

Biodiversity offsetting: implementing the policy at the coast

Presentation by
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Background

- Many similarities to terrestrial environment
- Presentation explores additional issues and challenges at the coast as highlighted in ICE Discussion Paper (May 2013) and Position Paper (July 2013)
- Working Group set up in response to biodiversity offsetting proposals in Natural Environment White Paper
- Also taking into account:
 - Concern about 'death by a thousand cuts'
 - EU No Net Loss initiative under 2020 Biodiversity Strategy Target 2 Action 7
 - Potential role for coastal engineers and scientists (e.g. given experience gained from Habitats Directive requirements)

Potential challenges of offsetting at the coast (1)

- Natural processes: erosion, salinity
- Landownership: 'in perpetuity'
- Significant proportion already protected
- More complex regulatory regime
- Scale: fewer opportunities for large scale initiatives
- Habitat distinctiveness typically high: like-for-like or like-for better



Potential challenges of offsetting at the coast (2)

- Role of sediment: sediment-dependent habitats, offset action miles from beneficiary site
- Supply of sediment a valid offset?
- Habitat evolution: objective outside protected areas 'saltmarsh for saltmarsh' or 'dynamic, sediment-rich habitat for a dynamic, sediment-rich habitat'?
- Timescales: create habitat vs. create functioning habitat
- Opportunities for habitat banking



Likely demand for coastal offsets?

- Flood or coastal defence
- Port or navigation infrastructure
- Waterfront development or regeneration
- Renewables and energy infrastructure
- Marinas, moorings, jetties
- Intakes or outfalls, pipelines
- Offshore / marine developments?
- Terrestrial developments (if applying like-for-better)



Opportunities for offsetting at the coast

- Biodiversity offsetting within context of Shoreline Management Plans: demonstrate additionality
- Promote opportunities to coastal landowners: clear, coast-specific guidance
- Exploit scope for appropriate enhancement within protected areas
- Investigate feasibility of sites specifically designed for offsetting multiple small losses of coastal biodiversity: role of habitat banks; maturity of habitat banks
- Clarify respective roles of terrestrial planning authorities and Marine Management Organisation

Summary of ICE position

- Biodiversity offsetting could make a significant contribution to delivering no net loss of coastal habitats through win-win projects which also offer opportunities for coastal landowners
- The additional certainty provided by a consistent policy framework will be important in helping to secure the delivery of such benefits
- Other physical/technical and administrative issues also require early attention in order to ensure biodiversity offsetting at the coast is successful
- Coastal engineers and scientists are well-placed to help Defra and others develop and deliver an effective policy

Thanks for listening!



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