Overview of Built Development in the UK – How are Environmental Impacts Taken into Account?

Jon Grantham MRTPI
Principal
Land Use Consultants
Designing a System to Offset the Residual Impacts of Terrestrial Development on Ecosystem Service Provision

- Principal types of built development in the UK
- How environment impacts are assessed
Designing a System to Offset the Residual Impacts of Terrestrial Development on Ecosystem Service Provision

Planning applications received, decided and granted 1998/99-2008/09.

Designing a System to Offset the Residual Impacts of Terrestrial Development on Ecosystem Service Provision

Major planning applications by development type 2008/09 in England.

- 507,000 applications, 15,210 defined as “Major”
- June 2009 – June 2010: 311 applications for “EIA Development”

National Infrastructure Plan 2010

• Analysis of infrastructure challenges
• Specific policy and regulatory changes to remove barriers
• Each key area of infrastructure – energy; transport; digital communications; flood management, water and waste; intellectual capital

Planning Regime

• Major Infrastructure Planning Unit (replacing IPC)
• National Policy Statement (NPS) on Energy (Oct 2010)
• NPSs for remaining major infrastructure
• Response on Penfold Review on Non-Planning Consents
Designing a System to Offset the Residual Impacts of Terrestrial Development on Ecosystem Service Provision

WIND ENERGY
Some Key Statistics
- 268 onshore windfarm projects in the planning system (113 in Scotland, 85 in England, 45 in N. Ireland, 25 in Wales)
- 5 offshore windfarms in the planning system (plus Round 3 in preparation, EIA scoping reports submitted)

Other Considerations
- Major transmission upgrades
- Associated port infrastructure
- Reform of the electricity market
- Demise of Regional Spatial Strategies
Designing a System to Offset the Residual Impacts of Terrestrial Development on Ecosystem Service Provision

Assessing Environmental Impacts: HABITATS REGULATIONS
Assessing Environmental Impacts: EIA REGULATIONS

- Council Directive no. 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (as amended)
- Circular 02/99: Mitigation measures are designed to limit the environmental effects of development

But, how secured?

- Planning Conditions – must pass the tests
- Planning Obligations
- Environmental Management Plan or System
Summary

• Considerable development pressure will continue
• Step change in infrastructure provision
• Pressure on land and resources

However:

• Systems in place to manage land use change, assess environmental effects before development is permitted and secure mitigation

But:

• Effectiveness of systems?
• Difficulties in securing mitigation?
• Reform of planning system?