

Consultation on National Policy Statements

Ports



What is Planning Aid?

Planning Aid offers people the opportunity to get involved in the development of their local areas. We provide free and independent professional planning advice to community groups and individuals who cannot afford to pay professional fees. We work with communities to help them understand and play a role in the planning process. We are an independent source of advice and information on planning issues, not part of central or local government.

The new planning process for nationally significant infrastructure

The 2008 Planning Act introduced a new planning system for applications to build nationally significant infrastructure facilities in England and Wales. The new system covers applications for major energy generation, railways, ports, major roads, airports and water and waste infrastructure. Under the new system, national policy on infrastructure will be set out in a series of new National Policy Statements (NPS) which can be reviewed by the Secretary of State if there is a change in circumstances. A new independent body, the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC), will examine and decide applications for new infrastructure development, using the criteria on national need, benefits and impacts set out in the NPS, and consideration of evidence put forward on potential local effects.

Why should I get involved in the debate on National Policy Statements?

In autumn 2009 the Government published the first set of draft National Policy Statements (NPS) for public consultation. It is important to make your views known because once finalised the NPS will provide the framework for future decisions by the IPC on individual applications. Issues relating to the need for a specific type of infrastructure will not be debated again. Each NPS will be accompanied by an Appraisal of Sustainability on which comments are also invited. Except for the NPS on nuclear power stations and airports, specific locations for infrastructure are not identified although criteria may guide developers to appropriate types of area.

Ports

Ports compete with each other for business and will bring forward new development where they believe there is a opportunity to grow and meet a need or demand. Although most ports are privately run, some are run by local authorities (eg Portsmouth) and others are trust ports run by local boards on a self financing basis (eg Dover and Milford Haven).

In addition to domestic port traffic, over 90% of international trade comes and goes by sea, which in England and Wales amounts to 440M tonnes of cargo handled by ports each year.

National forecasts suggest that expansion of port capacity will resume after the recession and that this is most likely to occur in the container and 'roll-on roll-off' sectors. The NPS sets out why it is considered to be in the national interest for ports not only to meet the total estimated need for new capacity, but also to adapt to changing patterns of demand, encourage competition and build national resilience.

The NPS aims to:

- encourage sustainable port development to cater for long-term forecast growth in imports and exports by sea, with a competitive and efficient port industry;

- enable the ports industry to make informed judgments about when and where new development might take place; and
- ensure all proposed developments satisfy the relevant legal, environmental and social constraints and objectives.

The NPS applies to major developments, located at either an existing or a new port and each adding at least:

- 500,000 teu of containers (a teu is a twenty-foot equivalent unit: the majority of containers are 40ft long and so these count as 2 teu each);
- 250,000 roll-on roll-off units, mainly lorries unaccompanied trailers or trade vehicles; or
- 5 million tonnes of other types of cargo.

The NPS identifies a number of criteria which the IPC will need to consider when examining an application for new port capacity and any associated development. These include:

- The importance of good design.
- Climate Change Adaptation – coastal change and storm surge, higher temperatures and risk of drought need to be taken into consideration.
- Habitats – where protected habitats may be affected (including marine habitats impacted by dredging) compliance with relevant European and domestic legislation will be required.
- Road and Rail connections – a full transport assessment and mitigation of impacts required where there may be significant traffic implications.
- Air Emissions – the environmental impacts of emissions need to be taken into account and breaches of statutory limits avoided.
- Noise – goods handling and other on-port activities can inevitably be noisy and will need to be managed and mitigated.
- Waste Management – arrangements for managing waste



from vessels and from on-port activities will need to be considered.

- Water Quality and Resources – any adverse impacts, including the effect of discharges to estuaries, will need to be mitigated.

The NPS encourages the port operators to develop master plans as the basis for engaging with their neighbours, users and other stakeholders from the earliest stage of project formulation.

Further information on the consultation process, the questions on which comments are sought, related events, the draft NPS and the supporting documentation are available on the Department for Transport website www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/portsnps Welsh language, Braille and large print copies may be made available on request. Responses can be submitted online (portsconsult@dftgsi.gov.uk) by letter, fax or email. The consultation will close on 15 February 2010.



Contact Details

You can call the Planning Aid NPS advice line for independent advice. Initially advice will be given to all. If your enquiry is more complex and meets our eligibility criteria, you will be assisted by a qualified planning advisor or volunteer. If you can afford to pay, you will be referred to a planning consultant.

Planning Aid on 0121 214 2915 or www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Planning Aid for London on 020 7247 4900 or www.planningaidforlondon.org.uk

Planning Aid for Wales on 02920 485765 or www.planningaidwales.org.uk

Planning Aid is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute, a charity registered in England 262865 and Scotland SC 037841. Head office: Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL.

Planning Aid Wales is the independent charity providing Planning Aid services in Wales, with core funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.