



INDICATORS OF SUCCESS - ARE THEY BEING MET?

‘INDICATORS OF SUCCESS’ – ARE THEY BEING MET?

A recent FOI Request 3599 ©Natural England (13th October 2016) gives dates of Rural Payment Agency and Natural England visits to our campaign areas (and presumably other sites) to assess compliance monitoring in the context of EU regulations and agreement delivery respectively.

The former requires 5% of beneficiaries “to be selected for on-the-spot visits annually split between random selections and those with the highest scoring risk criteria. The risk criteria include the size of the agreement, the length of time since a previous inspection, and whether or not breaches had been identified at a previous visit, among other items.”

The latter checks that the ‘Indicators of Success’ for the agreement are being met. They note that “site visits to Carnyorth Common have been made by Natural England staff and indicate that management of lowland heath prescriptions have been followed and satisfactory progress is being made towards achieving the Indicators of Success.”

However NE state that they have no plans to commission independent surveys in respect of the indicators of success for individual agreements, so it seems that they will be left to ‘police’ their own agreements with farmers. Let’s hope that will be an unbiased exercise and that the public will have received value for money when the 10 year schemes finish – the summer of 2017 in the case of Carnyorth Common.

The following farms which cover our campaign areas – although their agreements concern a far larger area – have been subjected to a number of inspections by the Rural Payments Agency [RPA] and by Natural England.

<i>Farm with agreement reference and relevance to 'our areas'</i>	<i>Agreement start date usually lasting 10 years</i>	<i>RPA compliance monitoring visits</i>	<i>RPA First Inspection date</i>	<i>RPA Last Inspection date</i>	<i>Natural England agreement delivery site visits</i>	<i>NE First Inspection date</i>	<i>NE last inspection date</i>
Trevean Farm (Watch Croft) AG00327122	May 2011	1	-	July 2015	7	May 2011	April 2013
Bosigran Farm (Carn Galva) AG00329091	May 2011	2	Late 2011	November 2014	8	July 2011	January 2016
Lanyon Farm (2 crofts) AG00335998	May 2011	1	-	November 2013	22	May 2011	June 2014
Carne Farm (Chun Downs) AG00399708	December 2012	0	-	No inspections carried out	4	April 2013	February 2016

Keigwin Farm (Higher Downs) AG00371322	December 2012	0	-	No inspections carried out	4	October 2013	August 2016
Sunset Farm (Carnyorth Common) AG00260864	August 2007	0	-	No inspections carried out	11	October 2010	April 2016

An email was sent on 15th October 2016 to the Natural England Lead Adviser, Land Management and Conservation (Cornwall)

“A statement concerning Carnyorth Common in a recent FOI request¹ that: “*Site visits to Carnyorth Common have been made by Natural England staff and indicate that management of lowland heath prescriptions have been followed and satisfactory progress is being made towards achieving the Indicators of Success*” would seem to be in direct contradiction to recent assertions made by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership [CISLNP] and the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership [AONB]² that, to quote:

- Despite investment in agri-schemes in Cornwall species populations are still declining.

- It is clear that the current agri-schemes in Cornwall [are] either ineffective and/or the levels of investment and activity are not enough to make a difference. The answer is probably both.

This is both surprising and disturbing since the CISLNP Board members include representatives from the National Trust and Cornwall Wildlife Trust [CWT] both of whom are recipients of ‘agri-money’ for environmental agreements with Natural England; in addition the AONB partnership includes CWT and the National Trust as well as Natural England.

In view of the apparent fundamental ambiguity as outlined above I would be grateful for your comments to clear up this matter.”

A lengthy response was received on 25th October although the answer to the above query was short and sweet: “The document does not reference data or sources to support the conclusion about HLS therefore I cannot offer further comment with regard to this particular document.”

However, a number of links of interest were included:

- [State of Nature Report 2016 England](#);
- [State of Nature Report 2016](#)
- The Lawton Report, [Making Space for Nature](#) sets out useful background to the current situation and together with the response of government in the Natural Environment White Paper - The natural choice: securing the value of nature; that gives direction to current policy.

- Natural England Commissioned Report (NECR114) *Monitoring the outcomes of Higher Level Stewardship: Results of a 3-year agreement monitoring programme* sets out the background to the effectiveness of HLS as well as an initial baseline with the intention of undertaking follow-up monitoring and report. [see <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/11462046>]

A similar query was sent to the AONB author of the Report on 15th October 2016 and also asking why “you consider agri-schemes in Cornwall tend to be ineffective”. But as yet no response has been forthcoming

8th November 2016

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¹ FOI Request 3599 ©Natural England (13th October 2016)

² Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Nature Partnership and the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership in September 2016 that was submitted to the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee: The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum inquiry.

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/environmental-audit-committee/the-future-of-the-natural-environment-after-the-eu-referendum/written/37676.html>