Environmental Management Planning in EIAs for New Industrial Estate Projects in England

Paul Slinn
EIA Centre
University of Manchester
Paul.a.slinn@man.ac.uk

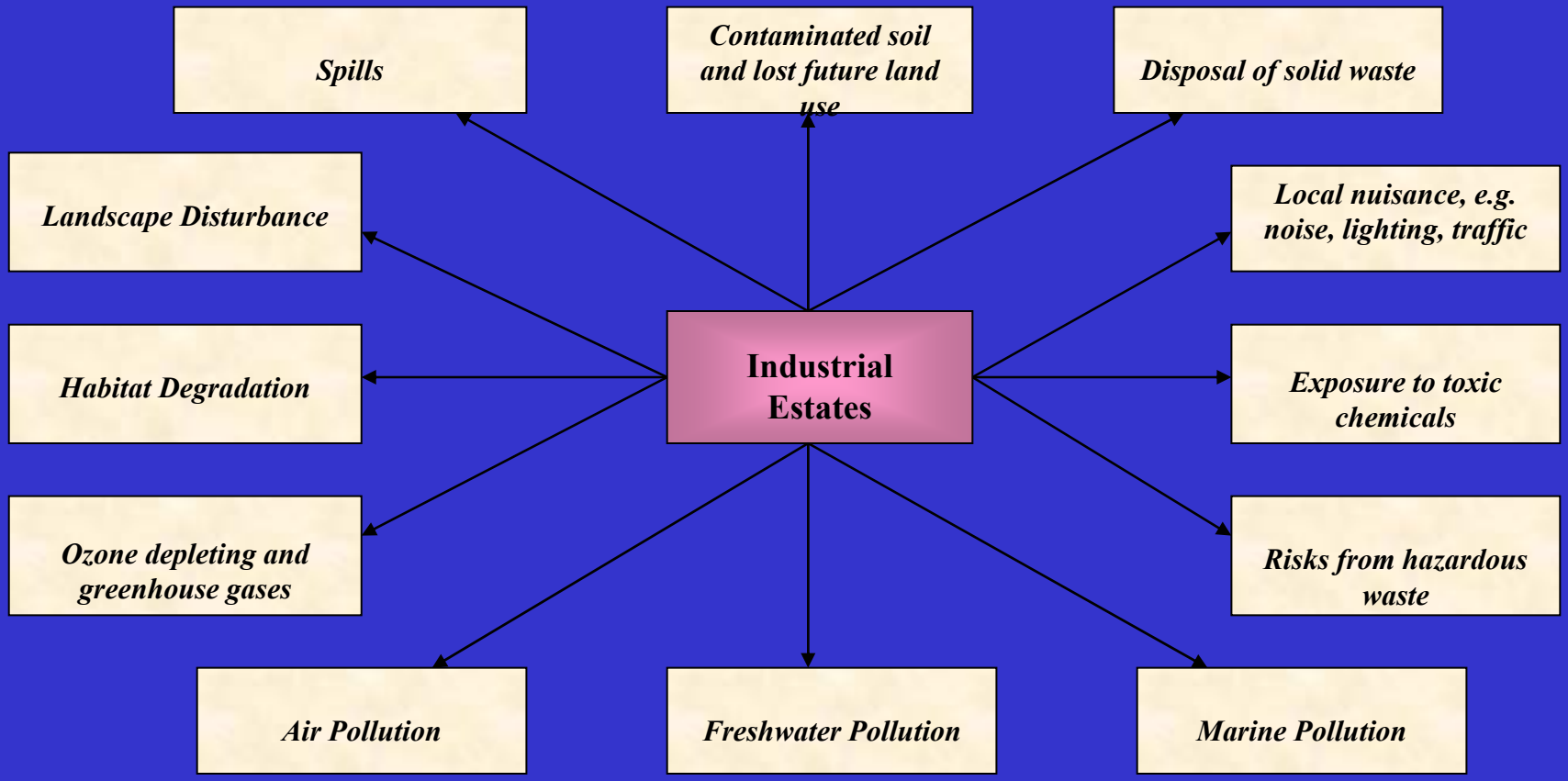
What is an Industrial Estate?

- Definition (UNEP, 1997)
  - "A large tract of land, sub-divided and developed for the use of several firms simultaneously, distinguished by its shareable infrastructure and close proximity of firms" (UNEP, 1997)

The Significance of Industrial Estates

- Of central economic and environmental importance
  - Approximately 12,000 worldwide
  - Approximately 1,200 in the UK
- Legacy of environmental problems associated with long-established sites

Environmental Impacts



Potential environmental impacts of industrial estates (UNEP, 1997)

Key Variables

- Models of ownership and management
- Industrial processes
- Type and context of site
- Nature of the decision-making process

Promotion of Good Practice

- Environment Agency, (2000) *A guide to Good Environmental Practice for Trading Estates and Business Parks*- aimed at businesses on established sites

- North European Trade Axis (NETA) project, (2001) *Workpackage 2: Sustainable Industrial Areas* worked with a number of North European sites to establish principles for best practice for industrial process and site design

- UNEP, 1997 *The Environmental Management of Industrial Estates*- covering design and operational issues for both new and established sites

The Study

- 12 projects selected
  - All subject to EIA between 1995 - 2001
  - All active projects
- Environmental statements analysed for environmental management commitments
- Follow-up interviews with developers for 8 of the projects

EIA and Industrial Estates

- Schedule 2; 10(a) of the regulations in England
  - Industrial Estate Development Projects >0.5ha.

- There are rare examples where EIA has been waived.

- Appropriate mitigation proposals are mandatory
- No requirement for impact monitoring or auditing
- No requirement for an Environmental Management Plan

Findings- Impact Mitigation

- Tends to focus on a standard range of measures:
  - Procedural (e.g. construction codes of practice, lanscape management etc.)
  - Hard engineering (e.g. new/upgraded roads)
  - Soft engineering (e.g. landscape design solutions for habitat protection/creation, stormwater drainage, visual/noise screening)

Findings- General

- Just 2 out of 12 EISs included any impact monitoring commitments
- There were no references to environmental management systems and only one developer actually operated an EMS
- However, 6 out of 8 developers interviewed had carried out assessments for environmental liability risk and had site monitoring programmes in place for that purpose
- Developers also acting as landlords had environmental conditions built into leases and contracts
- All projects were subject to environmental planning consent conditions
- EIA was well established and accepted by developers as a positive part of the development process

Conclusion

- EIA was conducted in narrow accordance with the regulations and planning system
- EIA was not being used as a vehicle for systematic environmental management planning
- Environmental management systems were not a priority for developers in this sample

Conclusion

- But there was evidence of environmental management planning;
  - Better informed decision-makers increasingly use the development brief and attach environmental conditions to planning consent
  - Awareness of environmental liability risks and strict licensing arrangements increasingly drive developers to apply environmental conditions to leases and contracts and to put in place site monitoring programmes
  - Growing developer recognition that environmental quality can translate into enhanced asset values