

## **SOUND INSULATION OF DWELLINGS AGAINST EXTERNAL NOISE**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report outlines the details of a consultation report from the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, seeking the Authority's views on the transfer of responsibility for the consideration of external noise from the Planning regime to Building Control.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 At the present time, protection of dwellings from external noise is carried out under the Planning system. The Government is proposing to transfer responsibility for sound insulation of the building envelope from the Planning Authority to Building Control. A response to the consultation paper is required by 20<sup>th</sup> April 2001.

### **3 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE**

- 3.1 The proposed arrangement would continue to require all site layout issues to be resolved by the Local Planning Authority as part of the application process.
- 3.2 However, once a consent is issued, the developer would present the Building Control Authority with noise information in a standard format, so that proposed building envelope sound insulation could be assessed, along with other Building Control matters.
- 3.3 The consultation paper suggests that the benefits to this approach are:-
- sound insulation, thermal and ventilation aspects of the building envelope can be considered together
  - the inter-dependence of sound insulation from external sources and adjoining dwellings can be addressed
  - target performance value will be uniform across England and Wales
  - accessible technical guidance will be available on this subject for the first time
  - compliance rates are likely to be greater, given the number of site inspections made under the Building Control system.

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- 3.3 Under the proposed changes, the effect of external noise on living conditions inside a proposed dwelling would not cease to be a material planning consideration.
- 3.4 The Planning Authority would continue to be responsible for determining whether it was necessary to control or reduce noise levels, or to mitigate the impact of noise, through the use of conditions or planning obligations. The Planning Authority would continue to decide whether noise should be mitigated through site layout or perhaps the provision of noise barriers.
- 3.5 However, if it was determined that a development required sound insulation measures to the building envelope, the developer would submit the details to the Building Control Officer (or private sector Approved Inspector).
- 3.6 The end result of this change would mean that the Building Control Authority would be responsible for the technical aspects of noise insulation and be better able to ensure agreed arrangements were properly implemented.

#### **4 DISCUSSION**

- 4.1 This is a relatively minor change to current procedural arrangements and would seem to make sense, given the technical responsibilities of the Building Control Authority.
- 4.2 The Planning Authority would continue to take the lead role in examining the noise implications of any development but, where it is considered that it is reasonably practicable for a developer to meet noise requirements, there would be no need to consider further the details of construction or other technical considerations.
- 4.3 It is considered that the proposed change does make sense and will ensure that building envelope insulation, where required, is provided to an appropriate standard and that installation/construction is properly monitored.

#### **5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Consideration of the noise impact of any new development proposals will remain a material planning consideration.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The consideration of some noise insulation issues has long been a part of the Building Regulations process. However, there may be a requirement for Building Control Officers to undergo some specialist training and, in addition, there may also be a need for a noise

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consultant to be employed from time to time to provide specialist advice if the transfer of responsibility is followed through.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to any comments from Members, the Department of Environment, Transport & the Regions be informed that this Council supports the proposed transfer of responsibility for sound insulation of the building envelope from the Planning to the Building Control Authority. (HPS)

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**Background Papers:**

Consultation Paper from the DETR dated 9 February 2001

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