



Guide to Using Traffic Light Rating Model for Public Consultation

The guide is to assist in ascertaining the amount and type of public consultation that is required for any proposed site. The public consultation that is carried out under this process will be in addition to that already carried out for full planning by the authority responsible for planning.

As part of the process, the Acquisition Consultant acting on behalf of the Operator will decide the Traffic Light Rating (which for the avoidance of doubt is designed to assess the level of consultation required and is not a measure of whether a site should or should not be progressed) and an attempt will be made to agree it with the Planning Officer¹.

It is vital that full records are kept regarding the consultation carried out on a site for auditing purposes. Also it can be put forward as evidence before a Planning Inspector (Planning Reporter in Scotland) if the application is refused.

The graph should be used to rate a site as green, amber or red. The Traffic Light Model operates along two axis; 'Planning and Environmental issues' (horizontal) and 'Community issues' (vertical).

It is important to appreciate that the rating for a site should be reviewed at least once. Once pre-application consultation is carried out with the Planning Officer¹ issues may be raised that warrants changing a site's rating.

Planning and Environmental Issues – horizontal axis

The horizontal axis is used to ascertain planning and environmental issues relating to the proposed site. The axis is graded 0-30, where 0 indicates very low concern or no concern and 30 where there are likely to be major concerns to the proposal.

The grading along this axis is made up from three categories; Sensitive Land Use, Siting and Appearance and Planning. Each category identifies the key elements that will determine the level of consultation required. The categories have different levels of influence and have, therefore, been given different levels of weight.

The Sensitive Land Use category is graded from 0 – 15, the Siting and Appearance category from 0 – 10, and Planning from 0 – 5.

The highest score within each category will apply and not a cumulative score.

The person using the Traffic Light Model will use the tables below to determine the score in each of the categories. Some of the categories are objective (Sensitive Land Uses) whilst the others allow some form of subjectivity. A degree of common sense must be applied when giving a Site a Rating as there may be other reasons not mentioned in this Guide that will affect it's sensitivity.

The horizontal axis rating is calculated by adding the score given in each of the categories on that axis.

Note:

1. England & Wales – Local Planning Officer
Scotland – Planning Officer
Northern Ireland – DOE Planning Services Local Planning Officer

Sensitive Land Use 0 - 15

Residential property or homes 0 – 15	
Location of site in relation to building	
Located on a residential tower block	10 - 15
next to	10 – 15
in close proximity	5 – 10
far from	0 – 5

Schools 0 – 15	
Location of site in relation to boundary	
Located on	15
next to	10 – 15
close proximity	5 – 10
near to	0 - 5
far from	0

Nurseries, playgroups, play grounds, recreation grounds (with children’s areas) 0 – 15	
Location of site in relation to building	
next to	10 – 15
in close proximity	5 – 10
far from	0 – 5

Hospital Property 0 - 10	
Buildings or grounds	
Located on	0 – 10
Elsewhere	0

Other sensitive land use to be treated on it’s own merits but could score 0 – 15.

Siting and Appearance 0 - 10

This category is more subjective based on the factors set out in the box. A score must be given based on the implications of the issues in the category for that particular site.

Siting and Appearance 0 – 10	
High Environmental Impact	5 – 10
Low Environmental Impact	0 – 5
<p>Siting – <i>matters to be considered include existence of topographical features and natural vegetation, flora and fauna, impact on skyline or horizon, townscape clutter, site in relation to existing masts, structures and buildings (including historical or traditional character), views of recognised importance</i></p> <p>Design – <i>matters to be considered include height in relation to surrounding area, appearance of the installation, material, colouration, dimensions (other than height), overall shape, solid or open framework, transmission solutions (i.e. impact of dish)</i></p> <p>Site type – <i>new site, upgrade, swap out, mast share</i></p>	

In respect of upgrades, swap outs, or mast shares it is anticipated that the score under siting and appearance will be less than for new installations. The matter that is being given consideration is the impact of the proposed alteration in comparison to the existing installation.

Planning 0 - 5

Development Plan policies (site specific) 0 – 5 (not relevant to Northern Ireland)	
Positive stance towards proposal	0
Neutral stance	0
Negative stance	5

Precedents/Site history 0 – 5	
Previous applications refused	5
No history of telecommunications proposed	0
Previous applications successful	0

Located within special land use 0 – 5	
From the following: National Park, National Scenic Area, National Heritage Area, AONB, SSSI, ASSI Others i.e. World Heritage Site, Registered Park or Garden, Archaeological site, Special Landscape Area, Heritage Coast Zone, National Nature Reserve, Areas of Great Landscape (no statutory force), Historic Park Gardens or Demesnes, Local landscape Policy Areas, Areas of Townscape or Village Character, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar Listed sites, Designated Local Nature Reserves, Historic Monuments, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Conservation Areas, Regional Parks,	5
In Green Belt land Within 50m of Conservation Area	0 - 5

Location in relation to sensitive site 0 - 5	
On a Listed Building	5
Within 50m of Listed Building	0 - 5
Greater than 50m	0

Community Issues – vertical axis

The vertical axis is used to ascertain community issues. The axis is again graded 0-30, where 0 indicates low concern and 30 where there are likely to be major concerns to the proposal.

The grading along the vertical axis is made up from three categories; View and attitudes of Local Communities, Social, Political and Media. Each category identifies the key elements that will determine the level of consultation required. The categories have different levels of influence and have, therefore, been given different levels of weight.

Views and Attitudes of Local Communities from 0 – 15, Social and Political is graded from 0 – 10, and finally Media from 0 - 5.

The highest score within each category will apply and not a cumulative score.

The person using the Traffic Light Model will use the tables below to determine the score in each of the categories. A degree of objectivity has been provided but a score can be given anywhere between the upper and lower limits.

The vertical axis rating is calculated by adding the score in each of the categories on that axis.

The vertical axis is the most likely to be reviewed, in particular, the stance of Councillors, views and attitudes of local communities, level of influence of local and key stakeholders views and attitudes of local communities and Media. In the event that there is a major change

such as the formation of a resident's objection group then this would warrant a review but in any event a review should be carried out after the pre-application consultation.

Views and attitudes (or likely) of local communities 0 - 15

Previous residents activity	
Considerable opposition	10 – 15
Some opposition	5 – 10
Little opposition	0 – 5

Social Political 0 - 10

Council Policy on Telecommunications 0 -10

Stance of Planning Committee 0 – 10	
All refusals	10
Some refusals (less than 50%)	5
Mostly approvals (greater than 50%)	0

Local and key stakeholders and Non Government Organisations 0–8	
Active interest	8
Some interest	4
No interest	0

Involvement of Member of Parliament or Assembly Member 0 – 10	
Significant previous involvement	10
No previous involvement	0

LPA own land and Property 0 - 10	
Moratorium on all land and property	10
Partial Moratorium i.e. residential	5
No moratorium	0

Media 0 - 5

Previous media interest 0 – 5	
Significant negative publicity	5
No interest	0

Does the Rating feel Right?

It is important to appreciate that a degree of common sense must be applied in determining a Rating for a particular site. Once the Rating has been given and it is obvious that it is not appropriate then a final review should be undertaken. The Rating can be amended but only if there are compelling reasons, in other words this health check should only be used on rare occasions. A full written justification must be given as to why the Rating was changed and may have to be reviewed as all sites are.