

## Development Control advice

Environmental Health and Consumer  
Protection Department

### Environmental Health assessment of planning applications

### Guidance for applicants



#### Introduction

Many applications for planning permission to develop or redevelop land will have the potential to impact on the environment or be affected by the existing environment. In these circumstances the Director of Environmental Services may consult the Director of Environmental Health and Consumer Protection for advice.

The Environmental Protection Service provides advice on environmental health matters relating to planning applications. Where necessary you need to make sure that enough information is provided with the planning application to allow an environmental assessment to be completed and avoid delays in considering your application. It may be useful to talk to us about what you want to do before you apply. Whilst we cannot act as a consultant or design solutions for you, we are happy to provide help and advice.

The amount of information you will need to provide will depend on the nature of your proposal and its potential to affect or be affected by environmental factors. Where insufficient information is provided you may be contacted by an officer in person or by letter for further information. Certain information may be readily available however on occasions where we have reservations about whether a development can go ahead, we may ask for detailed reports or schemes prior to the application being considered by the Planning Committee.

Where enough information is provided we will normally make one of these three types of recommendations.

- 1 **Approval with no conditions** – the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant environmental impact or be affected by the existing environment.
- 2 **Approval with conditions** – there are environmental impacts associated with the proposed development but these can be controlled by attaching suitable planning conditions.
- 3 **Refusal** – the environmental impacts are so great that they cannot practically be controlled and therefore development is prevented.

You should note that environmental health matters are only one of a number of different material considerations that members of the Planning Committee must consider when deciding applications. A balance must therefore be found with other considerations and members will not automatically include all recommendations that we make.

Where conditions are attached to planning permissions requiring schemes and reports to be submitted we can provide guidance on what is required. When requested by the Director of Planning and Regeneration, we will review these to ensure they have been carried out using appropriate methodologies, guidance, standards and criteria and that conclusions and recommendations are acceptable.

The following are specific environmental issues that may need consideration depending on the nature of the proposed development:

- **Noise - including vibration**
- **Air quality**
- **Contaminated land**
- **Other environmental health issues**

The level of detail supplied in the application should reflect the level of risk, for example, the higher the risk of environmental impact being caused the more detail will be required and the higher the need for a proactive approach. For some major developments a formal Environmental Impact Assessment may need to be submitted but even small developments may have the potential for environmental impacts.

The following paragraphs give advice on:

- **Circumstances where specific matters require consideration.**
- **What we aim to ensure.**
- **The nature of the information that you will need to provide.**

## **Noise - including vibration**

Noise can have a significant effect on the environment and on the quality of life enjoyed by individuals and communities. The impact of noise can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **You will need to consider noise where:**

- Noise generated by the proposed development may affect existing noise sensitive premises. For example, if you propose to develop a noisy manufacturing process or entertainment venue close to existing housing.
- Existing noise may affect the proposed development. For example, if you propose to develop housing close to existing industry or busy roads.

### **We aim to ensure that:**

- Developers employ measures to control noise to acceptable levels. This would include the design, layout and fabric of buildings as well as noise attenuation measures associated with plant, equipment and machinery.
- Noise levels are not loud enough to cause Statutory Nuisance or to give reasonable cause for annoyance to persons in the vicinity.
- Creeping background, which is the gradual increase in background noise levels as use intensifies and areas develop, is prevented.

### **You will need to provide:**

- Details of any potentially significant sources of noise from the development.
- An assessment of the existing noise climate.
- Details of techniques that will be used to control noise
- An assessment of the overall impact.

Where a detailed noise assessment is required either prior to the application being considered by the Planning Committee or as a condition attached to the planning permission reference must be made to all current standards and guidance.

## **Air quality**

Local authorities have new responsibilities for tackling poor air quality including the designation of Air Quality Management Areas and action plans where improvements are required. The planning system can be a key method for providing improvements. As a result air quality has been given a greater importance as a material consideration in many planning decisions.

Air is polluted if it contains substances which may have a harmful effect on the environment and on health, or cause a nuisance. We all notice smells, fumes, smoke and dust that pollute the environment however many pollutants cannot be seen or smelt.

### **You will need to consider air quality where:**

- Existing air quality may have an adverse effect on the proposed use. For example, if you wish to develop housing or a school adjacent to busy roads or significant industrial sources.
- Emissions resulting from the proposed development may have adverse effects on existing local air quality. For example, if your proposed development will lead to significant emissions to air or will generate a significant increase in road traffic.
- Emissions from development process may lead to nuisance or complaints from premises in the vicinity. For example, your proposed use may lead to emissions of dust, fumes or odour that may adversely affect neighbouring premises. These could be from industrial processes or food preparation.

### **We aim to ensure that:**

- The designation of a new Air Quality Management Area is not required as a result of the development.
- The application does not conflict with an Air Quality Action Plan.
- Emissions to air do not lead to any health effects or statutory nuisance.

### **You will need to provide:**

- Details of all emissions to air from the development.
- An assessment of existing air quality.
- Details of techniques that will be employed to control emissions.
- An overall assessment of the impact.

Detailed assessment may be required in the following circumstances:

- Industrial activities with potentially significant air emissions. For example, processes requiring authorisation under Part 1 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Developments that have the potential to increase the volume of traffic by more than 10% on roads with flows greater than 20,000 vehicles per day.
- Developments located in an Air Quality Management Area which would significantly change patterns of traffic flows or emit one or more of the pollutants listed in the National Air Quality Standards.

## **Contaminated land**

Local authorities have new responsibilities to deal with contaminated land through a strategic approach to identification, assessment and remediation. Contamination or the potential for it can be a material planning consideration. The planning system complements this new regime and contaminated land will continue to be remediated through the planning process.

Development sites may be affected by contamination as a result of their current or historical use or a pollution incident. Very few sites are so badly contaminated that they cannot be used at all, but they must be made suitable for their intended use. The aims of this 'suitable for use' approach are where practicable to deal with any unacceptable risks to health or the environment taking into account the intended use.

**You will need to consider contaminated land where:**

- The proposed development site has been used in the past for a potentially contaminating use.
- The proposed development site is located adjacent to or nearby to other contaminated sites including landfill sites.

**We aim to ensure that:**

- The site is suitable for its intended use.
- There are no unacceptable risks to health or the environment.

**You will need to provide:**

- Details of current and previous uses of the site.
- Details of any known contamination.
- An assessment of the influence of adjoining and nearby sites.
- Details of techniques that will be employed to remove or control contamination.
- An overall assessment of the impact.

Where a detailed site assessment is required either prior to the application being considered by the Planning Committee or as a condition attached to the planning permission reference must be made to all current standards and guidance. The report should normally cover site investigation, remediation proposals if required and post remediation verification.

**Other environmental health issues**

The Environmental Health Department has responsibility for a wide range of other issues that may need to be considered as part of an application for planning permission. These include:

- Waste management
- Drainage provisions
- Standards relating to houses in multiple occupation and flats.

**Further information**

**Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Department**

**For further Environmental Health advice** please contact:

Environmental Protection Service  
Environmental Health and Consumer Protection Department  
Town Hall  
Library Street  
Wigan  
WN1 1YN  
Telephone: 01942 827073  
Facsimile: 01942 827079  
E-mail: EHCPenquiries@wigan.gov.uk

**Environmental Services Department**

**For more information** or if you wish to discuss specific proposals, please contact the appropriate Development Control Manager for the area:

**West**

Standish, Shevington, Western Wigan (including Wigan Town Centre), Orrell, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Ince-in-Makerfield.

Telephone: 01942 404271

**East**

Hindley, Atherton, Tyldesley, Astley, Leigh, Golborne and Lowton.

Telephone: 01942 404259

Facsimile: 01942 404222

Out of hours answerphone: 01942 404301

E-mail: [environmentalservices@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalservices@wigan.gov.uk)

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