4. ASSESSMENT OF AMBIENT NOISE LEVELS

4.1 An indication of the acceptability of the site for residential development could be found in the 1994 Planning Policy Guidance note 24, "Planning and Noise". This gives advice on how planning systems can be used to reduce the impact of noise on people. It outlines the relevant considerations to be taken into account by local planning authorities when determining planning applications for residential developments which will be exposed to existing noise sources. It also sets out three key approaches by which noise impact can be minimised:

"(i) Engineering - the reduction of noise at the point of generation, the containment of noise generated, and protection of surrounding noise sensitive buildings;

(ii) Lay-out - adequate distance between source and noise sensitive building or area; screening by natural barriers, other buildings or non critical rooms in a building;

(iii) Administrative - limiting operating time of source, restricting activities allowed on site, specifying an acceptable noise limit"

4.2 In brief, the methodology of PPG24 involves a calculation of the noise affecting the site (in this case, generally traffic noise) during a 16 hour day time period, and an 8 hour night time period. The calculated values are then compared to a set of tables which will categorise the results as being 'A', 'B', 'C' or 'D'. For each of these categories, PPG 24 gives guidance whether the residential development should be allowed, whether it should be refused, or whether conditions should be imposed under planning to mitigate any expected excess.