

PINS NOTE 1153

To: All Inspectors (England)

Date of Issue: 27 April 2010

Currency: review at 6 months after issue

NOISE POLICY STATEMENT FOR ENGLAND

Background

1. On 15 March 2010 Defra published the 'Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE)', which sets out the long-term vision for Government noise policy, within the context of the guiding principles set out in Chapter 1, part 4 of the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy – 'Securing the future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy' (March 2005).

2. The NPSE overall policy vision is to *'Promote good health and a good quality of life through the effective management of noise within the context of Government Policy on sustainable development'*. This statement represents an important step forward in noise policy, as its application should help to ensure that 'noise' is properly accounted for at the right time during noise related policy development and decision-making, as well as ensuring that noise is not considered in isolation.

3. The NPSE applies to:

- Environmental Noise (ambient noise);
- Neighbour Noise (noise from inside and outside residential homes);
- Neighbourhood Noise (noise arising from within the community, i.e. industrial and entertainment premises, trade and business premises, construction sites and noise in the street).

The NPSE does not apply to:

- Occupational Noise (noise in the workplace).

4. Sound becomes 'noise' (often referred to as 'unwanted sound') when it occurs in the wrong place at the wrong time, e.g. when it causes sleep disturbance. Unlike air quality, there are currently no EU or national noise limits which have to be met (but there can be specific local limits for certain developments¹). The NPSE seeks to provide a clear description of desired outcomes from noise management of a particular situation. Its 3 aims, within the context of Government policy on sustainable development, are:

¹ Under [Directions](#) which came into force on 28 February 2008, issued under [S5 of the Noise Act 1996](#), which set out certain permitted noise levels from 'the offending dwelling or premises' (i.e. must not be >10dB above the background level).

- i) **to avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life²** from environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise;
- ii) **to mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life²** from environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise;
- iii) **where possible, to contribute to the improvement of life** through the effective management and control of environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise.

Action

5. In view of the above, when considering cases where noise is an issue, Inspectors should balance up the evidence, including any technical assessment, guidelines and any written & oral representations, to come to a reasoned conclusion on whether the noise constitutes a 'significant' effect on the 'quality of life' of those potentially affected by the proposed development.

6. It should be noted that the NPSE does not seek to replace existing guidance in PPG24, or topic specific guidance in other PPS/PPGs³ but serves to complement it by clarifying the underlying principles and aims in any existing policy documents, legislation and guidance that relates to noise. Therefore the advice in PPG24 and other topic specific PPS/PPGs still stands and remains a material consideration in casework where noise is an issue.

7. Please contact XXXX if you have any queries on this Note.

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Director of Policy, Quality and Development Plans

² This aim refers to situations where the noise impacts lie somewhere between the 'Lowest observed adverse effect level (LOAEL) and Significant observed adverse affect level (SOAEL).

³ Examples include the treatment of noise in PPS4, PPS10, PPG13, PPS22 & "*The assessment and rating of noise from Windfarms*" (ETSU for the DTI, 1997), PPG23, MPS2 and Regional Planning Guidance.