

Aircraft Noise Competent Authority
(ANCA) Fingal County Council



An tÚdarás Inniúil um
Thorann Aerárthaí
Aircraft Noise
Competent Authority

COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL **RECORD OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ORDER**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination under:
The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes)
Regulations 2004 (the "Regulations of 2004")
In relation to:**

**'the proposed amendment of the Noise Abatement Objective for Dublin Airport pursuant to
Section 9(2)(a) of the Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Act 2019 (NAO), relating to Planning
Application F23A/0781 and Action 3 of the Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport 2024-2028 by
the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority'**

1. Section 9(2) of the Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Act 2019 (the **Act of 2019**) requires Fingal County Council, in its capacity as Aircraft Noise Competent Authority (**ANCA**), to *"ensure that the Balanced Approach is adopted where a noise problem at the airport has been identified and, to that end, shall further ensure that, as appropriate: (a) the noise abatement objective is, as appropriate, defined, restated or amended, taking into account, as appropriate, Article 8 of, and Annex V to, the Environmental Noise Directive"*. That obligation reflects the obligation under Article 5(2) of Regulation 598/2014 (the **Airport Noise Regulation**).
2. Fingal County Council (the Planning Authority) received on **15th December 2023** a planning application **Ref No. F23A/0781** from the airport authority for Dublin Airport (daa) under section 34B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (the **Act of 2000**) for development at Dublin Airport. The Planning Authority gave ANCA a copy of such application on **23rd December 2023** pursuant to section 34B(1)(a)(i)(I) of the Act of 2000.
3. On receipt of that application, ANCA was required in considering the application, to form the opinion or not that the development (I) contains a proposal requiring the assessment for the need for a noise-related action, or (II) indicates that a new operating restriction may be required.
4. Pursuant to Section 34B(1)(a)(iii) of the Act of 2000, ANCA concluded that it is of the opinion that the proposed development (**F23A/0781**) contains a proposal requiring the assessment for the need for a noise-related action, in **CE Order ANCA/0002/2024 dated 17 January 2024** and issued a notice to the planning authority to this effect pursuant to 34B(2) of the Act of 2000 on 17 January 2024.
5. ANCA is consequently engaged in the process of noise regulation provided for in section 34B and in the 2019 Act, which requires, as appropriate, the definition, restatement or

amendment of the Noise Abatement Objective (NAO) and the making of a regulatory decision.

6. In 2024, the Planning Authority published the Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport 2024-2028 (the 'NAP'). The NAP presents the noise situation at Dublin Airport in 2021 and 2023, assessed in accordance with the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 549 of 2018) (as amended) ('the ENR') and the Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC ('the END'). The NAP includes a range of Actions to take place over the NAP duration. Action 3 of the NAP also requires ANCA to carry out a review of the NAO for Dublin Airport to support sustainable community and airport development in accordance with relevant plans and policies.
7. Furthermore, pursuant to Section 9(7) of the Act of 2019, any noise mitigation measures and operating restrictions provided for in the Regulatory Decision cannot be more restrictive than is necessary in order to achieve the NAO. Therefore, the NAO sets the framework for the Regulatory Decision and in turn sets the framework for the decision on F23A/0781 and future applications for development consent at the airport. Accordingly, the NAO is a plan or programme for the purposes of the Regulations of 2004.
8. Article 9(1) of the Regulations of 2004 require competent authorities such as ANCA to carry out an environmental assessment for all plans and programmes which are prepared for, among other things, transport and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. However, where a plan or programme described above only determines the use of a small area at local level, Article 9(2) only requires ANCA to carry out an environmental assessment if it determines that the Plan or Programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. In making that determination, ANCA must take account of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Regulations of 2004.
9. Logika Consultants Limited prepared the attached Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (the **Screening Report**) dated **06th January 2026** on behalf of ANCA, attached as Appendix A, to assist in making that determination (the **Screening Determination**). The Screening Report collates and analyses information relevant to the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Regulations of 2004.
10. Article 9(5) of the Regulations of 2004 requires ANCA to give notice to the **Environmental Protection Agency, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Minister for Climate, Energy and Environment, and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (the Environmental Authorities)** before making the Screening Determination. The notice must indicate that the Environmental Authorities can make a submission or observation in relation to whether the proposed plan or programme would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. On 19th November 2025, ANCA gave the required notice to the Environmental Authorities, including a draft of the Screening Report. One submission was received from the Environmental Protection Agency (dated 17/12/2025), the contents of which are summarised and addressed in the Screening Report.
11. Following that consultation, the final Screening Report recommends that ANCA determine that the NAO and Regulatory Decision are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

RECOMMENDATION

Having regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including the following:

- The Regulations of 2004, and in particular the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to those Regulations;
- Directive 2001/42/EC, and in particular the provisions of Recital 15;
- Act of 2000, and in particular Section 34B of that Act;
- The Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport 2024-2028;
- Act of 2019, and in particular Section 9 of that Act;
- SEA Screening Report, attached as Appendix A;
- Submission and observation received from the Environmental Protection Agency dated 17th December 2025.

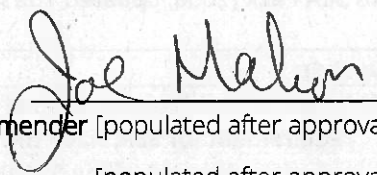
I agree with the conclusions and recommendation set out in SEA Screening Report and I recommend that ANCA proceeds to:

- determine, pursuant to Article 9(2) of the Regulations of 2004, that the amending of the NAO is likely to have significant effects on the environment requiring Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- determine that amending the NAO requires Strategic Environmental Assessment pursuant to Article 9(2) of the Regulations of the 2004;
- prepare an environmental report pursuant to Article 10 of the Regulations of 2004;
- consult with the Environmental Authorities in accordance with Article 11 of the Regulations of 2004 prior to making a decision on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report; and
- consult with the Environmental Authorities and members of the public in accordance with Article 13 of the Regulations of 2004 with regard to the amended NAO at the same time as it carries out the consultation required by Section 34B(10) to (14) of the Act of 2019 with regard to the draft Regulatory Decision and underlying report.

I am satisfied that such an Order is consistent with the SEA Screening process described in the EPA's SEA Pack (2008, updated 2023) as follows:

Question	Response
1.1) In reaching a determination of the requirement for SEA, have the criteria set out in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 or Schedule 1 of S.I. 435, as amended by S.I. 200 &	Annex I of the SEA Directive specifies the information that is to be provided in the Environmental Report. Annex II of the SEA Directive meanwhile sets out criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have

S.I. 201 of 2011 been taken into account?	significant effects on the environment – this is dealt with in Chapter 3 of the Screening Report. Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 and Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 set out the same criteria as Annex II of the SEA Directive, and again this is addressed through Chapter 3 of the Screening Report.
1.2) Has a determination been made, in consultation with the DHLGH, regarding the requirement for an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Habitats Directive?	Appropriate Assessment Screening is being undertaken concurrently, and separately to the SEA process. A determination will be made by ANCA, in consultation with the DHLGH, regarding the requirement for an appropriate assessment. Given however, that it is recommended that SEA should be undertaken, whether the need for Appropriate Assessment is screened in or out becomes irrelevant and is not influential.
1.3) Has the relevant competent authority consulted the prescribed environmental authorities as required and notified them of its determination?	ANCA consulted the Environmental Authorities, including by providing them with a copy of the Screening Report, during the period 19/11/25 to 17/12/25, allowing them to provide input to inform the Screening Determination. ANCA will notify the Environmental Authorities accordingly upon making the Screening Determination.
1.4) Has the relevant statutory authority made available for public inspection a copy of its determination on the requirement for SEA?	The Screening Determination made following this Recommendation must be made available for public inspection. It is proposed that it will be published on the ANCA website, together with the Screening Report and the responses provided by the Environmental Authorities.
1.5) Does the screening determination clearly state whether SEA is required or not, who has made the decision and when?	I am satisfied that an Order made in accordance with this Recommendation will satisfy this requirement.
1.6) If the P/P has been screened out of SEA, does it clearly demonstrate that it does not meet all/most of the criteria of Annex 1 and Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 and Schedule 1 of S.I. 435?	The Recommendation is that the Plan or Programme would be screened in, not screened out.
1.7) Has a description been provided in the Environmental Report of the screening process and subsequent determination?	ANCA will have to provide this description in the SEA Scoping Report and subsequent Environmental Report.


 Recommender [populated after approval]
 [populated after approval]



ORDER:

For the reasons set out in the recommendation of the Senior Noise Technical Officer and the SEA Screening Report in Appendix A, I hereby order:

- A Determination, pursuant to Article 9(2) of the Regulations of 2004, that amending the Noise Abatement Objective is likely to have significant effects on the environment requiring Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- A Determination that amending the NAO requires Strategic Environmental Assessment pursuant to Article 9(2) of the Regulations of the 2004;
- The preparation of a draft environmental report pursuant to Article 10 of the Regulations of 2004;
- consult with the Environmental Authorities in accordance with Article 11 of the Regulations of 2004 prior to making a decision on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report; and
- Consultation with the Environmental Authorities and members of the public in accordance with Article 13 of the Regulations of 2004 with regard to the amended NAO at the same time as it carries out the consultation required by Section 34B(10) to (14) of the Act of 2019 with regard to the draft Regulatory Decision and underlying report.

For the avoidance of doubt, this order does not predetermine the content and level of detail of the environmental report. A recommendation in relation to the content and level of detail of the environmental report should be submitted to the Director of Services after the conclusion of the consultation with the Environmental Authorities in accordance with Article 11 of the Regulations of 2004 and prior to submission of the draft environmental report to ANCA for approval.

ORDER:



Approver Ethna Felten

Director Of Services

12-01-2026 Dated

thereunto empowered by order of the Chief Executive, Fingal County Council C.E No 8912 delegating to me all powers, functions and duties in relation to the Council of the County of Fingal in respect of this matter.

APPENDIX A

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Screening Report

(Dated 06th January 2026)



Report

ANCA Amended NAO

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

For ANCA

6 January 2026

Document Control

Project Title:	ANCA Amended NAO
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Prepared By:	KF
Reviewed By:	TG

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03	06/01/2026	Finalisation following consultation



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Aircraft Noise Regulation

Regulation (EU) 598/2014 (hereinafter referred to as 'Regulation 598') requires Ireland and other EU Member States to appoint a Competent Authority to regulate the noise situation at certain airports. Regulation 598 applies to airports with more than 50,000 civil aircraft movements per calendar year. Dublin Airport is the only airport in Ireland meeting this threshold. Fingal County Council (FCC) have been designated as the Competent Authority for the purposes of aircraft noise regulation at Dublin Airport. FCC have, to fulfil their function with regard noise management, created an independent division, the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority (ANCA), which discharges FCC's functions under Regulation 598 and the Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Regulation Act 2019 (hereinafter referred to as the '2019 Act').

Under Regulation 598, ANCA must ensure that the noise situation at Dublin Airport is assessed in accordance with the Environmental Noise Directive (Directive 2002/49/EC) and by the adoption of the Balanced Approach. Regulation 598 requires ANCA to apply the Balanced Approach at those airports where a noise problem has been identified. The Balanced Approach is a policy of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which has provided guidance in ICAO Doc 9829, Guidance on the Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management. Under Regulation 598, the Balanced Approach is applied where a noise problem at an airport has been identified. According to the ICAO guidance, it involves analysing various measures available to reduce noise which can be classified into four principal elements as follows:

- Noise at Source;
- Land-use Planning Management;
- Noise Abatement Operational Procedures;
- Operating Restrictions.

In addition to those elements specified in ICAO, Regulation 598 also requires ANCA, in the context of the Balanced Approach, to define a Noise Abatement Objective (NAO) for the airport, identify the measures available to reduce the noise impact, and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the noise mitigation measures. Annex II of Regulation 598 also sets out guidance on assessing the cost-effectiveness of operating restrictions. At the end of this process, ANCA must specify the noise mitigation measures and ensure they are implemented.

The 2019 Act gives further effect to Regulation 598 in Ireland. It provides for ANCA to apply the Balanced Approach and discharge its functions under Regulation 598 on its own initiative or in response to any planning application by Dublin Airport Authority (daa) relating to:

- 1) any proposed development that (I) contains a proposal requiring the assessment for the need for a noise-related action, or (II) indicates that a new operating restriction may be required (Section 34B); or
- 2) the taking of a 'relevant action' (Section 34C), whereby the 'relevant action' consists exclusively of the revocation, amendment or replacement of an operating restriction, with or without the introduction of new noise mitigation measures.

ANCA discharges its functions under Regulation 598 and the 2019 Act by, among other things, making a 'regulatory decision' (hereinafter referred to as 'the RD').

The first step in the application of the Balanced Approach under the 2019 Act is to define, restate or amend the Noise Abatement Objective.

1.1.2 Overview

In 2022, following consultation, ANCA defined a NAO for Dublin Airport. The NAO was defined in response, among other things, to a potential noise problem resulting from Planning Application F20A/0668, which sought to amend Conditions 3(d) and 5 of the North Runway Planning Permission (NRPP). This planning application was referred to as the North Runway Relevant Action (NRRA).

Logika prepared an SEA Screening Report in April 2021 which recommended to ANCA that the NAO was likely to have significant effects on air noise around Dublin Airport and had the potential for significant effects on a range of other environmental receptors, including biodiversity, human health, air quality, carbon emissions, landscape and cultural heritage.

ANCA, having regard to the information provided in the SEA Screening Report, determined that the defining of the NAO was likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore required environmental assessment under Article 9(2) of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations (SI 435/2004).

Following consultation, ANCA published the Final Environmental Report on 17 June 2022, and defined the NAO on 20 June 2022. ANCA's SEA Statement was also published on 20 June 2022.

1.1.3 The Current NAO

The approach taken to the development of the NAO, and considerations made by ANCA in the definition of it were documented in the Noise Abatement Objective Report for Dublin Airport (the 'NAO Report'). The NAO Report described how the NAO had been developed having regard for wider international, regional and local legislation, policies, standards and guidance. It also provided discussion with respect to each part of the NAO identifying relevant considerations that had been applied in its definition.

The NAO for Dublin Airport is defined over five parts:

- 1) **A Policy Objective** – the overarching policy statement which sets out the high-level noise-related outcomes that ANCA wishes to achieve at Dublin Airport.
- 2) **An Explanation of the Policy Objective** – which provides further description of how the policy objective is to be applied as part of decision making.
- 3) **Measurable criteria** – how the NAO is to be measured and the metrics that are to be used as part of its measurement.
- 4) **Expected Outcomes** – based on the policy objective and the measurable criteria, the expected outcomes that are to be achieved.
- 5) **Monitoring** – how the expected outcomes set by the NAO are to be monitored.

The NAO was formally adopted by the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority in June 2022 (the 2022 NAO).

1.2 Need for Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations

Directive 2001/42/EC (hereinafter referred to as the SEA Directive) requires Member States to ensure that certain plans and programmes are subject to a requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment ('SEA'). Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 435/2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations (2004) (hereinafter referred to as the SEA Regulations) transpose this Directive into Irish legislation.

In terms of the requirement to carry out environmental assessment, the SEA Regulations state:

'9. (1) Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes (a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and tourism, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or (b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.

(2) A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination.

(3) A competent authority shall determine whether plans and programmes other than those referred to in sub-article (1), which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment.'

A 'development consent' in Irish law includes a planning permission for projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive.

1.2.2 The 2022 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The NAO is a plan or programme that sets the framework that can be in support of future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive. A Screening Report was produced that determined the need for SEA (the 2022 Screening Report). ANCA determined that the Regulatory Decision in relation to the NRRRA and the associated NAO were likely to have significant effects on air noise around Dublin Airport due to the proposed increase in night-time flying. The RD and associated NAO had the potential for significant effects on a range of other environmental factors, including biodiversity, human health, air quality, carbon emissions, landscape and cultural heritage.

The 2022 Screening Report was followed by the production of a Scoping Report that set out the scope for the draft SEA Environmental Report that was published for public consultation for a period of 14 weeks during November 2021 to February 2022. At the same time, the draft SEA Environmental Report was issued to the relevant Environmental Authorities. Following the consultation, a Consultation Report and SEA Final Environmental Report (the 2022 SEA ER) was produced, and ANCA prepared its SEA statement providing information on the decision to adopt both the NAO and the RD. The SEA Statement was published in June 2022. ANCA formally defined the NAO by Chief Executive Order.

The 2022 SEA Environmental Report included the following:

- An outline of the Plan;

- The assessment methodology;
- The baseline conditions;
- Public consultation;
- An assessment of likely significant effects;
- Mitigation measures; and
- Next steps.

The conclusions in regard to likely significant effects with the implementation of the NAO and RD are summarised in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1: Summary of Likely Significant Effects

Environmental topic	Summary of Likely Significant Effects
Air Quality	Minor improvements in localised air quality due to more efficient operations; negligible regional impact.
Biodiversity	Potential minor disturbance to wildlife, particularly during sensitive periods; no significant impact on protected habitats expected. Negligible to limited effects beyond 2km.
Carbon and Climate Change	The NAO may increase passenger-related CO ₂ emissions, but with more efficient operations and fleet mix the overall effect is expected to be insignificant, leaving carbon reduction targets largely unaffected, though long-term climate impacts will persist.
Cultural Heritage	Adverse impacts are considered unlikely, however, to avoid densely populated areas, aircraft could be rerouted over more rural areas where heritage assets are located which could result in negative setting impacts.
Landscape and Visual	The impact on landscapes will be negligible as the majority of changes will be at night. The general reduction in noise impacts outside of the night-time period will lead to a more tranquil environment.
Noise and Vibration	Night-time noise exposure is expected to increase, however, the likelihood of compliance with the WHO guidelines is considered to be high, therefore overall effects will be positive.
Population and Human Health	Additional nighttime flights has the potential to negatively impact human health and air quality, however compliance with air quality legislation and WHO guidelines will be met.

1.2.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

Screening

The procedure of undertaking SEA screening is based upon the evaluation of specific criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive (Schedule 1)¹.

According to the EPA Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening², the screening process covers three different stages as below:

- Applicability;
- Screening; and
- Determination.

If a Plan or Programme falls within the remit of the SEA Directive/SEA Regulations and requires mandatory SEA, Scoping is undertaken.

Scoping

This part of the process sets out the proposed scope of the detailed environmental assessment that will be undertaken.

Assessment

This is the detailed assessment of likely effects and alternatives which will be documented in an SEA Environmental Report.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

On 15 December 2023, the airport authority for Dublin Airport (daa) made an application (F23A/0781) pursuant to section 34B of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended (the PDA) for planning permission to increase the passenger capacity of Dublin Airport from 32 million passengers per annum (mppa) to 40 mppa, and the provision of associated airport infrastructure.

On 17 January 2024, ANCA gave notice to the Planning Authority under section 34B(2) of the PDA that in accordance with section 34B(1)(a), it concluded that it was of the opinion that the proposed development contained a proposal requiring the assessment for the need for a noise-related action.

Consequently, ANCA must apply the Balanced Approach in the performance of ANCA's functions under Section 34B. In accordance with section 9(2) of the 2019 Act, the first step in the Balanced Approach is for ANCA to ensure that the Noise Abatement Objective is defined, restated or amended, taking into account as appropriate Article 8 of, Annex V to the Environmental Noise Directive.

The specific purpose of SEA is to ensure that early consideration is paid to environmental aspects when a plan or programme is in development. However, a plan or programme that determines the

¹ European Union, Directive 2001/42/EC, Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, as transposed by S.I. 435/2004, European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (Accessed November 2025) Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/si/435/made/en/print#article1>

² Environmental Protection Agency, SEA Screening Good Practice 2021 [Accessed November 2025] available at: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-screening-good-practice-2021.php>

use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme only requires SEA if implementation of the plan or programme is considered likely to lead to significant environmental effects.

Determining whether the plan or programme (1) affects (a) the use only of a small area at local level or (b) consists only of minor modifications to a plan or programme, and then whether that plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, and therefore whether SEA applies, is completed through a process known as Screening.

It is ANCA, in their role as Competent Authority, who are required to make a Screening Determination on whether SEA applies. This determination is made by undertaking a screening exercise whereby information, in the form of a SEA Screening Report (or as it is sometimes referred to, a SEA Screening Statement), is provided to ANCA who, using this, establish whether there is this potential for likely significant environmental effects to occur as a result of implementing the associated NAO.

Under the SEA Regulations, in reaching a Screening Determination, notice shall be given and advice requested from specific prescribed Environmental Authorities, with these being:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- The Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment;

This, the SEA Screening Report has been forwarded to each Environmental Authority, and used as the vehicle for providing the information they require and for allowing them to provide input/submissions as they see fit to inform ANCA's Screening Determination. The information within this Report will also be considered by ANCA themselves to inform the Screening Determination they make.

Should SEA be required, ANCA will, following the completion of a Scoping exercise, publish a draft Environmental Report at the same time as the NAO is presented for public consultation.

1.4 Related Environmental Assessments

Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 477/2011 - European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations (2011), which transposes the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) into Irish law, requires that 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) be carried out where a plan is likely to have a significant impact on a European site. European sites are commonly referred to as Natura 2000 sites and include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Each of these sites is designated because of their specific biodiversity value: for SPAs this is because of their value for wild birds; for SACs, it is because of the important habitats that they support. AA is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening, that the plan, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site. As with SEA, in determining this, a Screening exercise is undertaken to establish whether the potential for such exists.

AA Screening is therefore being undertaken separately, to the SEA Screening and Scoping stages. It should be noted that if AA is screened as being required, SEA must also be undertaken given as required by Regulation 9(1)(b) of SI 435/2004. If AA is required, ANCA will also publish a Natura Impact Statement at the public consultation stage.

1.5 Consultant Team

This Report has been prepared by Logika Consultants Ltd. ('Logika'), part of the Logika Group. Logika are the Consultant Team engaged to provide expert support to ANCA in the drafting of the amended NAO. Specifically, Logika are responsible for providing environmental advice for the purposes of complying with the SEA and Habitats Directives in the NAO process.

2 Description of the Proposed Amendments

2.1 Site Location

Dublin Airport is the Hub Airport of Ireland with routes to over 200 different destinations, served by nearly 50 airlines. In 2024 a total of 34.6 million passengers used the Airport and its 244,511 Air Traffic Movements (ATMs). Dublin Airport is currently served by main runways and a further cross runway which is used less frequently. It has two terminals, operates 24 hours a day, and for 364 days a year. As with all major airports, it relies on considerable additional infrastructure including an extensive bus network and car parking facilities.

Dublin Airport is located on the east coast of Ireland, see Figure 2.1, in Collinstown, in County Dublin in the administrative area of Fingal County Council. It lies approximately 7km north of Dublin City Centre, and between the City and the Airport lies mostly development. The area north of the Airport is also mainly developed all the way to the conurbation of Swords which lies approximately 3km to the north. In an easterly direction from the Airport is found a mixture of farmland and other open space, with scattered development all the way to the coast and the settlement of Portmarnock which lies approximately 5km from the Airport itself. West of the Airport is characterised by being mainly undeveloped and comprising mostly farmland and other forms of open space.

The Airport is accessed by the M1 motorway, which provides access from Dublin itself and from areas to the north as far as Belfast in Northern Ireland. The M50 Dublin ring road connects with the M1, and from this there are road connections to the rest of Ireland.

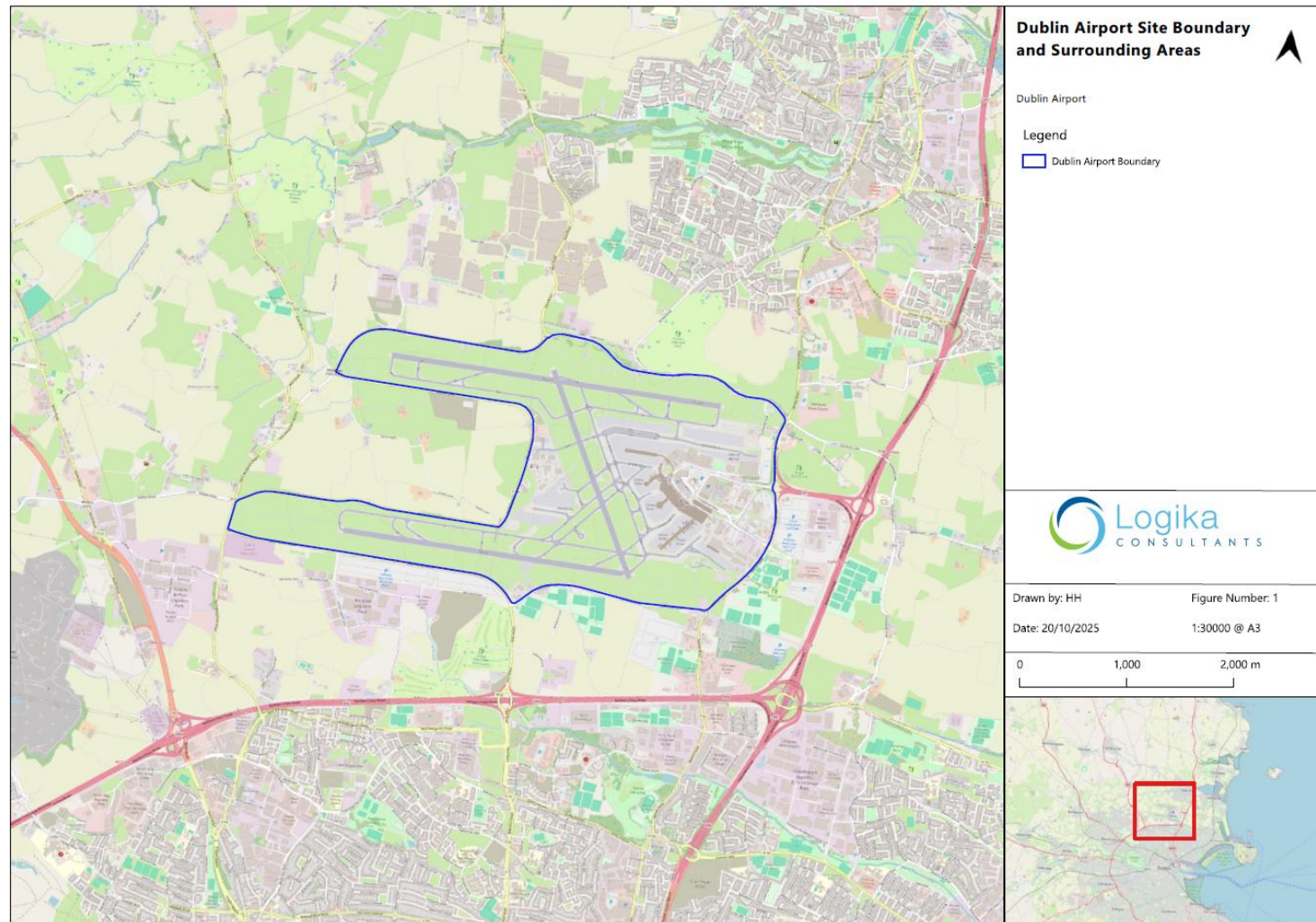


Figure 2-1: Dublin Airport Site Boundary

2.2 The Proposed Amendments

2.2.1 The Need for the NAO to be Amended

In 2024, Fingal County Council published the Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport 2024 – 2028 (the Noise Action Plan). The Noise Action Plan presents the noise situation at Dublin Airport in 2021 and 2023, assessed in accordance with the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 549 of 2018) (as amended) ('the ENR') and the Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC ('the END'). The NAP also provides forecasts for how the noise situation may evolve during the period of the plan, having regard for potential developments at Dublin Airport.

Action 2 of the Noise Action Plan requires Fingal County Council to "Carry out the process of Aircraft Noise Regulation at Dublin Airport in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Act of 2019, the Act of 2000 and/or the Aircraft Noise Regulation as appropriate." This assessment was commenced under Section 9 of the Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Regulation Act 2019 ('the Act of 2019').

Under the Act of 2019 as part of the process of aircraft noise regulation, ANCA is required to ensure that 'the noise abatement objective is, as appropriate, defined, restated or amended, taking into account, as appropriate, Article 8 of, and Annex V to, the Environmental Noise Directive'. This requires ANCA to have regard for the Noise Action Plan, and as a precursor to this step, ensure that that noise situation at Dublin Airport has been assessed in accordance with the ENR and END.

Action 3 of the Noise Action Plan commits to such a review requiring '*... a review of the Noise Abatement Objective for Dublin Airport to support sustainable community and airport development in accordance with relevant plans and policies.*'

In accordance with the Act of 2019 and in response to Action 3 of the Noise Action Plan, the NAO is undergoing review.

ANCA has also given notice to the Planning Authority under section 34B(2) of the PDA 2000 that it is of the opinion that Planning Application Reference F23A/0781 contains a proposal requiring the assessment for the need for a noise-related action.

Therefore, in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Act of 2019, ANCA is also required to ensure that the Balanced Approach is adopted where a noise problem at the airport has been identified and, to that end, must further ensure, as appropriate, that the NAO is, as appropriate, defined, restated, or amended.

2.2.2 The Amendments that are proposed

Overview

A number of amendments have been developed that are under consideration and detailed below. Other amendments may evolve to be considered as the NAO process progresses, which would then, if appropriate be assessed by subject environmental assessment through the SEA process.

Amendment 1 - Changes in HSD and HA reduction outcomes

The key change is to re-baseline the NAO against the noise situation in 2023 rather than in 2019. This change allows the NAO to set outcomes based on how the airport operates in its current form rather than its noise performance prior to the opening of the North Runway in 2022 and substantial fleet modernisation through, for example, the introduction of the Boeing 737max.

Resetting the reduction outcomes based on the 2023 baseline ensures that:

- Noise impacts result in better health outcomes compared to the current NAO; and
- The principle of reducing effects over time is maintained.
- This amendment therefore secures better noise-related health outcomes for communities over time.

Amendment 2 - Removing and revising the 55 dB L_{night} and 65 dB L_{den}

Since 2021 the introduction of the 2019 Airport Noise Zone has effectively prevented the constructions of new residential developments with the Zone A. Growth in the number of developments in Zone B within the areas designated for residential use by the FCC development Plan is a contributor to the increment in the number of people exposed to levels above the 55 dB L_{night}.

Whilst consent can be given to developments in zoned areas that are compatible with noise sensitive development on condition that appropriate sound insulation is provided as required by FCC policy set out through Noise Zones contained in the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029. Further development in these areas in conflicts with the achievement of the current Noise Abatement Objectives linked to 55 dB L_{night} when assessed against the forecasts noise levels of the future airport operations.

Under consideration is whether an amended NAO can better protect human health without providing any conflict to land use planning or define incompatible levels of noise exposure for development consent. An NAO should seek to minimise the adverse impact of aviation noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development.

3 SEA Screening

3.1 Overview

In accordance with EPA guidance and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, the test around whether SEA applies is undertaken in two stages, which are detailed below.

3.2 Stage 1 – Applicability

The applicability of the SEA Directive to a plan or programme should be determined using a four-step process. The first stage of that process requires determination of whether the plan or programme falls within the scope of the SEA Directive and transposing legislation, and to confirm if the plan or programme requires mandatory SEA, i.e. the applicability of the plan or programme to the SEA Directive.

In accordance with the EPA Good Practice Guidance, the NAO Amendments were considered against the SEA Decision Tree (Appendix C of the guidance). Since the NAO Amendments will be adopted by ANCA, and they have been prepared with regard to the transport sector there is a need to screen for likely significant effects as the NAO Amendments are considered to be a minor modification to a plan or programme.

3.3 Stage 2 – Screening – the characteristics of the Plan

In accordance with Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, consideration of whether the characteristics of the Current NAO were likely to have significant effects on the environment was included in the 2022 SEA Screening in Section 3 of the report. As this Screening Report concerns amendments to the Current NAO, rather than a new plan or programme, the previous consideration of the characteristics of the Current NAO has been reviewed and amended where necessary to reflect the NAO amendments. This is presented in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1: SEA Screening - characteristics of the NAO Amendments

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive	Response
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard to:	
'the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources'	The NAO amendments are a policy objective that have the potential to influence noise mitigation measures for development at Dublin Airport.
'the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy'	The National Planning Framework (2025) and associated National Development Plan (2021), National Development Plan Review (2025), the National Aviation Policy for Ireland (2015), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2019), the Fingal Development Plan (2023), and the Dublin Airport Local Area Plan (2020) (the 'LAP') are adopted plans which consider and inform, at a strategic level and high level, future development

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive	Response
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard to:	
	including passenger numbers and aircraft movement growth at Dublin Airport. Given the potential breadth of the NAO that is being amended, the NAO amendments proposal will be considered within the SEA, and furthermore, will be considered in the drafting of the plan itself.
'the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development'	ANCA is responsible for ensuring that noise generated by aircraft activity at the Airport is assessed and managed in accordance with EU and Irish legislation. The very nature of the NAO is to support management of the noise effects of daa's operations and therefore sustainable development is its main purpose. Annex II to Regulation 598 also provides that CAs may take due account of "environmental sustainability, including interdependencies between noise and emissions" when assessing the cost-effectiveness of noise related operating restrictions. As such, the entirety of the implications of NAO amendments need also to consider any wider sustainability effects. This can be achieved through the undertaking of SEA.
'environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme'	<p>ANCA is responsible for ensuring that noise generated by aircraft activity at the Airport is assessed in accordance with EU and Irish legislation, and for the application of the Balanced Approach to aircraft noise management when a noise problem or potential noise problem at the Airport is identified. By its very nature therefore, in order for ANCA to be proceeding with this process means that an environmental problem or more specifically a noise problem could occur as a result of the NAO amendments (and the subsequent RD). The details of the NAO amendments, as they are currently known, are summarised in Chapter 2 above. The result of this is that there is a need to consider, through environmental assessment, and when more detail about the NAO amendments proposals are known, whether its implementation could result in other environmental problems. Specifically, and in accordance with appropriate legislation and guidance, the following needs to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population – including whether there would be material effects on the population including for example, because of a result of a change in aircraft noise exposure. • Human Health including Air Quality. • Other environmental 'factors' including particularly biodiversity (flora and fauna) climatic factors, landscape, cultural heritage and archaeological heritage. Soil, water and material assets are unlikely to be affected by NAO amendments.
'the relevance of the plan or programme'	Regulation 598 is a legal requirement in all EU Member States (MS). This Regulation places a legal requirement on MS to

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive	Response
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard to:	
programme for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)'	implement the process of the ICAO Balanced Approach where noise-related operating restrictions are being introduced at EU Airports. The 2019 Act provides further effect to Regulation 598 by specifically addressing how it should be implemented in the context of existing Irish legislation such as the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) whilst making FCC the Competent Authority. Regulation 598 governs the RD process. The adoption of an NAO and any amendments are a critical input into the RD process, as the process described is binding on the Competent Authority in their decision making duties. The NAO addresses noise problems that have been identified within the Noise Action Plan, which is developed in accordance with the ENR and END.

3.4 Stage 2 – Screening - characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected

Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations also requires consideration of the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to the following criteria as set out and assessed against the proposed amendments to the NAO in **Table 3-2**.

Table 3-2: Step 2 – Characteristics of Effects

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive	Response
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
'the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects'	There is some potential for effects from amendments to the NAO, given the amendments will secure better noise-related health outcomes for communities over time.
'the cumulative nature of the effects (including with other plans or programmes as might be relevant)'	<p>The NAO and the amendments made are a critical input into the RD process, which, in itself will be informed by other already adopted plans including the National Planning Framework (NPF) and associated National Development Plan (NDP), the National Aviation Policy, the Noise Action Plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), the Fingal Development Plan (FDP), and the Dublin Airport LAP.</p> <p>The NPF is designed to improve the effectiveness of public investment in infrastructure and other relevant services in Ireland including the enhancement of regional and international connectivity.</p> <p>The NDP supports the implementation of the NPF and also the National Aviation Policy, with particular reference ensuring that</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive	Response
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
	<p>noise is a recognised environmental consideration, by funding airport infrastructure to meet environmental standards, including noise mitigation, as well as supporting noise regulation compliance.</p> <p>The National Aviation Policy aims to foster the growth of aviation enterprise in Ireland, and to develop Dublin Airport in a way that does not come at the expense of community well-being, focussing on a <i>"Balanced Approach" to noise management at Irish airports</i>.</p> <p>The Noise Action Plan outlines the regulatory framework and processes for managing aircraft noise and is based on the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018. The Noise Action Plan reviews the noise situation and highlighted areas for improvement, such as changes to noise management measures.</p> <p>The RSES, in particular, the Eastern and Midland RSES, which covers Dublin Airport, addresses aircraft noise, stating that the strategy <i>"Support[s] the National Aviation Policy for Ireland and the growth of movements and uses. Policies shall recognise and reflect the airport noise zones associated with Dublin Airport."</i></p> <p>The FDP proposes a broad suite of sustainable development across the county, covering residential, employment, economic, infrastructure and transport development. With regards to Dublin Airport and noise, the FDP integrates airport noise zones, in alignment with the National Aviation Policy. The FDP also includes objectives to manage environmental noise. Objective ED31 of the FDP in particular states, <i>"Ensure that the required infrastructure and facilities are provided at Dublin Airport so that the aviation sector can develop further and operate to its maximum sustainable potential, whilst taking into account the impact on local residential areas, and any negative impact such proposed developments may have on the sustainability of similar existing developments in the surrounding area, and the impact on the environment, including the climate."</i></p> <p>The Dublin Airport LAP sets out the framework to achieve the National Aviation Policy for Dublin Airport. The LAP is a land use plan for the purposes of effective land-use planning and safeguarding the use of the Airport, which sets the Dublin Airport Noise Zones and outlines noise mitigation strategies.</p> <p>It is considered that the amended NAO will be complementary to and in accordance with these, with the effects being considered in the SEA having also been considered in these other plans and programmes. Therefore, there are unlikely to</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive	Response
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
	<p>be cumulative effects. In addition, at this stage, no other plan that might act in a cumulative way with the amended NAO has been identified. However, at the SEA Scoping stage further consideration will be paid to this including particularly to whether certain scenarios that implementation of the amended NAO might trigger have all been covered within other plans or programmes. Therefore, although it is unlikely that cumulative effects will occur, the SEA will need to consider the cumulative nature of other plans or programmes.</p>
'the transboundary nature of the effects'	<p>Most of the effects that will arise from the proposed NAO amendments and that need to be considered are very localised occurring within a relatively small radius of the Airport itself, and certainly within Irish borders. Furthermore, although air travel is by its very nature, transboundary, localised effects of flying are for the most part, considered at each individual airport itself rather than being in anyway attributed to both the departing and arriving airport.</p> <p>For these reasons it is highly unlikely that any effects arising from the NAO amendments would be considered to be transboundary affecting any other Member State, and this would not be normal in the assessment of effects arising from aviation activities.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that transboundary effects are not considered any further albeit this will be confirmed at the SEA scoping stage.</p>
'the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)'	<p>It is considered that an assessment needs to be undertaken to determine the potential for effects arising as a result of the NAO amendments. This includes both to human health and environmental receptors. More information on the effects on human health and relevant environmental receptors will be provided at the SEA Scoping stage.</p>
'the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)'	<p>At this stage it is difficult to precisely identify magnitude and spatial extent of the effects. More information will be provided at the SEA Scoping stage and within the SEA ER itself.</p>
<p>'the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special natural characteristics of cultural heritage 	<p>Within the SEA, consideration will be paid to the value and vulnerability of the area that could be affected by the NAO amendments. It is however considered that the NAO amendments will not alter the value and/ or vulnerability due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altering special natural characteristics or cultural heritage Exceeding environmental quality standards or limit values Intensive land-use

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive	Response
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values Intensive land-use The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status

4 Proposed SEA Screening Determination

It is of course, for ANCA as the Competent Authority to make a Screening Determination informed by consultation with the prescribed Environmental Authorities, and on the basis of the information provided within this Report.

The authors of this Screening Report recommend that ANCA determine that the amended NAO has the potential for significant effects on a range of environmental receptors, including those related to biodiversity, human health, air quality, carbon emissions, landscape and cultural heritage. As a result, the need for SEA should be triggered.

This recommendation takes account of the results of consultation with the relevant prescribed bodies as detailed in the Table below (Table 4-1). The responses themselves are provided as Appendices to this Report (Appendix A2).

Table 4-1: SEA Screening Responses

Environmental Authority	Summary of Response
Environmental Protection Agency	<p>ANCA should determine whether the implementation of the proposed Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment based on criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of S.I. 435.</p> <p>ANCA should ensure that the Plan is consistent with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024 <p>Available EPA guidance and resources relevant to SEA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA SEA Screening Guidance; Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Planning Authorities; Inventory of spatial datasets relevant to SEA; EPA SEA WebGIS Tool; Catchments.ie and EPA AA GeoTool.
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage	No response received.
Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine	No response received.
Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment	No response received.

The SEA Process Checklist (EPA, 2008) has been completed to demonstrate how this Screening approach has met the prescribed requirements. Details follow in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2: SEA Screening Checklist

Question	Response
1.1) In reaching a determination of the requirement for SEA, have the criteria set out in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive and Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 or Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 been taken into account?	Annex I of the SEA Directive specifies the information that is to be provided in the Environmental Report. Annex II of the SEA Directive meanwhile sets out criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment – this is dealt with in Chapter 3 of this Report. Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 and Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 set out the same criteria as Annex II of the SEA Directive, and again this is addressed through Chapter 3 of this Report.
1.2) Has a determination been made, in consultation with the DHLGH, regarding the requirement for an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Habitats Directive?	Appropriate Assessment Screening is being undertaken concurrently, and separately to the SEA process. A determination will be made by ANCA, in consultation with the DHLGH, regarding the requirement for an appropriate assessment. Given however, that it is recommended that SEA should be undertaken, whether the need for Appropriate Assessment is screened in or out becomes irrelevant and is not influential.
1.3) Has the relevant competent authority consulted the prescribed environmental authorities as required and notified them of its determination?	ANCA consulted the Environmental Authorities, including by providing them with a copy of this Report, during the period 19 November 2025 to 17 December 2025, allowing them to provide input to inform the Screening Determination. ANCA will make the Screening Determination upon receipt of this updated Report, and will notify the Environmental Authorities accordingly.
1.4) Has the relevant statutory authority made available for public inspection a copy of its determination on the requirement for SEA?	ANCA will make the Screening Determination upon receipt of this Report. This will be published on the ANCA website, together with this Report and the responses provided by the Environmental Authorities.
1.5) Does the screening determination clearly state whether SEA is required or not, who has made the decision and when?	ANCA will make the Screening Determination upon receipt of this Report. These details will be provided.
1.6) If the P/P has been screened out of SEA, does it clearly demonstrate that it does not meet all/most of the criteria of Annex 1 and Schedule 2A of S.I. 436 and Schedule 1 of S.I. 435?	N/A
1.7) Has a description been provided in the ER of the screening process and subsequent determination?	A description will be provided in both the SEA Scoping Report and the subsequent Environmental Report of the Screening process and subsequent determination.

5 Next Steps

The information within this Report will be used by ANCA, in their role as Competent Authority, to inform the Screening Determination they make.

Should ANCA determine that an SEA is required, the following stages of the SEA process, as prescribed in the SEA Process Checklist (EPA, 2008) / SEA Pack (Updated 2023), will be undertaken to ensure that the requirements of the relevant legislation has been met:

- Scoping: this part of the process sets out the proposed scope of the detailed environmental assessment that will be undertaken (further information on specifically what this stage entails is provided in Appendix A1);
- Environmental Assessment: this is the detailed assessment itself as will be documented in the Environmental Report;
- Public Consultation: the Environmental Report will be made available to designated authorities and the public - this will take place as part of the public consultation on the NAO amendments and underlying report;
- Information on Decision/SEA Statement: following adoption of the plan a statement setting out the relevant "Information on the Decision" is required - this is where a summary of the process is documented and, among other things, why the plan or programme has been chosen ahead of other options.

A1 SEA Scoping

An SEA Scoping Report is to be produced, that will set out the proposed scope of the detailed environmental assessment that will be documented within the Environmental Report itself. It will have regard to any submissions made by the Environmental Authorities at the Screening stage and will include, interpreted from the SEA Process Checklist (EPA, 2008) / SEA Pack (Updated 2023), the following information.

Details of the geographical area involved including with a referenced and scaled map of the area;

- An outline description of the Plan;
- The likely scale, nature and extent of the area affected by the proposed Plan during the lifespan of the RD that the NAO will feed into (in broad terms);
- Details of the legislation and planning policy that applies;
- Alternatives that have been or will be considered, potentially including reference to the options also detailed;
- The predicted 'scoped in' significant effects of the Plan and those that are proposed to be 'scoped out' with justification for why they are scoped out;
- An overview of the approach that will be taken to assemble further baseline data to support the Environmental Assessment and the methodology that will be used to assess significance

In addition, consideration will be paid as to whether there could be, with other Plans as might be relevant, any cumulative environmental effects.

In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, and therefore the SEA Directive, certain environmental aspects will be considered. The list below notes the environmental factors that will be considered:

- Population
- Human Health
- Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)
- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Carbon and Climate Change
- Material Assets
- Landscape and Visual
- Cultural Heritage including Architecture and Archaeological Heritage
- Interrelationships between the above factors

The Scoping Report will be as concise as is possible and it will serve to ensure that where environmental effects are unlikely, they are scoped out so they do not need to be assessed in detail.

Consultation, through provision of the Scoping Report, will be undertaken with the Environmental Authorities to seek to gain agreement on the specific scope and method for the detailed assessment which will be detailed in the Environmental Report.

A2 SEA Screening Consultation Responses

By email to: aircraftnoiseCA@fingal.ie

Ms. Ethna Felten
Director of Services
The Aircraft Noise Competent Authority
Fingal County Council
County Hall
Main Street
Swords
County Dublin K67 X8Y2

17/12/2025

Our Ref: 251114.1

Re. SEA Screening for an amended Noise Abatement Objective for Dublin Airport

Dear Ms Felten,

We acknowledge your notice, dated 19th November 2025, in relation to an Amended Noise Abatement Objective for Dublin Airport (hereafter referred to as “the Plan”) and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening.

In our role as a SEA environmental authority, under the SEA Regulations, we focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Plan and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the plan. Our functions do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans or programmes.

Where we provide specific comments on plans and programmes, our comments will focus on the EPA's remit and areas of expertise (in particular water, air, climate change, waste, resource efficiency, noise, radon and the inter-relationships between these and other relevant topics e.g. biodiversity), as appropriate and relevant to the particular Plan.

Proposed SEA Determination

If a proposed determination hasn't been made, you should determine whether the implementation of the proposed Plan or Programme would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The criteria to consider are set out in Annex II of Directive 2001/ 42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (The SEA Directive) and in *Schedule 1 of the European Communities*

(Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I No. 435 of 2004, as amended).

You should take into account the relevant criteria set out in *Schedule 1* into account in making its determination as to whether the Plan or Programme would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Guidance on the SEA process, including an SEA pack and checklist available on our website at: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-resources-and-guidance/>.

We recommend that you take the available guidance into account in making your SEA Screening Determination and incorporate the relevant recommendations as relevant and appropriate to the Plan or Programme.

EPA SEA Screening Guidance

Our [Good Practice Guidance for Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\) Screening](#) (EPA, 2021) provides specific stand-alone guidance to assist plan or programme makers and SEA practitioners. It focuses primarily on plans/programmes in the non-land use sector in Ireland and includes an elaboration of the steps needed for screening, the legislative landscape underpinning SEA screening, and step-by-step process and templates to assist in preparing the required documentation.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The [Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities](#) (DHLGH, 2022) provides advice on carrying out SEA in the land-use planning sector for those plans listed in S.I. No.436 of 2004, as amended. These plans comprise regional, county and local plans, including Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, County or City Development Plans, variations of Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Planning Schemes for Strategic Development Zones. The Guidelines replace previous guidance for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities published in 2004.

In considering the plan or programme, you should take into account the need to align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as incorporating any relevant recommendations in sectoral, regional and local climate adaptation plans.

You should also ensure that the plan or programme aligns with any key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024

In October 2024, the EPA published the latest iteration of our 4-yearly State of the Environment Report. This report should be considered, and relevant aspects integrated

as appropriate, in implementing the Plan outputs/ recommendations. It is available at: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/state-of-environment-report-/>.

Available Guidance & Resources

Our website contains various SEA resources and guidance, including:

- SEA process guidance and checklists;
- Inventory of spatial datasets relevant to SEA;
- Topic and sector specific SEA guidance (including [*SEA and Integration Guidance*](#) (EPA, 2025), [*Good practice note on Cumulative Effects Assessment*](#) (EPA, 2020), [*Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA*](#) (EPA, 2015), [*Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment*](#) (EPA, 2012) and [*'Integrating Climatic Factors into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note'*](#) (EPA, 2019)).

You can access these guidance notes and other resources at: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-topic-and-sector-specific-guidance-/>

The latest Fingal Noise Action Plan may also be a useful resource to consider.

EPA SEA WebGIS Tool

Our SEA WebGIS Tool has been updated recently and is now available at <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA>. It allows an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in a specific geographic area to be produced. It is intended to assist public authorities in SEA screening and scoping exercises.

Catchments.ie

Our <https://www.catchments.ie/maps/> website provides a single point of access to water quality and catchment data from the National WFD monitoring programme.

EPA AA GeoTool

Our AA GeoTool application has been developed in partnership with the NPWS. It allows users to select a location, specify a search area and gather available information for each European Site within the area. It is available at: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool>

Future amendments to the Plan

Where changes to the plan or programme are made prior to finalisation, or where modifications to the plan or programme are proposed following its adoption, these should be screened for potential for likely significant effects in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 1 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended) of the SEA Regulations, as appropriate.

Appropriate Assessment

You should ensure that the plan or programme complies with the requirements of the Habitats Directive where relevant. Where an Appropriate Assessment is required, the

key findings and recommendations should be incorporated into the SEA and the plan or programme.

Environmental Authorities

Under the SEA Regulations, prior to making your SEA determination you should consult with:

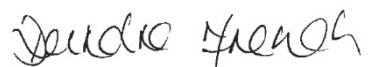
- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment; and,
- Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine.

SEA Determination

As soon as practicable after making your determination as to whether SEA is required or not, you should make a copy of your decision, including, if appropriate, the reasons for not requiring an environmental assessment, available for public inspection in your offices and on your website. You should also send a copy of your determination to the relevant environmental authorities consulted.

If you have any queries or need further information in relation to this submission, please contact me directly. Please send an email confirming receipt of this submission to: sea@epa.ie.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Deirdre French', written over a horizontal line.

Deirdre French

SEA Section

Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring



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