

L INVOLVEMENT AND STRONGER INSTITUTIONS

Main messages

Many local communities have developed and published Local Agenda 21 strategies and local indicators to monitor progress.

In 1996/97 about one in eight householders participated in local voluntary work, but the levels of voluntary action in the most deprived areas tended to be very low. In England in 1997/98, just under half of all households thought that their area had a lot of community spirit, the same proportion as that reported in earlier surveys in 1992 and in 1994/95.

Relevance

To build sustainable communities, institutions and policies are needed which can take a cross-cutting approach to sustainable development objectives. Public involvement is also essential.

The extent to which the key objectives identified in the Strategy are being achieved, as reflected by the indicators, is illustrated in the following table.

Key strategies

- *A better quality of life: A strategy for sustainable development for the UK (7.77-7.99)*

Some other related indicators:

Public understanding and awareness (T7); Awareness in schools (T8); Individual action for sustainable development (T9)

Objective	Ref no.	Indicator	Data used	Change since		Specific targets/goals
				1970	1990	
All local communities to have sustainable development strategies in place by 2000	L1	Number of local authorities with LA21 strategies	1994-1998	✓	✓	All local communities in the UK to have strategy by end of 2000
Voluntary and community activity can promote social inclusion and cohesion	L2	Voluntary activity	1996/97	
Help build a sense of community by encouraging and supporting all forms of community involvement	L3	Community spirit	1992-1997/98	...	≈	

Key

✓ significant change, in direction of meeting objective

≈ no significant change

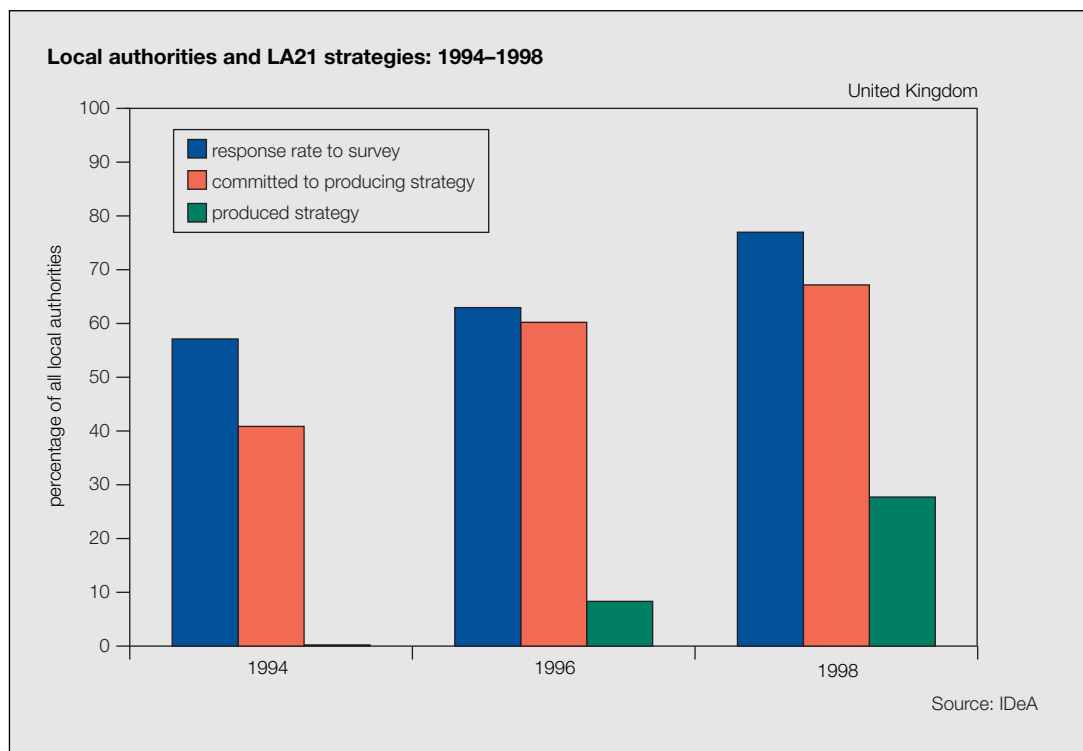
na not applicable, in cases where the indicator is for contextual purposes

✗ significant change, in direction away from meeting objective

... trend is uncertain or no quantitative data available

Objective All local communities to have sustainable development strategies in place by 2000

Indicator Number of local authorities with LA21 strategies **L1**



A survey in autumn 1998 showed that 315 local authorities (67 per cent of all authorities) were committed to producing a Local Agenda 21 strategy. 130 authorities (28 per cent) said they had produced a strategy

Relevance Action at a local level is essential. Local authorities have a vital role in delivering a better quality of life, particularly through the development of sustainable communities.

Targets and goals The Prime Minister has set a target for all local communities in the UK to have LA21 strategies in place by the end of 2000.

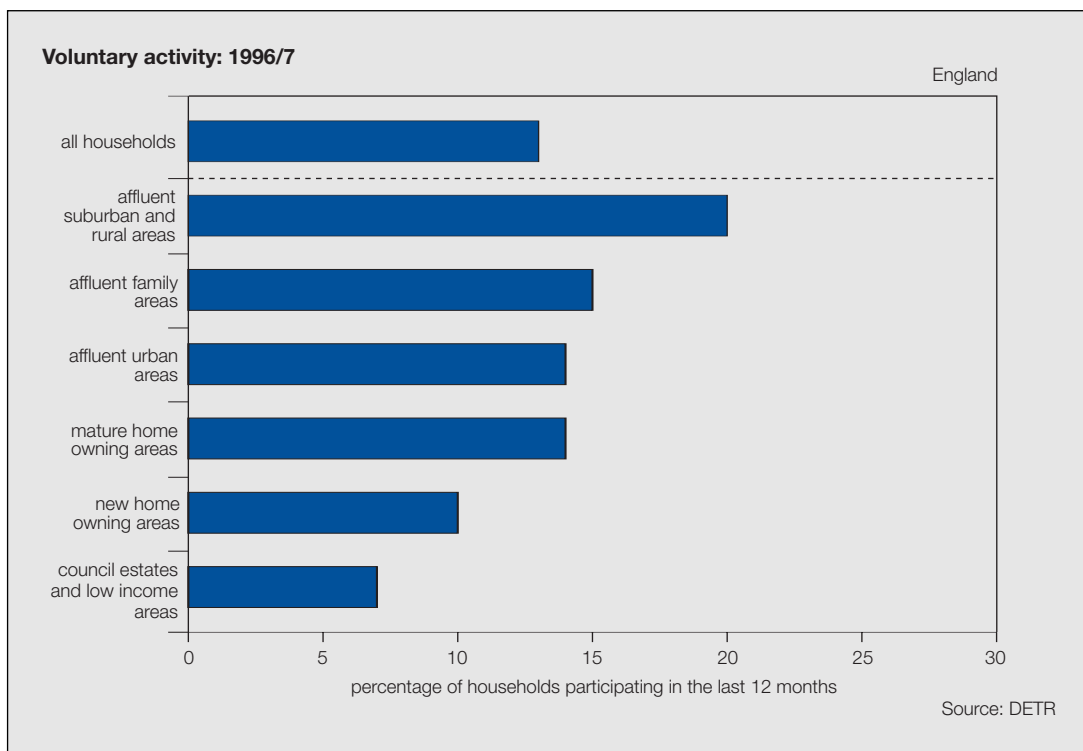
Trends The number of local authorities known to be committed to producing strategies has increased from 41 per cent in 1994 to 67 per cent in 1998. Many authorities are developing indicators to complement their strategies. A recent survey for the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) showed about a half of all local authorities in the UK to be developing sustainability indicators.

Background An LA21 strategy is a local action plan for sustainable development. Most LA21 processes are led by the local authority with broad involvement by the local community. Strategies should inform all other local plans, policies and programmes.

Objective Voluntary and community activity can promote social inclusion and cohesion

Indicator Voluntary activity

L2



In a 1996/97 survey about one in eight householders claimed to have participated in local voluntary work in the last 12 months. In the most deprived areas levels of voluntary action tend to be very low.

Relevance 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.

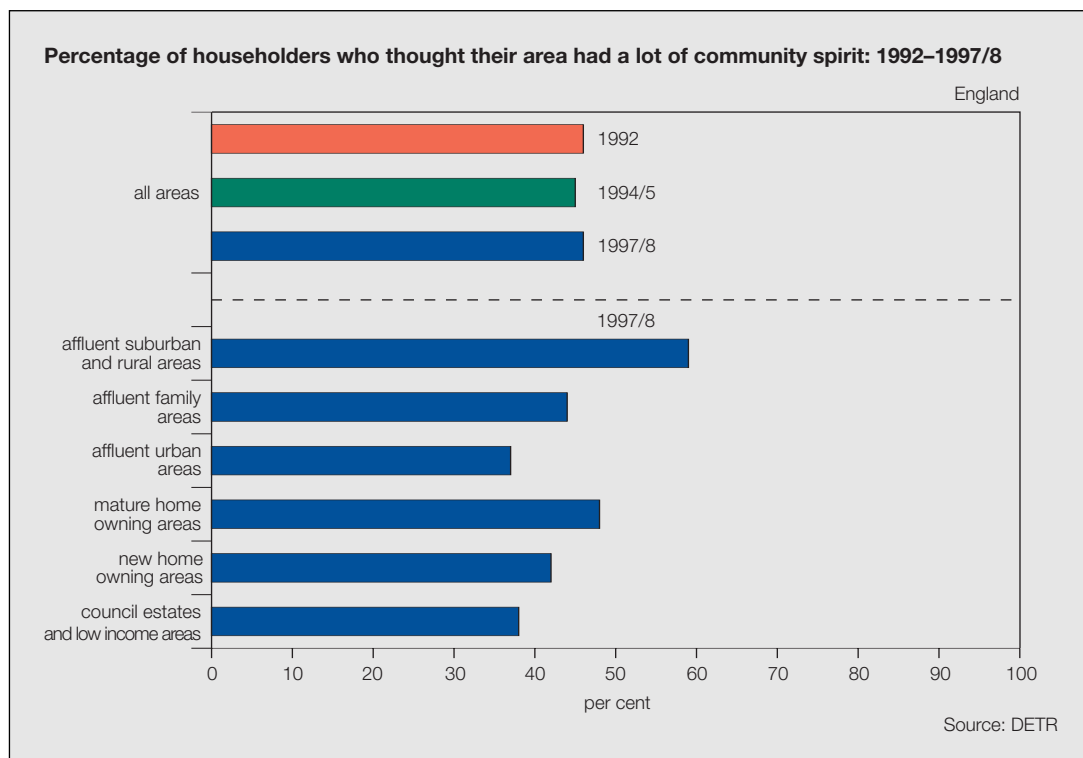
Trends Participation in voluntary work varies by type of area: about 20 per cent of those in affluent suburban and rural areas had participated in local voluntary work compared with about 7 per cent of those in council estates and low income areas. Overall, around half of all people had either participated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

Background The Prime Minister wants to see a greater involvement by everyone in community life. The key aim of the Prime Minister’s initiative is to help build a sense of community by encouraging and supporting all forms of community involvement. This indicator is based on responses from the Survey of English Housing, 1996/7. Further studies may be undertaken to refine or produce an alternative indicator and to track trends over time.

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

Indicator Community spirit

L3



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

Relevance Community activity can do much to promote social inclusion and cohesion in a community, with benefits for the recipients, participants and society as a whole.

Trends Although less than half of all households surveyed in England thought there was a lot of community spirit in their area, 36 per cent said that people in their area were very friendly and a further 56 per cent said that people were fairly friendly. Views about community spirit varied by type of area – 59 per cent of households in affluent suburban and rural areas reported a lot of community spirit, compared with 38 per cent of households in council estates and low income areas, and 37 per cent in affluent urban areas.

Background The Prime Minister wants to see a greater involvement by everyone in community life. The key aim of his initiative is to help build a sense of community by encouraging and supporting all forms of community involvement. This indicator is based on responses from the Surveys of English Housing, and the 1992 Housing Attitudes Survey.