

WSP Note on Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment – Transport (20 July 2021)

The “Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic” were produced by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) in 1993 and were intended to guide the assessment of the environmental effect of road traffic associated with major new developments.

The following rules, taken from the IEMA guidelines, have been used by RVR as a screening process to define the scale and extent of the assessment:

- Rule 1 – Include road links where traffic flows would increase by more than 30% (or the number of HGVs would increase by more than 30%); and
- Rule 2 – Include any other specifically sensitive areas where traffic flows would increase by 10% or more.

The premise from the scheme promotor has been that the ES update did not require a wholesale re assessment as traffic flows had not changed materially since the original ES.

There has been debate within the Transport Planning industry as to the continued relevance of this document given that its publication is approaching 30 years ago.

Provided at Annex 1 to this Note is an email received by WSP from the IEMA concerning the ongoing relevance of the 1993 Guidance. The email states that the 1993 document remains the current guidance and has not yet been superseded by a complete replacement document. Whilst the general topic areas and thrust of the guidance is still the most appropriate for an EIA, it is considered that much of the content is out of date.

Annex 1

IEMA Clarification email dated 28 June 2021

From: Howard, Stephanie
Sent: 19 July 2021 11:30
To: Fielding, Ian; Smith, Alex
Subject: FW: 1993 Traffic Guidance

From: Rufus Howard <r.howard@iema.net>
Sent: 28 June 2021 13:49
To: Paddle, Martin <Martin.Paddle@wsp.com>
Cc: Julia Ambrose <j.ambrose@iema.net>
Subject: 1993 Traffic Guidance

Dear Martin

Thank you for your query regarding the 1993 Traffic Guidance.

We get asked about this guidance quite often. IEMA has an expert working group that is currently updating the guidance. We hope to have an updated version published late 2021 or early 2022.

In the meantime, the 1993 guidance can still be used bearing in mind the following points:

- The 1993 Guidance remains the most current version and has not yet been superseded by a complete replacement document
- The general topic areas and thrust of the guidance is still the most appropriate for an EIA, however IEMA considers much of the content to be out of date
- The Guidance also does not cover more recent areas such as:
 - Proportionate assessment
 - Digital EIA
 - Greater weight towards scoping discussions and collaborative working
- In particular, when considering scale and magnitude of the impacts, it may no longer be appropriate to apply the previous thresholds as the 'one stop shop' approach. There should be more consideration by the professional with respect to the baseline conditions and the anticipated impact. Professional judgement should be used on a case by case basis with the scope agreed with the Local Authority/ relevant Statutory Body

Kind regards

Rufus

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