

DEFRA – Noise Stakeholder Workshop – Notes from the Meeting

Date – 17th October 2017

Context for Workshop – DEFRA 25 Year Plan and EU Exit

DEFRA 25 Year Plan – DEFRA is currently drafting the 25 Year Plan, it is anticipated to be published in full at the end of 2017 or early 2018. It is DEFRA's intention that the 25 Year Plan will be high level, more detail will be developed later. It is noted that not everything outlined in the plan will have a supporting strategy. It will contain short and longer term objectives. The matters that were raised at the workshop included –

- Querying concerning frequency of updates.
- Matters or issues that would trigger a need for a review.
- How will the plans progress be monitored?

EU Exit – key matter will be appreciating the policy implications and preparing an action plan for 2019.

Workshop 1 – Key Challenges, Opportunities and Priorities for noise policy –

Challenges –

- Discussion regarding the impact of people living closer together. Concentration of persons in close proximity to transportation corridors/hubs to increase sustainable travel mode use, and the conflict with noise mitigation.
- Achieving acoustic design in times when financial viability of development is incredibly important.
- Building Regulations – consider the implications of noise/acoustic adaptations on generating heat sources. Important to address the noise at source.
- There is an opportunity for a holistic approach –
 - Air quality;
 - Noise;
 - Carbon.

Consider the inter-relationships between the above matters.

- Increasing pressure on using brownfield land for future residential development – often an issue is the adjacent land uses which generate noise and therefore conflicts between occupiers.
- New technology – electric cars, drones and quieter planes – provide challenges as well as opportunities.
- New energy sources – fracking, wind power and the impacts they have on the noise environment.
- Consideration of the differences between urban and rural living, understanding the requirements and expectations of the different types of environment.

- Neighbour noise – increasingly becoming an issue.

Possible opportunities or mitigation discussed –

- Discussion about whether consideration should be given to introducing time restrictions on when people may undertake certain tasks.
- New technology – electric cars, drones and quieter planes – provide challenges as well as opportunities.
- Address construction noise and the whole noise life

Priorities –

- DEFRA should be a lead not reactive to issues and concerns, in doing so they should demonstrate that they are proactive in policy terms.

Workshop 2 – Policies and Actions

- Liveability Scores – takes account of environmental impacts.
- Need for minimum standards – that should be higher than current standards.
- Electric vehicles – need to understand the full implications of their use. Including considering acceptable noise levels for vehicles.
- Lessons should be learnt from wind energy, where incentives for their use resulted in them being developed too close to where people live, and this led to issues with noise.
- Planning process should be recognised as very important especially when considering new runways and runway use.
- Current planning process is too focussed on significant impacts, there is a need to consider how planning can be utilised to shape the environment that we live in.
- Need to ensure that policy seeks to limit noise at source, and consider the wider implications associated with acoustic adaptations too buildings.
- Measuring success – national noise attitudes survey.

Workshop 3 – EU Exit – opportunities, challenges and scope

- Consideration should be given to the impact EU exit will have upon legislation e.g. European Noise Directive (END). Matter to consider include –
 - Are there parts of the END that should be abandoned or improved?
 - Can more flexibility be given regarding noise metrics?
 - How often should the legislation be updated?
 - Should real time information be included?
 - Evidence base?
 - How the END has led to monetising the impacts of noise?
- The impact of the EU departure on resources available to DEFRA for research and development.
- Need to continue to raise awareness to noise as a health issue.
- Need to ensure that noise and air quality are considered together.