

Consultation on the 25 Year Environmental Plan: Measuring Progress

Submission by the Sport and Recreation Alliance

1. The Sport and Recreation Alliance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance (the Alliance) is the representative body for the sport and recreation sector, with a diverse membership of more than 325 national and local organisations across the sport and recreation sector. As the voice of the sector, we work with Government, policy makers and the media to make sure grassroots sport and recreation grows and thrives

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Alliance welcomes the inclusion of measuring changes in people enjoying and caring about the natural environment within the proposed framework to measure progress against the 25 Year Environment Plan (the Plan).
- 2.2 That being said, this does not feature an indicator to capture the number of people being physically active in the natural environment, and we encourage government to expand the draft framework to include such an indicator.
- 2.3 The comprehensive range of indicators within the proposed framework should enable robust monitoring and ensure good accountability, but consistent, quality reporting will be essential to deliver this

3. Breadth of Proposed Framework

- 3.1 There is a good range of headline and system indicators within the proposed framework, but government must ensure that reporting is meaningful as the Plan is implemented. If this is assured, the breadth of indicators should ensure accountability, and further incentivise good progress against the Plan.
- 3.2 There is an imbalance between the number of headline and system indicators regarding asset conditions or pressures and services/benefits. The range of indicators monitoring asset conditions and pressures is comprehensive, whereas those regarding measuring services or benefits are more limited and could be developed further.

4. Engagement with and enjoyment of the natural environment

- 4.1 Although the proposed framework, and more specifically the '*people enjoying and caring about the natural environment*' category, includes indicators which capture peoples' engagement and the health and wellbeing benefits provided, there is an absence of any indicator which captures the number of people being explicitly physically active in the natural environment.
- 4.2 Questions 4 and 12 of the existing Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (detailed within the MENE Technical Report¹ published in September 2018) are most relevant to peoples' activity levels in the natural environment at present. That being said, the existing questions do not collate any of the listed activities as an overall summated physical activity grouping, nor measure the frequency or intensity of any forms of physical activity.
- 4.3 The natural environment plays a vital role in providing opportunities to be active, with evidence from Natural England² suggesting that health and exercise is the most frequently cited motivation for visiting the outdoors, but the insight and monitoring here must be optimised.
- 4.4 An indicator to capture the number of people being physical active in the natural environment could sit within the Monitor of the Natural Environment (MENE) survey, and the Alliance urges government to include an additional question within the existing survey to capture if the respondent engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity during their visit to, or engagement with, the natural environment.
- 4.5 An alternative, if such a change to the existing MENE survey cannot be delivered, may be integration with Sport England's existing Active Lives³ survey to capture such an indicator.
- 4.6 We recognise that the H16 indicator is intended to capture the health and wellbeing benefits that the natural environment provides, however with the indicator still to be developed, we also ask that government makes sure that the indicator tracks the changes in the benefits for physical health and mental health as separate indices.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposed framework for measuring progress of the Plan is broadly sound, but we would urge government to revising the existing indicators to include measuring how many people are being physically active in the natural environment.
- 5.2 We would be happy to clarify or provide further information on any of the points we have made within this consultation response.

**Sport and Recreation Alliance
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¹ Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment – Technical Report, Natural England: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/738892/Monitorof_Engagement_withthe_Natural_Environment_technical_report_March_2016to_February_2018.pdf

² Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment, Natural England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-survey-purpose-and-results>

³ Active Lives, Sport England: <https://www.sportengland.org/research/active-lives-survey/>