



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP
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Dear Liam

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Thank you for your email of 23 January to Baroness Sugg about the Government's policies for planning and air quality. Your letter has been forwarded to this department for reply as it has responsibility for planning policy.

I hope you understand that I am not able to comment on specific planning proposals for reasons of propriety. However, I would like to set out the Government's policies for the issues raised by your constituents.

Air quality has improved significantly but there is still much more to do. The revised National Planning Policy Framework clearly sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications.

We have put in place a £3.5bn plan to reduce harmful emissions and this includes £475 million to help local authorities develop and implement local air quality plans. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.

Government policy is that by encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. The character of the area and the surrounding environment may affect what will be considered an appropriate level of lighting for a development. In particular, lighting schemes for developments in protected areas of dark sky or intrinsically dark landscapes should be carefully assessed as to their necessity and degree.

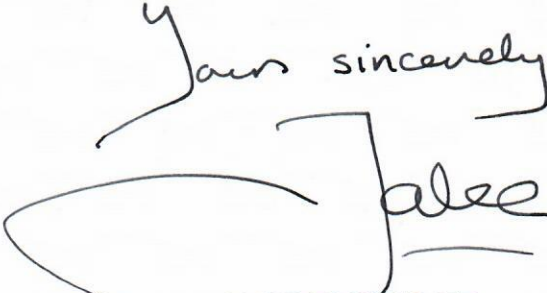
The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations apply to developments (or changes/extensions to development) that are likely to have significant environmental effects. EIA ensures that a local planning authority can only grant planning permission in the full knowledge of a development's effects and having taken those effects fully into account. If a development falls within the remit of EIA development the developer must provide an environmental statement, prepared by competent experts, that includes the information reasonably required to assess its impacts. This statement must then be publicised, and the statutory consultation bodies and public given an opportunity to give their views about the proposed development. These views must also be taken into account in the decision-making process.

The management of environmental effects associated with airport development is considered in detail in the Aviation Policy Framework, which may be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-policy-framework>

The revised National Planning Policy Framework can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Yours sincerely

JAKE BERRY MP