscapes in England between 1990 and 1998 displayed signs of marked change in character. The project concluded that the range of information

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used to compile the indicator should be extended and that further data on the historic environment was a particular requirement. ³

Indicators can also be used to help gauge the performance of institutions, and as a target-setting tool. Local authorities, for example, are encouraged to meet Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) selected by the Audit Commission and reflecting the wide range of different types of service delivered at the local level. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently piloting a new series of BVPI measures, including three new measures relating directly to local authority provision for conserving and explaining the historic environment:

- The percentage of conservation areas which have been subject to a character appraisal, or its review, within the last five years, as a proportion of the total number of conservation areas in the local authority area
- The percentage of local authority heritage assets which have been reviewed within the last five years as a proportion of all local authority heritage assets
- The percentage increase since the previous financial year of the number of historic environment records benchmark measures in place

It is hoped that if these BVPIs are rolled out across all local authorities, they will provide useful data for future *Heritage Counts* reports. Similarly, the government now requires local planning authorities to identify and use key indicators as part of sustainability appraisals of regional spatial strategies, development plan documents and supplementary planning documents, reflecting the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

Last year's *Heritage Counts 2003* report launched a consultation on the issue of devising a set of indicators for the historic environment. A provisional list of some 30 potential indicator measures was proposed, under three overlapping headings: Benefits; Identity and Condition; and Conserving and Explaining. It was suggested that these indicators could form the basis for future *Heritage Counts* reports, thereby providing a consistent time-series of data to inform assessments of the state of the

historic environment. Views and comments on this framework were invited, with a view to publishing a revised framework in *Heritage Counts 2004*.

A distinction is sometimes drawn between 'measures' and 'indicators': measures are baseline quantities (such as the number of scheduled monuments), while indicators are proxies for concepts, attitudes or behaviours (such as the population of farmland and woodland birds, used in the UK as an indicator of environmental biodiversity). A straightforward way to understand this distinction might be to consider the difference between taking a regular measure of the number of listed buildings (a baseline quantity, which probably changes little year-on-year but is nonetheless useful over the long-term) and the number of listed buildings on the English Heritage *Register of Buildings at Risk* (which features as an indicator in the government's Quality of Life Counts indicator set, and which demonstrates trends in attitudes and actions towards the historic environment). For the time being, the indicators used in *Heritage Counts 2004* embrace both of these definitions, while recognising the long-term need to develop properly robust performance indicators to correct the current preponderance of baseline measures.

2.2

CONSULTING ON *HERITAGE COUNTS* INDICATORS

The consultation period on the findings of *Heritage Counts 2003* ended on 27 February 2004. Among the written responses to the consultation were some very useful comments about producing indicators for the historic environment, including:

- The importance of using indicator measures to highlight observable trends in a clear and unambiguous way, and generate wider public interest
- The need to differentiate clearly between baseline data and indicator measures

³ www.countryside-quality-counts.org.uk.

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- Baseline measures do not in themselves enhance understanding but can be helpful if they are viewed within a wider context and repeated regularly as a time-series under comparable conditions
- The indicators need to cover the non-designated historic environment as well as statutorily protected resources
- Indicators need to address the wide range of historic environment concerns, including, for example: open spaces and the public realm; archaeological assets; places of worship; skills and training issues; and research activity
- A smaller number of particularly powerful indicator measures might have more of an impact than a longer list of baseline data sources.

The proposed indicator framework was then considered at a seminar hosted by the National Trust in April 2004, and at a regional event held at Brodsworth Hall in Yorkshire in July 2004 as part of the 'Taking It On' consultation on a new UK strategy for sustainable development. These events provided further views and opinions from a wide range of stakeholders and experts, at national, regional and local levels, on the structure and content of a new framework of indicator measures for the historic environment.

2.3 THE REVISED *HERITAGE COUNTS* INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

The revised framework of historic environment indicators that emerged from the consultation exercise and the two workshops sets a series of proposed measures within three interconnected groups:

A. Understanding the assets

Baseline data and indicator measures relating to the **identity** of the nation's heritage assets, and how **information** on them is collected and their **significance** defined.

B. Caring and sharing

Measures that demonstrate the processes involved in **looking after** the heritage resource **making it accessible** to the public.

C. Using and benefiting

Indicators of the results of managing the heritage resource, in terms of **social and economic contributions** and wider **cultural and historic awareness**.

The table opposite sets out this framework in more detail.

Although many of these measures featured in *Heritage Counts 2003* and its predecessor document the *State of the Historic Environment Report (2002)*, they are brought together for the first time in *Heritage Counts 2004* under this revised framework. The framework provides a structure for the rest of this report, and a focus for the data presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. By reporting on this data in a consistent manner in future reports, it will be possible to draw year-on-year comparisons of the key trends affecting the historic environment.

Further comments on the framework adopted and the validity of the measures used are welcomed, and should be sent by email to: **heritagecounts@english-heritage.org.uk** by **31 March 2005**.

2.4 *HERITAGE COUNTS* INDICATOR SET

A Understanding the assets

GENERAL DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	MEASUREMENT	INDICATOR MEASURE OR BASELINE DATA?	ASSESSMENT
A1 DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS	A1.1	NUMBER OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 16 SITES IN ENGLAND, ONE NEW IN 2004 (LIVERPOOL)
	A1.2	NUMBER OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 19,594 SCHEDULED SITES IN ENGLAND AT 1 APRIL 2004, A NET INCREASE OF 148 ON 2003
	A1.3	NUMBER OF LISTED BUILDINGS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 371,971 ENTRIES ON THE LIST AT 1 AUGUST 2004
	A1.4	NUMBER OF REGISTERED HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 1,584 ON REGISTER AT 1 APRIL 2004, A NET INCREASE OF 26 ON 2003
A2 EXTENT AND ACCESSIBILITY OF HISTORIC AREAS AND OPEN SPACES	A2.1	NUMBER OF CONSERVATION AREAS IN ENGLAND	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 9,140 CONSERVATION AREAS IN ENGLAND AS AT 1 APRIL 2004, A NET INCREASE OF 60 ON 2003
	A2.2	EXTENT OF AREA DESIGNATIONS IN ENGLAND	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 994 HECTARES OF NATIONAL PARK, 20,40 HECTARES OF AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY, 1,057 KILOMETRES OF HERITAGE COAST
	A2.3	EXTENT OF AREA OF ANCIENT WOODLANDS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 349,073 HECTARES OF ANCIENT WOODLANDS IN ENGLAND
A3 ACQUIRING INFORMATION	A3.1	NUMBER OF ITEMS RECORDED ON HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 1.43 MILLION ITEMS (ESTIMATED) ON HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS
	A3.2	EXTENT OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION PROGRAMME NOW MORE THAN HALF COMPLETED
	A3.3	EXTENT OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH	BASELINE	NO SINGLE INDICATOR IDENTIFIED

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B Caring and sharing

GENERAL DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	MEASUREMENT	INDICATOR MEASURE OR BASELINE DATA?	ASSESSMENT
B1 HERITAGE AT RISK	B1.1	BUILDINGS AT RISK	INDICATOR	DATA AVAILABLE: 3.5% OF GRADE I AND GRADE II* BUILDINGS AT RISK; 12.2% ECONOMIC TO REPAIR
	B1.2	LANDSCAPES AT RISK	INDICATOR	NOT YET AVAILABLE: CURRENTLY AT PILOT STAGE
	B1.3	MONUMENTS AT RISK	INDICATOR	NOT YET AVAILABLE: CURRENTLY AT PILOT STAGE
B2 MANAGING POSITIVELY	B2.1	PLANNING TRENDS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 671,590 APPLICATIONS DECIDED IN 2003/04, 7% INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR
	B2.2	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 33,283 APPLICATIONS DETERMINED IN 2003/04, 2% INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR
	B2.3	SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT DECISIONS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 928 APPLICATIONS LOGGED BY ENGLISH HERITAGE IN 2003/04, 7% INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR
	B2.4	PLANNING APPLICATIONS AFFECTING REGISTERED HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 751 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY IN 2003/04
	B2.5	CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED ANNUALLY BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 3,147 DECISIONS ON CONSENT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED IN 2003/04, 5% INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR
	B2.6	WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGEMENT PLANS	INDICATOR	DATA AVAILABLE: 13 PLANS IN PLACE IN 2004
B3 CAPACITY AND RESOURCES	B3.1	EMPLOYMENT NATIONWIDE ON HERITAGE, MUSEUM AND CONSERVATION SERVICES	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 29,392 EMPLOYED IN MUSEUM AND HERITAGE SERVICES IN 2002
	B3.2	FUNDING AVAILABLE	INDICATOR	NO SINGLE INDICATOR IDENTIFIED; NEED TO INCLUDE GRANT AID, HLF FUNDING, FISCAL RELIEF, EUROPEAN SOURCES, CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT/RDA
B4 DEVELOPING SKILLS AND TRAINING	B4.1	NUMBER OF NEW APPRENTICESHIPS IN HERITAGE CRAFT SKILLS	INDICATOR	NO SINGLE INDICATOR IDENTIFIED SECTOR SKILLS NEED ANALYSIS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY
B5 NEW USERS	B5.1	NEW USERS OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FROM PRIORITY GROUPS	INDICATOR	NOT YET AVAILABLE: DATA GATHERING CURRENTLY UNDERWAY

C Using and benefiting

GENERAL DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	MEASUREMENT	INDICATOR MEASURE OR BASELINE DATA?	ASSESSMENT
C1 EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING	C1.1	GCSE/A LEVEL HISTORY CANDIDATES	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 193,937 CANDIDATES ENTERED FOR GCSE (GRADES A-C) AND 33,421 CANDIDATES ENTERED FOR A LEVEL (GRADES A-C) IN 2001/02
	C1.2	STUDENTS STUDYING COURSES RELATING TO HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 104,475 STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDYING FOR HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT-RELATED DEGREES
	C1.3	SCHOOL VISITS TO HISTORIC SITES	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 2.065 MILLION SCHOOL VISITS TO HISTORIC ATTRACTIONS RECORDED BY VISITBRITAIN IN 2003
C2 ECONOMIC BENEFITS	C2.1	ANNUAL VISITS TO HISTORIC VISITOR ATTRACTIONS	BASELINE	DATA AVAILABLE: 62.5 MILLION VISITS TO HISTORIC VISITOR ATTRACTIONS RECORDED BY VISITBRITAIN IN 2003
C3 PARTICIPATION	C3.1	MEMBERSHIP OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ORGANISATIONS	INDICATOR	DATA AVAILABLE: 3.3 MILLION NATIONAL TRUST MEMBERS, 544,000 ENGLISH HERITAGE MEMBERS IN 2004
	C3.2	NUMBER OF HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEERS	INDICATOR	DATA AVAILABLE: 157,000 VOLUNTEERS IN OVER 100 ORGANISATIONS ESTIMATED IN 2003
C4 WELL-BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE	C4.1	ATTITUDE SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS	INDICATOR	NO SINGLE INDICATOR IDENTIFIED
C5 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	C5.1	RE-USE OF EMPTY HOMES	INDICATOR	DATA AVAILABLE: 718,720 EMPTY HOMES IN ENGLAND ON 1 APRIL 2003, A DECLINE OF OVER 50,000 ON THE NUMBER IN 1999

The major archaeological project at Chester Ampitheatre

