



A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5 WTC)

Appendix TNI – Theme Report: Agriculture

29 July 2016

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Statutory and Policy Context

1. Addressing potential impacts on agriculture and agricultural land is a national and UK wide objective, and the subject of the following statutes, policies and plans in Northern Ireland, all of which have been considered throughout the environment assessment process:
 - Northern Ireland Land Act 1925 (c.34). The Act includes the regulations with respect to turbary rights on bogs allowing the proprietor to cut turf.
 - Regional Development Strategy, RDS 2035: Building a Better Future: The Regional Development Strategy offers a long-term policy direction with a strategic spatial perspective on the future development of Northern Ireland up to the year 2035.
 - PPS21 (June 2010) establishes the objectives and the policies for land use and development appropriate to the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland.
 - Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland Regional Planning Policies: Policy AG 1 Agricultural Land Quality is provided below:

Policy AG 1 Agricultural Land Quality

The provisions of [PPS 21](#) will take precedence over this policy.

To protect the best and most versatile agricultural land within Northern Ireland.

High quality agricultural land is an important resource. Once developed, even for other open space uses, the return to viable agricultural use is rarely feasible. It is important to protect, as far as practicable, the best and most versatile agricultural land from development.

The quality of agricultural land will be an important consideration in the formulation of development plans. Where possible in zoning land for development, planning policy will be to avoid the loss of high grade land. Particular consideration will be given to:

- maintaining compact settlements;
- directing development where possible to areas of poorer agricultural quality land; and
- encouraging the re-use of redundant or derelict land

The potential loss of good or versatile agricultural land will be a material factor which will be given considerable weight when considering applications for development.

Assessment Methodology and Significance of Impacts

2. The Agricultural Impact Assessment has sought to establish:

- Size, quality and layout of the farm, including a brief description of farm infrastructure etc.
- Type of enterprise(s) husbandry, livestock numbers, and land use.
- Single Farm Payment status.
- Implications of the Nitrates Directive.
- Countryside Management Scheme status.
- Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance Scheme (LFACAS) status.
- Whether the farm is divided by existing roads and how this impinges on current management of the farm.
- An appreciation of the frequency and type of movement of livestock and machinery.

3. The impact ratings and significance criteria used are as follows (*extracted from P15-6 of the A5 WTC ES, 2016*):

Rating	Description
Minor adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inconsequential land take or minimal loss of agricultural production, relative to overall scale of the farm. • Insignificant disruption to the present farm management routine. • Insignificant impact on present farm output. • Little or no impact, since the land is not currently used for agricultural production purposes. • Little or no impact on overall farm viability.
Moderate Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small to moderate land take relative to overall scale of the farm. • Small to moderate severance or disruption to the present farm management routine. • Small to moderate impact on present farm output, arising from additional inputs associated with farming retained lands. • Moderate impact on farm viability.
Substantial Adverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substantial area of the land constituting the farm would be taken by the Proposed Scheme. • Substantial disruption of the present day to day management routine. • Significant impact on overall farm viability. • Significant impact on farm output, arising from additional inputs associated with farming retained lands.

4. The assessment of agricultural impacts is in the context of EIA, and is not a detailed economic assessment of farm value which would be considered by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Services.

References

Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland:

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/policy_publications/rural_strategy/psrni_regional_policies/psrni_agriculture/psrni_ag01.htm

Planning Policy Statement 21 PPS21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements_and_supplementary_planning_guidance/planning_policy_statement_21_pps21_sustainable_development_in_the_countryside-3.pdf