

International Advanced Manufacturing
Park Area Action Plan Examination in Public

Sunderland City Council and South Tyneside Council Local Planning Authorities' Responses to the IAMP AAP Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 7- Environment and Ecology (Policies EN1, EN2, EN3 and EN4)

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Matter 7 – Environment and Ecology (Policies EN1, EN2, EN3 and EN4)

7.1 Are policies EN1 and EN3, in respect of the landscape and green infrastructure, soundly based? And in particular:

Councils' response

Are the requirements of part A of policy EN1 inappropriately restrictive?

The Landscape Technical Background Report (PSD17) and in particular its section 4.2.3 (page 21) sets out the rationale for the location and scale of the buffers proposed. Paragraph 96 sets out that the 50m buffer proposed along the A19 has been based on the parameters of the existing A19 buffers, the approach in part A of Policy E1 is seeking to maintain consistency with what is existing on site. The inclusion of a 20m buffer around the development edges, away from the 50m buffer along the A19, has been proposed to provide a permanent and readily recognisable defensible boundary to the Green Belt (Paragraph 97).

Both policies are assessed in terms of soundness within sections 5.2.14 and 5.2.16 of the Statement of Compliance and found to be sound.

Are the modifications to policies EN1 and EN3 proposed by the Councils (Docs PSD6/PSD7) necessary for the plan to be sound?

Councils' response

The modifications to this policy proposed by the Councils (PSD6/PSD7) are not necessary for the plan to be sound, they are intended to provide further clarity on this policy and strengthen the scenario in which development may come forward within the AAP site area as a planning application and not as part of a DCO.

Both policies are assessed in terms of soundness within sections 5.2.14 and 5.2.16 of the Statement of Compliance and found to be sound.

7.2 Is policy EN2, in respect of ecology, soundly based? And in particular:

Are modifications necessary in respect of the specific comments of the Durham Bird Club?

Council's response

The specific comments on site and species from Durham Bird Club relate to a level of detail which would be picked up in an Ecological Impact Assessment that would need to accompany any form of planning consent for the area covered by the AAP.

Proposed Modification

Policy EN2 A iii

Minimise loss of semi-natural habitats. Lost or degraded habitats should be replaced with habitats of equivalent or greater quantity and quality to ensure net gains for nature and accommodate priority species as well as protected species located within the AAP area;

Does the plan adequately reflect the Water Framework Directive?

Councils' response

The Water Framework Directive lays an obligation upon new development to prevent deterioration in the qualities of existing water bodies and, where practicable, to deliver or at the very least to support improvements in the status of those bodies where improvements are sought under the Directive's aims. The key impacts arising from the proposed IAMP scheme are in water quality (chemical and ecological). The proposed drainage systems to be provided as part of the

development and the cessation of agricultural activities are to be designed to meet water-quality management obligations under prevailing design standards. The impact upon the morphology of existing watercourses from the IAMP development is restricted to the locality of the proposed link-road crossing of the River Don, to the east of Hylton Bridge and any works to restore a more natural river form to the River Don in this vicinity are considered to be outside the scope of any direct mitigation. The plan is considered to address the objectives of the Directive to a satisfactory level.

Is the requirement to enhance various aspects of ecology, as proposed by the Councils as modifications to policy EN2 (Docs PSD6/PSD7), necessary for the plan to be sound?

Councils' response

The requirement to enhance various aspects of ecology is necessary for the plan to be sound, because it supports the national and local council planning policy requirement for a net gain in biodiversity.

The proposed modifications are not considered to be necessary to make the Plan sound. The policy is assessed in terms of soundness within sections 5.2.15 of the Statement of Compliance and found to be sound.

7.3 Does the plan provide adequate and soundly based guidance in respect of the role, protection and enhancement of the River Don Corridor?

Councils' response

Objective 13 of the IAMP is to improve habitat connectivity along the River Don. One of the masterplan objectives (Page 25 of the Publication Draft AAP (incorporating proposed changes February 2017) PSD7) is to protect the River Don corridor from development. It states that the IAMP AAP 'presents an opportunity to further safeguard and enhance the corridor for the benefit of the local environment and ecological features.' The publication draft AAP (incorporating proposed changes February 2017) refers in Policy EN2 to the need to maintain the River Don as functional ecological corridor.

To address representations made by Natural England and the Environment Agency, additional wording has been included in Policy EN2, to refer to enhancing the River Don as a functional ecological corridor (PM 76, PSD7). This is further strengthened by additional wording proposed (PM 77) in paragraph 164, which now states that 'Ecological mitigation measures will both maintain and enhance the River Don as a functional ecological corridor'. This modification is proposed to the Publication Draft for clarity and consistency. Policy EN3, also states that proposed development will 'retain and enhance existing mature trees, woodland and hedgerows around the edges of the development, along the River Don...'

Section 4.1 (Page 25) of the Ecology Technical Background Report makes specific reference to the need to Avoid Direct Impacts to Sites Designated for Nature Conservation (which includes the River Don as part of LWSs), and the need to maintain, replace and enhance habitat connectivity, including maintaining and enhancing the River Don as a functional ecological corridor.

7.4 Does the plan provide for adequate monitoring of the ecological impacts of its implementation?

Councils' response;

The AAP includes a monitoring framework which states how EN2 will be suitably monitored. This framework has been modified (PM 94 PSD6) since the Publication Draft AAP (August 2016), and now includes:

- Sustainability objectives in relation to protecting environmental assets and natural resources, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity; and
- Additional detail on the monitoring framework for Policy EN2, in relation to the submission of an ecological impact assessment being an appropriate indicator. One of the target outcomes for this indicator is that an appropriate long term management plan is included.

7.5 Is policy EN4, in respect of amenity, soundly based? Is the modification of the policy as proposed by the Councils (Docs PSD6/PSD7) to extend its applicability to all proposed development in the plan area necessary for the plan to be sound?

Councils' response;

As set out in Paragraph 171 of the IAMP AAP the approach to Policy EN4 aligns with Paragraph 120 of the NPPF. Further assessment with regards to the soundness of this policy is provided within table 5.2.17 (page 87) of the Statement of Compliance. Content of this policy, with regards to visual amenity, is evidenced through Section 4.2 (Page 20) of the Landscape Technical Background Report (PSD17).

PM 80 of PSD6 is proposed for clarity to ensure that the policy is applicable to all development that may come forward on site regardless of the consenting route, subject to the provisions of Policy S1 as proposed.

Policy EN4 as proposed has been assessed within the soundness section of the Statement of Compliance, evidence of which is found within table 5.2.17 and is considered sound.