

ALERC Workshop 5

Managing Local Sites Data – A Dedicated System

The following was set out as background:

Issues

- Different partnerships, established locally with very different governance and different local priorities.
- Common requirements for data across relatively few stakeholder groups.
- Multiple development and investment in local data management solutions.
- Some data is personal (DPA) or private or sensitive for other reasons - this needs to be acknowledged and dealt with appropriately when sharing data outside the partnership.
- Different local interpretations of legislations and guidelines.

Stakeholders

- Statutory
- Local Planning Authorities
- Developers and Consultants
- Local Sites Partnerships
- LRCs
- LBAPs
- Local Natural History Community

Proposals

- To develop a set of standard common output formats for sharing data.
- To evolve incrementally toward the common standard
- To engage stakeholders to establish a super-set of requirements
- To merge similar requirements wherever possible
- To be inclusive rather than exclusive
- To work from the generic to the specific
- To establish a common set of rules under which data can be licensed for use
- To work toward an eventual goal of having a shared common interpretation of the legislation and guidelines

Discussion

The following issues were raised during the workshop discussions:

- It was agreed that there was a lot of inconsistencies across the various systems for storing local sites data. Often the data is stored in GIS format but can sometimes include a wide variety of non-standard attributes.
- It was agreed that LRCs should be the place where the data is stored and managed and that they can offer guidance and that LRCs should attempt to develop national data standards.
- Although LRCs might offer their services there are currently very few financial incentives to develop data standards or manage and collate local sites data.

- Should the data be free to access or should it be chargeable product? It was felt that landowner should know whether their land contained a local site and that a free internet service could perform this. However if LRCs were to add value to the data, for example combining it with other data it should be chargeable service.
- From the suggested stakeholders list it was suggested that the Local Government Association may have a role to play in agreeing data standards.
- The system developed by YHEDN was described, it being very broad and including information about local sites designation, management etc.
- It was agreed that a good starting point for data standardisation would be to look at common attributes primarily for use in the GIS data.
- The scope of the attributes could be all inclusive but it might be best to start with some of the key attributes first. There were concerns that confidence in the data could decrease if a system included all possible attributes with many of these were blank due to a lack of data.
- The Natural England (NE) standard attributes ([see below](#)) contained in the 2011/12 Agreement with LRCs could be a good starting point.
- It was agreed that there needs to be further discussion on this subject and that the discussion should move to a thread on the ALERC Forum.
- It was agreed that the NE standard attributes should be posted on the Forum for LRC to discuss and put forward suggestions for changes.