

DEFRA Consultation on Draft Noise Action Plans

See [Consultation on Draft Noise Action Plans\(October 2018\)](#) on DEFRA's website for information.

West Sussex County Council's Response to Online Form, November 2018

1. Important Areas

Q1. Important Areas are the areas where the population is exposed to the highest levels of noise from road and railway sources. What are your views on the proposed approach for identifying Important Areas?

We note that the proposed approach for identifying Important Areas has not changed since the previous Round 2 mapping exercise. It would be helpful for further information to be provided about the methodology for the Important Areas mapping that has been undertaken. We understand that the mapping exercise is undertaken using a desk top mapping exercise, rather than specific noise measurements on the ground and this should be clearly explained. We believe further information should be provided to explain how actual noise measurements inform the identification of Important Areas.

Q2. In your view, how might this approach to Important Areas be improved?

Further information should be provided to understand the scope and key assumptions for the desktop mapping exercise, including which roads have been included, how built up areas are assessed, and how the assessment deals with the existing noise barrier features such as vegetation, embankments or noise barriers. This would provide a greater degree of clarity to affected members of the public and management authorities reviewing this information.

It is understood that a number of new Important Areas have been identified. Further information should be provided to summarise the general characteristics of these new areas and the rationale for identifying these as Important Areas. Given that the approach to identifying Important Areas has not changed, it is necessary to understand why these areas have not previously been identified as Important Areas.

2. Action Plans for Roads, Railways and Agglomerations (large urban areas)

Q3. The Roads and Railway Action Plans include summaries of the range of approaches which can currently be taken to manage road and railway noise effectively (see section 6 of the Roads and Railways Plans). In your view how might these summaries be improved? Please add your comments here.

We note the summary information about the range of approaches to addressing noise issues. We believe that more information should be added to the summary about the considerations, constraints and trade-offs associated with measures used to address noise issues from roads.

This will improve understanding of the other considerations that need to be taken into account when considering noise mitigation measures, for example the

implications of introducing vehicle restrictions and re-routing traffic away from noise important areas onto other roads, and the maintenance implications of different road surface treatments. Whilst noise important areas are a consideration that is taken into account in planning highway schemes, and road resurfacing programmes, this is one of the challenges that local highway authorities must balance when designing capital investment projects and programmes.

We believe that a clear results summary of the outcomes of the Round 2 Noise Action Planning process should be published. This is in order to present a clear picture about the degree of progress by local highways authorities, Highways England, and the rail industry in addressing noise important areas and to highlight if greater national resources are needed to tackle this important issue.

Q4. If you consider that important aspects have been omitted, could you explain what these are and why you feel they are important? Please add any additional comments here.

Please see comments above.

Q5. Are there any further comments you wish to make on the road, railway, or agglomeration plans? Please add any additional comments here.

With respect to the identification of 'quiet areas', we believe there should be a mandatory requirement that the proposer undertakes dialogue with the relevant noise omitting management authority, for example the highway authority where road noise is related to the designation that is proposed. The reasons for the noise impacting the proposed quiet area should be considered as part of the assessment of the proposed quiet area to ensure that measures to tackle noise in that area are realistic, for example it may not be practical to relocate a busy road away from that proposed quiet area.

3. Long term strategy for environmental noise management

Q.6. As explained in Long Term Strategy sections of the Roads and Railways Plans, the Government plans to engage separately with stakeholders on long-term priorities for noise management in England and options for addressing them. Do you have any initial views on opportunities which EU exit may present to better address the country's needs for managing environmental noise? Please add any additional comments here.

No specific comments to add.