

English Nature Research Reports, No. 639

Identification of biodiversity and geological conservation opportunities in three coastal Natural Areas: Tyne to Tees, Saltburn to Bridlington and Bridlington to Skegness

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Keywords: biodiversity, geology, natural areas, shoreline management plans, north east

Introduction

A study has been undertaken to provide a conservation 'vision' through the identification of biodiversity and geological conservation opportunities along the North East Coast within three English Nature Coastal Natural Areas; Tyne to Tees, Saltburn to Bridlington and Bridlington to Skegness. The primary project driver was the upcoming review of the first generation of Shoreline Management Plans and the opportunity to influence future policies in order to realise coastal environmental gain. Understanding where opportunities exist now, and when they might be delivered within the next 100 years, was key in determining potential changes to existing SMP policy that may enable these opportunities to be realised. In addition, links to potential biodiversity and geological gain within existing coastal designated sites and contributions that could be made toward maintaining and/or improving these were identified, as were potential biodiversity opportunities where contributions towards national and local Biodiversity Action Plan targets for coastal habitats and species could be made.

What was done

A wide range of biodiversity and geological opportunities were identified through information gathered from environmental interest groups and other key stakeholders via facilitated workshops. The first generation Shoreline Management Plans for this section of coast were assessed to determine how they had considered environmental enhancement as a component in the selection of shoreline management policy. A literature search was also conducted.

Results and conclusions

For the Tyne to Tees Coastal Natural Area, a total of fifteen opportunities were documented, five of which would require a change in the existing SMP policy if they are to be realised. These were all managed realignment type projects. Delivery of the remaining ten opportunities

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was not dependent on changes to existing SMP policies e.g. promotion of agri-environment schemes on cliff-tops. However, successful implementation of such schemes could in the longer term, benefit dynamic coastal processes and allow changes in SMP policy in areas where this presently is not possible. Between Saltburn and Bridlington, a total of five opportunities were documented, only one of which would require a change in the existing SMP policy to implement; this particular opportunity was associated with allowing dynamic coastal processes to occur along a section of coast in the longer term. Delivery of the remaining three opportunities was not dependent on changes to existing SMP policies, for example, landward movement of coastal assets. A total of fourteen opportunities were identified between Bridlington and Skegness, thirteen of which would require a change in the existing SMP policy. Many of these opportunities were various managed realignment projects.

English Nature's viewpoint

This study provides an important starting point for English Nature and other key stakeholders in the review of Shoreline Management Plan in the north east. The results of this study will provide a focus for active engagement by staff to promote biodiversity enhancement opportunities linked to the Shoreline Management Plan review. This study will also benefit work aimed at restoring favourable condition to SSSIs, as it provides a long term vision for sustainable coastal management. Additionally, other opportunities within the coastal environment, but not directly linked to SMP policy are also identified which will help progress action towards implementing the UK Biodiversity Action Plan for habitats and species. The commissioning of this report further demonstrates our commitment to the objectives of the Maritime Strategy: *Our Coasts and Seas*.

Selected references

BRODIN, N. 2001. *A Biodiversity Audit of the North East*. North East Biodiversity Forum.

Further information

For the full report or other publications on this subject, please contact the Enquiry Service on 01733 455100/101/102 or email enquiries@english-nature.org.uk

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