

Consultation on the use of the State of the Environment Indicators

Welsh Government Consultation

The Carnegie UK Trust is pleased to respond to the consultation on the use of the State of the Environment Indicators. The Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913 and we are delighted to be celebrating our centenary in 2013.

As an organisation interested in wellbeing, we have been engaged in debates in Scotland and at a UK level in measuring wellbeing. We support the recommendation of the Stiglitz Sen Fitoussi report that government develop a sub-dashboard on environmental indicators. Without such a sub-dashboard governments cannot properly track levels of economic, human and environmental stocks essential for our future wellbeing. We therefore support the Welsh Government's State of the Environment Indicators report.

We have set out our response to the specific questions asked in the consultation below.

1. Which of the environmental indicators do we use

- Indicator 5: Percentage of people taking action to improve the environment
- Indicator 24b: Percentage of people who feel safe in the local area - from Living in Wales Survey
- Indicator 24c: Number of environmental volunteers
- Indicator 28b: Trends in level of fly-tipping
- Indicator 28c: Cleanliness Index
- Indicator 29a: Percentage of total length of

footpaths and other rights of way which were easy to use by the public

2. What do we use the information for

The Trust is particularly interested in encouraging action on local environmental incivilities such as dog mess, graffiti, litter and so on. The quality of the local environment has been shown to have a significant impact on individual and community wellbeing indicators.

Our recent report *Pride in Place: Tackling Environmental Incivilities* was informed by

secondary data analysis of some of the above indicators, and comparisons between the nations of the UK. This data showed that significant improvements in the quality of the local environment had been achieved over a number of years but that deprived urban areas were still suffering high levels of these 'incivilities' .

Our report therefore focused on areas of deprivation and identified a number of community-led initiatives which improved the quality of local neighbourhoods. The report was published in August 2012 and includes examples from Wales. It can be downloaded [here](#).

3. How useful do we find the information presented in the State of the Environment report

The information itself is very useful and assists the Trust to advocate for improvements to the quality of the local environment. We also support the dissemination of the information through one report, as this helps stakeholders such as the Trust to gain an overview. The use of images to show areas of improvement, decline and where there has been no change is also particularly useful in providing this overview.

The Carnegie UK Trust has carried out a series of international study trips to France, the USA and Canada to explore how best to put wellbeing data to use (including environmental indicators). The report will be published on 30 October 2012. One of our key findings is the importance of developing simple and clear messages from wellbeing data that can be used by stakeholders to spark a debate on policy developments.

We have reviewed the State of the Environment report following these trips and note that there are a large number of indicators which makes it difficult for stakeholders to understand the overarching messages. At present, the information presented is summarised for the indicators as a whole in a pie chart (percentages improving,

standing still and decreasing). Similar information for each sub-heading would allow stakeholders to see quickly whether, on balance, the local environment was improving.

We would also suggest that the Welsh Government consider how best to summarise the information. The current summary measures provides no information on relative increases or decreases, so for example, a 10% increase in one area is given the same weight as a 0.5% increase in another. It may be helpful to consider whether an index could be established that provided an overview figure that better shows the direction of travel. The [Canadian Index of Wellbeing 9](#) shows how such an index can be built up from individual indicators.

We hope that you find these comments helpful. If you would like to discuss our response, or would like to find out more about our work on measuring wellbeing please contact Jennifer Wallace at jennifer@carnegieuk.org or telephone 01383 721 445.

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October 2012



Carnegie United Kingdom Trust
Scottish charity SC 012799 operating in the UK and Ireland
Incorporated by Royal Charter 1917