An tÚdarás Inniúil um Thorann Aerárthaí

Aircraft Noise Competent Authority

Regulatory Decision relating to Aircraft Noise Management at Dublin Airport

Strategic Environmental Assessment Final Environmental Report

November 2026



Report

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Strategic Environmental Assessment Final Environmental Report

For ANCA

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Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

Related to the Infrastructure Application which is a planning application (F23A/0781) currently under review by Fingal County Council for significant infrastructure upgrades to Dublin Airport which are designed to facilitate future passenger growth and enhance connectivity at the Airport, a noise problem was identified on 22nd January 2026. This triggered the process of aircraft noise regulation through the adoption of the International Civil Aviation (ICAO) Balanced Approach, as implemented by Regulation 598/2014 and the Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Regulation Act 2019 Act. In short, where a noise problem is identified, ANCA is required to define, restate or amend the existing and adopted Noise Abatement Objective (specifically, the NAO published in 2022), before then considering suitable noise mitigation measures.

Outline of the Plan

The Plan addressed through this SEA Final Environmental Report is the Regulatory Decision (RD). The making of a Regulatory Decision is a statutory function of ANCA and outlines the proposed noise mitigation measures and operating restrictions (if any) to be introduced in order to address any identified noise problem at the airport.

The RD is focused on noise mitigation measures required to address any noise problem that would arise from the Proposed Development.

Following evidence gathering and analysis, ANCA propose to put in place one noise mitigation measure, comprising a more expansive noise insultation scheme, to address the noise problem arising from the Infrastructure Application.

How the Assessment Was Undertaken

The impacts of the RD must be described relative to an identified baseline scenario, which describes how environmental conditions would develop in the absence of the RD, but in the presence of the existing NAO which would still be in place. For the purposes of this Final Environmental Report, the 'future baseline' assumes that daa will seek to grow the airport in line with the existing planning policy and that the existing NAO remains in place.

Consideration of reasonable and realistic alternatives, in this case this being alternative amendments, is a key feature of the SEA process and must be considered if there is the potential for alternatives to have differing environmental effects

Current Statement of the Environment Including Characteristics, Problems and Evolution

The relevant environmental baseline for each of the scoped-in environmental aspects is set out in the table below. Note that the area potentially affected by the RD relates only to noise-based receptors within the vicinity of Dublin Airport.

Table 1 - Summary of relevant environmental baseline

Aspect	Key policy context / environmental protection objectives	Current state of the environment including characteristics and problems	Likely evolution of the environment without implementation of the RD
Population and Health	The Healthy Ireland Framework and the NPF note that health and wellbeing (including heart and respiratory diseases, mental health, obesity and other injuries) are affected by spatial planning relating to the physical environment in which people live and work. Nationally, objectives seek a better quality of life for all citizens. At a local level, the Fingal Economic and Community Plan and the FDP aim to promote an inclusive and healthy community, and promote appropriate land use patterns in the vicinity of Dublin Airport, ensuring that proposals do not have a detrimental effect on adjacent residents, whilst allowing for sustainable growth. The Dublin Airport LAP seeks continued communication between the Airport and neighbouring communities to protect amenity and mitigate potential impacts of growth in the interests of long-term sustainability.	The growing population puts increased pressure on infrastructure and the natural environment. Air pollution from transport remains a key pollutant, however recent reporting from 2024 indicates no exceedances of NO_x. Noise can have a significant and disruptive effect on everyday life and it has been identified by the WHO as the second greatest environmental cause of health problems, after air quality. Environmental noise has been linked with negative health outcomes including cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbance, annoyance and psycho-physiological effects. Noise in the vicinity of Dublin Airport is affecting a large number of people, partly due to an increase in noise, and partly due to residential development delivered in the area surrounding Dublin Airport.	The EPA states that systemic change is needed to reach Ireland's climate goals, with a model shift towards more active travel. Although aircraft have become quieter due to increasingly stringent regulations, noise and other health impacts on the local population could continue to increase as the airport grows and further development occurs around the airport

Measures to Prevent, Reduce, Offset and Monitor Significant Environmental Effects

Overall, the assessment of the RD revealed that there would be no significant adverse environmental effects. There is therefore no need to put in place any measures to prevent, reduce and / or offset for significant adverse effects with regard the proposed measure. By its very nature, the implementation of the noise insulation scheme is to ensure that appropriate mitigation is in place to mitigate noise effects at Dublin Airport, specifically, the identified noise problem.

Reviews will be undertaken annually to ensure that the noise insulation scheme adapts to the noise situation at Dublin Airport.

Next Steps

The Draft Environmental Report was made available for public consultation alongside the proposed amendments to the NAO, NAO Review Report, the DRD, and the DRD Report for a period of 14 weeks. Additionally, it was issued to each Environmental Authority for comment. The AA Screening Report is also available for public inspection.

This Final Environmental Report has been produced having regard to the submissions made during the public consultation (including those from the Environmental Authorities).

Following adoption of the RD, an SEA Statement will be produced, setting out information on the decision, including how environmental considerations and consultation responses have been integrated into the RD.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to Aircraft Noise Management at Dublin Airport

Aircraft Noise Regulation

1.1.1 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').

1.1.2 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 detailed 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; and
- Operating Restrictions.

1.1.3 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 Dublin Airport, identify the measures available to reduce the noise impact, and evaluate thoroughly 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.

1.1.4 The 2019 Act gives further effect to Regulation 598 in Ireland. It provides for ANCA to 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 noise problem that would arise from the carrying out of the development as proposed" (Section 34B) or (2) any noise problem that would arise from taking of a relevant action as proposed (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').

1.1.5 How Regulation 598 will apply to the planning application daa made, on 15 December 2023, a planning application (F23A/0781) (hereinafter referred to as the 'Infrastructure Application') to FCC

seeking permission for a suite of significant infrastructure upgrades designed to facilitate future passenger growth and enhance connectivity. The overall aim of the Infrastructure Application is to support the projected growth of passenger numbers through Dublin Airport from 32 million passengers per annum (mppa) to 40 mppa. The Infrastructure Application is described in more detail below.

1.1.6 Section 34B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, which was introduced by the 2019 Act, deals with planning applications that contain a proposal requiring the assessment for the need for a noise-related action or indicate that a new operating restriction may be required. Section 34B requires the planning authority to refer such applications to ANCA, which must apply the Balanced Approach to the data and proposals made by daa.

1.1.7 Pursuant to Section 34B, the planning authority has referred the planning application to ANCA and has consulted with ANCA in relation to any noise problem that could arise from the planning application. ANCA has explored this through its report 'Identification of a noise problem arising from Planning Application F23A/0781' and concluded on 22 January 2026 that a noise problem would arise from the carrying out of the development as proposed through the Infrastructure Application.

1.1.8 ANCA can require daa to carry out such assessments and give to it such information or plans arising from such assessments, or to give to it such other information or plans as it may reasonably require for the purposes of making the RD. ANCA must also give notice to the planning authority and daa of the noise mitigation measures and operating restrictions (if any) it intends to provide for in the RD before adopting the RD. The planning authority and daa may then make comments and observations and make counterproposals. ANCA must take those into account and apply the Balanced Approach to the counterproposals.

1.1.9 ANCA must then publish a draft regulatory decision ('DRD') and an underlying report for public consultation. The underlying report must include a summary of the data examined, the NAO, the noise mitigation measures considered, an evaluation of their cost-effectiveness, a summary of how ANCA applied the Balanced Approach, the alternative measures that have been considered, the noise mitigation measures and operating restrictions (if any) actually proposed, the reasons for those measures, any relevant technical information in that regard, and a non-technical summary of the foregoing. ANCA must take account of all submissions and observations made in that public consultation and revise the DRD and underlying report if necessary, before making the final RD.

1.1.10 The RD can impose the operating restrictions and noise mitigation measures sought by daa (if any), or it can impose other operating restrictions and noise mitigation measures. There is no requirement for the RD to mirror exactly the proposals made in the planning application. If ANCA believe that the RD needs to, for example, consider alternative options or cover a wider breadth of operating procedures to that proposed within the planning application they have the ability to do so. Equally, if ANCA believe it to be appropriate, they can extend the RD to consider more than simply the proposals made in the application, for example to be extended so that a wider range of noise related measures and/or forecasts are considered.

1.1.11 When ANCA makes the final RD post-consultation, the planning authority will then consider the planning merits of the application, including Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment if required. The planning authority must then incorporate the RD in any planning permission granted and, if necessary, revoke, replace or amend the conditions of any previous planning permission to make it consistent with the RD.

1.1.12 The planning permission incorporating the RD may be appealed to An Coimiusiún Pleanála by the parties normally entitled to make such appeals, as well as by any party who made a submission or observation in the public consultation on the DRD.

1.1.13 If the DRD introduces a new operating restriction, it must be notified to the European Commission and other Member States. The European Commission may review whether the Balanced Approach was properly applied in imposing the operating restriction.

1.1.14 This Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report relates to the Regulatory Decision (hereinafter referred to as the 'RD').

1.1.15 The process of aircraft noise regulation also requires ANCA to define, restate or amend the NAO where a noise problem is identified before considering mitigation measures under section 9 of the 2019 Act.

1.1.16 Action 3 of the Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport 2024-2028 also requires Fingal County Council to review the existing NAO, taking account of the current noise environment and relevant policy context. A review and the subsequent proposed amendments to the NAO are subject to a separate SEA process.

The Infrastructure Application

1.1.17 The Infrastructure Application seeks permission for a suite of significant infrastructure upgrades designed to facilitate future passenger growth and enhance connectivity. The overall aim of the Infrastructure Application is to support the projected growth of passenger numbers through Dublin Airport from 32 million passengers per annum (mppa) to 40 mppa.

1.1.18 There are eleven projects associated with the Infrastructure Application, which are outlined below:

1) North Apron Expansion – expansion of the northern apron and Pier 1 area to accommodate more aircraft stands and operation.

2) South Apron Expansion - New pier and apron space near Terminal 2 to support long-haul aircraft, enhance U.S. CBP pre-clearance capacity, and improve aircraft parking and taxiways.

3) Terminal 1 Central Search Expansion – relocating and enlarging the security screening area in Terminal 1 to increase capacity and free up space for improved check-in and passenger services.

4) New Apron 7 - Creation of new aircraft stands on the western side of the airport campus to support aircraft parking and operational flexibility.

5) Vehicle Underpass - Construction of an underpass beneath the runway to safely connect the remote West Apron with the main campus — crucial for operational access.

6) Surface Water Management - Major investment in drainage and surface water infrastructure to enhance environmental protection and airfield resilience.

7) Ground Transportation Centre - provide additional bus bays (29no. in total) in a new Drive-In, Reverse-Out (DIRO) arrangement. A dedicated bus only lane; bus only recirculation route; pedestrian waiting area and revisions to pedestrian circulation routes.

8) Terminal 2 Car Park Upgrades - Expansion and enhancement of Terminal 2 multi-storey car park capacity to meet rising demand.

9) Long-term Carpark Red (temporary) - Additional long-term parking spaces east of the airport (temporary until Metro link opens).

10) Staff Carpark North - New staff parking provision in the north of the airport to replace spaces lost to development.

11) Surface Access Infrastructure - Improvements to public transport access, bus facilities, and safer movement routes around the airport, supporting better connectivity and a shift from private car use.

The Infrastructure Application is currently under review by FCC, with the public consultation stages having been complete. FCC are currently awaiting direction from ANCA regarding noise impacts.

1.2 Need for Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2.1 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.

1.2.2 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.'

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

1.2.4 The RD that will be made in response to the planning application relates to transport. Even though the RD will be incorporated into an individual planning permission, it may impose operating restrictions and/ or mitigation measures to address the noise problem. It also results from an assessment against an NAO; it cannot be more restrictive than necessary to achieve the NAO. Accordingly, the NAO sets the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive, including changes or extensions to airfields and airports with a basic runway length of 2,100 metres or more. The NAO sets a framework for the RD, which in turn sets the framework for future applications made for planning permission at the airport. Therefore, SEA is required, and the 'Plan' assessed through this SEA is the RD.

1.2.5 A SEA Scoping Report was produced to set out the proposed scope of the detailed environmental assessment and to facilitate consultation with the prescribed Environmental Authorities in that regard, with the consultation period for input to Scoping having closed on 10 April 2026. The outcomes of the Scoping stage are summarised in Chapter 3, Section 3.3 of the Report.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

1.3.1 This Final Environmental Report is an updated version of the Draft Environmental Report made available for consultation from **28th May 2026** to **3rd September 2026**, having regard to the submissions made during this consultation and including those from the prescribed Environmental Authorities.

1.3.2 Pursuant to the SEA Regulations (Annex I), the SEA Process Checklist (EPA, 2008) / SEA Pack (Updated 2023), and submissions made by the Environmental Authorities at the Scoping stage, this Final Environmental Report includes the following information:

a) an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans or programmes – Chapter 2;

b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme – Chapter 4;

c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected – Chapter 4;

d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or the Habitats Directive – Chapter 4;

e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation – Chapter 2;

f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors – Chapter 5;

g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, – Chapter 6;

h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information – Chapter 3;

i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme – Chapter 6;

j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings – beginning of this Report.

1.3.3 Consultation, through the provision of the Draft Environmental Report, has been undertaken with the Environmental Authorities (listed below) and with the public:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;

- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Environment; and
- The Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment.

1.4 Related Environmental Assessments

1.4.1 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 and species 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.

1.4.2 AA Screening was therefore undertaken broadly concurrently, but separately, to SEA Scoping. The AA Screening Report (Logika Consultants, 2026) was submitted to ANCA, in its role as Competent Authority, at the same time as this Final Environmental Report. This outlined that no likely significant effects to European sites will occur as a result of implementing the RD.

1.5 Consultant Team

1.5.1 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 DRD and subsequent final RD. Further, Logika are responsible for providing SEA (and AA) input to the RD process.

2 Outline of the Plan and Relationship with Other Plans and Objectives

2.1 Dublin Airport

2.1.1 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 Dublin Airport and its 244,511 Air Traffic Movements (ATMs). Dublin Airport is currently served by two main runways and a further cross runway which is used less frequently. Since the submission of the 2022 SEA ER, the second runway (the North Runway) has commenced operations.

2.1.2 The Airport 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.

2.2 Site Location

2.2.1 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 Dublin Airport lies mostly development. The area north of Dublin 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 Dublin 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 Dublin Airport itself. West of Dublin Airport is characterised by being mainly undeveloped and comprising mostly farmland and other forms of open space.

2.2.2 Dublin 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.

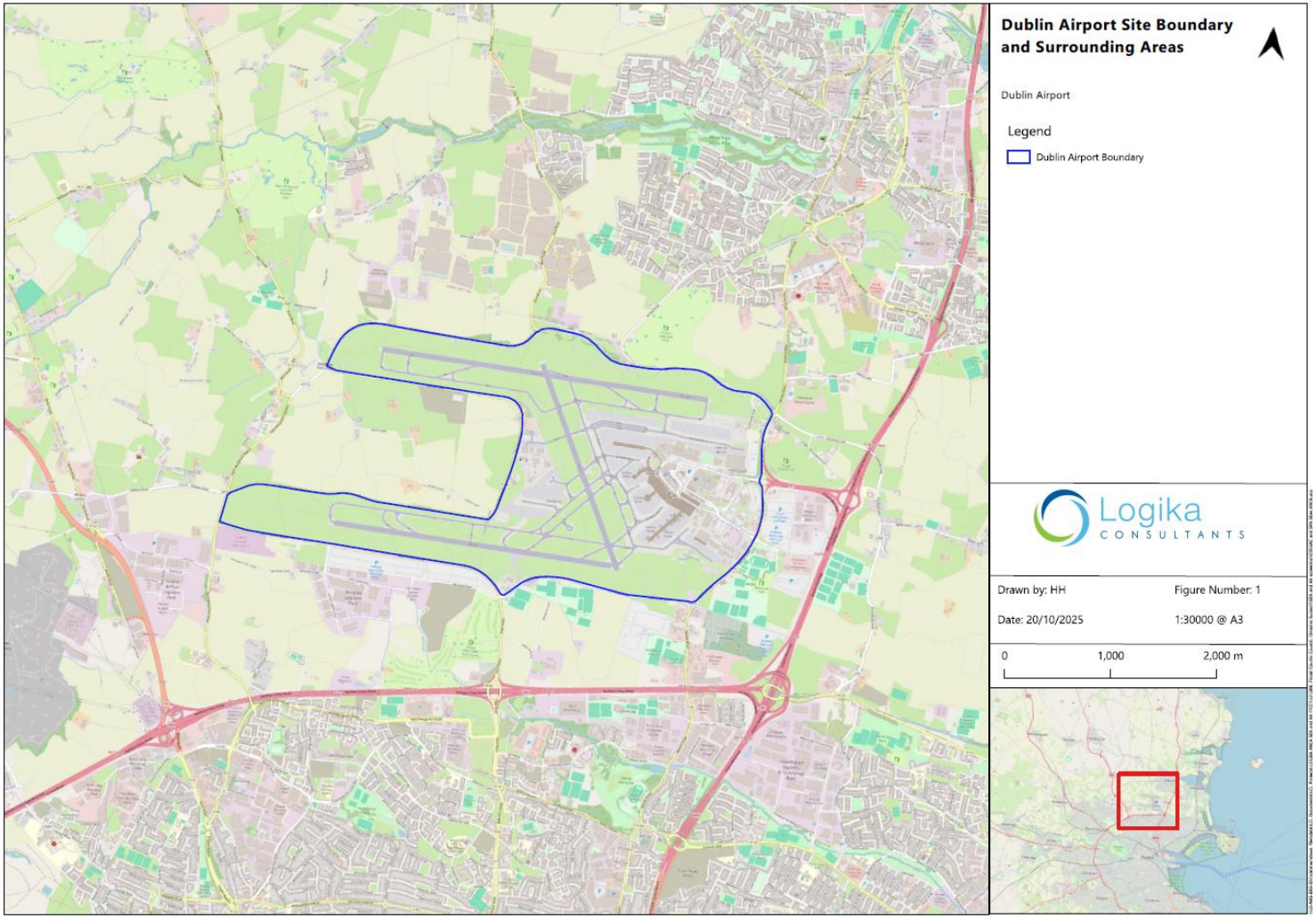


Figure 2-1: Dublin Airport Site Location

2.3 Contents and Main Objectives of the Plan

Overview

2.3.1 As stated in the previous chapter, following assessment of planning application F23A/0781 (the Infrastructure Application) and the information provided by the Applicant a noise problem was identified at Dublin Airport. Where ANCA identifies a noise problem, it must ensure that the Balanced Approach is adopted and to that end shall ensure that, as appropriate, the NAO is defined, restated or amended. The noise problem that is triggered by the development proposed in the Infrastructure Application must be assessed in the context of the NAO, culminating in ANCA making an RD informed by the DRD.

2.3.2 The 'Plan' addressed through this SEA Final Environmental Report is the RD, which is focused on noise mitigation measures to address any noise problem that would arise from the Proposed Development and if necessary operating restrictions that seek to secure the noise outcomes set by the NAO. ANCA is preparing the amendments to the NAO and the drafting of the RD as two separate outputs, and the amendments to the NAO are subject to a separate environmental assessment (and all other environmental assessments). Therefore, the 'Plan' comprises the RD.

The Regulatory Decision

2.3.3 Having applied the Balanced Approach to the noise problem identified on 22 January 2026, ANCA proposes to make an RD, as outlined in Paragraph 1.1.4. ANCA proposes to direct the planning authority to include the following measures in its decision to grant the Infrastructure Application, which would lead to a potential noise problem in the absence of mitigation measures. These have regard to the objectives and outcomes of the proposed amendments to the NAO as defined by ANCA, (which was subject to a separate SEA process), and ANCA considers that they are appropriate to address the potential noise problem and achieve the proposed amendments to the NAO.

2.3.4 A range of available measures were considered when applying the Balanced Approach to address the noise problem, themed under the following topics:

- Reduction of Noise at Source – this was immediately ruled out on the grounds that the introduction of measures to encourage the use of quieter aircraft at Dublin Airport is a matter for the IA rather than the RD itself;
- Noise Abatement Operating Procedures – these procedures, were ruled out on the grounds of potential conflicts with EU regulations and technological implementation difficulties;
- Land Use Planning and Management – these measures including, in particular, a review of the noise zones attached to the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029, were not considered further in the making of the RD since this is a matter to be dealt with by FCC. That said, on 2 March 2026, ANCA wrote to the planning authority to recommend that FDP 2023-2029 airport noise zones be reviewed and that the updated noise zones align with the key metrics of the ENR; and
- Operating Restrictions.

2.3.5 Following the evidence gathered and analysis presented in the RD, ANCA has proposed a more expansive noise insulation scheme to address the noise problem arising from the Infrastructure Application. This forms the basis of the RD.

2.3.6 More information on why specific measures as noted above, were ruled out, can be found within the RD Report.

Relationship with other Plans and Environmental Protection Objectives

2.3.7 A review of relevant policy has been undertaken in relation to Dublin Airport to establish foreseeable developments, noise related matters, as well as any objectives for environmental protection which may impact future development. The following plans have been reviewed from which the key themes identified are discussed below.

- Zero Pollution Action Plan (European Commission, 2021)
- National Aviation Policy for Ireland (Department of Transport, 2015)
- Ireland's Action Plan for Aviation Emissions Reduction (Department of Transport, 2019, updated 2025)
- Review of Future Capacity Needs at Ireland's State airports (Department of Transport, 2018)
- National Policy Statement on Airport Charges Regulation (Department of Transport, 2019)
- National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040 – First Revision (Government of Ireland, 2025)
- National Development Plan 2018-2027 (Government of Ireland, 2018)
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031 (Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, 2019)
- Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 (National Transport Authority, 2016)
- South Fingal Transport Study (FCC, 2019)
- Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 (FCC, 2023)
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (Meath County Council, 2021)
- Dublin Airport Local Area Plan (FCC, 2020)
- Dublin Airport Central Masterplan (FCC, 2016)
- Dublin Airport Capital Investment Programme 2020+ (Dublin Airport, 2019)
- Dublin Airport Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 (FCC, 2024)
- Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024 (EPA, 2024)

Environmental Objectives

2.3.8 Whilst also supporting growth at Dublin Airport, the above-mentioned plans highlight the need for environmental performance. In the context of noise, the plans highlight:

- Need for effective land-use planning;
- Consideration of impacts on local residents;
- Need for technological and operational measures to reduce environmental impacts; and
- Anticipation of population exposure due to aviation growth.

2.3.9 In the case of the European Commission's Zero Pollution Action Plan (2021), this overarching EU policy sets clear targets with respect to reducing the number of people chronically disturbed by transport noise.

2.3.10 As part of this Action Plan, Target 2 states that:

"By 2030 the EU should reduce by 30% the share of people chronically disturbed by transport noise [from a 2017 baseline]."

2.3.11 However, the EPA State of the Environment Report (2024) highlights that these targets surrounding exposure to transport noise are a major challenge.

2.3.12 The other plans also have regard to other environmental considerations in relation to Dublin Airport, namely carbon and emissions. The plans state that:

- that the airport should become 'carbon neutral' by 2020 and 'net zero carbon' by 2050;
- the need for technology improvements in aircraft and engine design to help combat aviation emissions and improve energy efficiency;
- protection of natural landscape features, such as rivers, and the climate from impacts associated with airport expansion.

2.3.13 Furthermore, the State of the Environment Report identified five key priorities which are relevant for delivering Ireland's long-term sustainable development and environmental protection goals. These are as follows:

- Delivering a national policy position on the environment;
- Driving policy implementation;
- Transforming our systems;
- Scaling up investment in infrastructure; and
- Protecting the environment to protect our health.

How the RD relates to these plans and environmental objectives

2.3.14 The plans listed above outline the policies that promote growth and/ or changes in the operations at Dublin Airport, whilst environmental objectives are also set out in many of them. The proposed amendments to the NAO ensure that whatever growth occurs is carried out in a sustainable manner, specifically in terms of guiding noise management and measures needed in order to reduce noise and associated health impacts. The RD must therefore be complementary to, and in accordance with, the existing plans, and not in any way additional, other than providing more detail on aircraft noise reduction than the other plans. **Figure 2-2** shows the links and key inter-relationships of the RD with other key relevant national, regional and sectoral and environmental plans.



Figure 2-2: Relationship between the RD and other Plans

3 Methodology for the Assessment and Assessment of Alternatives

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 This chapter provides more detail on the SEA process, including the scope of the SEA and how Scoping consultation responses have been taken into account; the alternative delivery options considered for the making of the RD; and the methodology for undertaking the environmental assessment of the RD, including the alternatives. The methodology includes the future baseline and assessment case (i.e. what is being assessed); the SEA objectives, indicators and targets (the assessment framework), and the significance criteria used.

3.1.2 As set out in Section 1.2, a Scoping Report was produced and submitted to the Environmental Authorities to confirm the scope of the SEA. On **24th April 2026** ANCA adopted a CE Order confirming that the SEA Scoping Report takes account of the SEA Process Checklist (EPA, 2008) recommendations and they are satisfied with the scope of the SEA.

3.2 Consultation

Statutory Responses

3.2.1 The scope of the assessment and level of detail included in this Final Environmental Report also takes account of the results of consultation with the relevant prescribed bodies.

3.2.2 The Scoping Report included the following information:

- Details of the geographical area involved including a referenced and scaled map of the area;
- An outline description of the RD;
- The likely scale, nature and extent of the area affected by the RD during the lifespan of the RD (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 RD 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 SEA and the methodology that will be used to assess significance.

3.2.3 The EPA provided a consultation submission to the Scoping Report on **8th April 2026** (Appendix A1). In it they highlighted a series of considerations for the SEA Draft Environmental Report stage, outlined under the following headings:

- Governance and Implementation;
- Synergies with Key National Plans;
- Integration of the SEA and the Plan;

- Ireland's State of the Environmental Report 2024;
- Environmental Authorities;
- Scope of the SEA;
- Data & Knowledge Gaps;
- Range of Effects;
- Consultation;
- Transboundary Consultation;
- Monitoring, Implementation and Reporting;
- SEA Statement;
- Integration with other Key Plans and Programmes; and
- Available Guidance & Resources
  - EPA guidance notes;
  - Noise related guidance;
  - EPA SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool; and
  - EPA Appropriate Assessment GeoTool.

3.2.4 The key points from the EPA Scoping submission are summarised in the table below, along with a note on how this Final Environmental Report accounts for the responses.

Table 3-1: Key points from the EPA scoping consultation response

Point raised	How point is accounted for
The Plan should clearly set out the scope, remit and implementation related elements of the Plan, including measures that will be implemented directly or by other plans.	ANCA's remit and the scope of the Plan has been clearly explained in Section 2.3.
Interrelationships between various topics.	The interrelationships between various topics (aspects) are described in Section 6.3 of this Report.
The Plan should identify any significant data and knowledge gaps and include commitments to address these.	This is described in Section 3.7 of this Report.
The SEA Environmental Report should refer to a full range of effects as well as short, medium and long-term, cumulative and synergistic effects of the Plan.	The results of the assessment of likely significant effects are described in Section 6 of this Report.
Consultation should be undertaken with the prescribed environmental authorities.	Consultation with the prescribed authorities was undertaken at the Scoping Stage of the SEA. Further consultation with the same authorities occurred as

Point raised	How point is accounted for
	part of the consultation on the Draft Environmental Report. Responses from this consultation have been considered in this Final version of the Environmental Report and are also presented within the Consultation Report (ANCA, 2026) at Section 4.5.
Transboundary consultation should be undertaken with environmental authorities in Northern Ireland where the potential for likely significant transboundary effects have been identified.	There is no potential for transboundary effects as the effects relate to Dublin Airport and the surrounding areas only.
The Plan should include a commitment to implement the environmental monitoring programme and associated reporting.	Annual reviews of the noise impact will be undertaken following grant of the Infrastructure Application.
The SEA Environmental Report should specify monitoring frequency and responsibilities and include provisions for reporting on the monitoring.	Environmental monitoring measures and procedures are dealt with in Chapter 6 of this Report.
The Plan and SEA Environmental Report should include schematics to show the links and key inter-relationships with other key relevant national, regional, sectoral and environmental plans.	A schematic is provided in Figure 2-2. Links with other key relevant national, regional, sectoral and environmental plans are described in the Regulatory Decision Report and Section 2.3 of this Report.
SEA guidance and resources are available via EPA's website.	Guidance has been referred to where appropriate in this Report, particularly Chapter 3, whilst resources and spatial data have been used for the SEA baseline in Chapter 4.

3.2.5 The EPA also provided a consultation submission to the SEA Draft Environmental Report on **3rd September 2026** (Appendix A2). In it they highlighted two environmental issues for ANCA's consideration within the SEA and Final Environmental Report. These matters are summarised in the table below, along with how this Final Environmental Report accounts for the responses.

Table 3-2: Key points from the EPA Draft Environmental Report consultation response

Point raised	How point is accounted for
Assessment of Environmental Effects & SEA Monitoring The EPA notes the exclusion of noise from the scope of the assessment in Table 3-2 of the two associated SEA ERs1&2[1]. The SEA ERs should assess and document the full range of likely significant environmental effects of implementing the NAO and draft RD, including positive effects. Therefore, in the context of population and human health, noise should	Further clarity on the scope relating to Noise has been included within Table 3-3. Monitoring of the Plan is covered in Section 6 of this Report.

[1] SEA ERs1&2 refers respectively to the Environmental Reports prepared for the proposed amendments to the NAO and the RD.

be considered in the scope of the assessment. Additionally, the SEA monitoring programme should include details of proposed monitoring to measure both positive and negative effects and the related targets of the NAO and draft RD. If the monitoring identifies that the targets are not being achieved during the implementation of the Plan, ANCA should include a commitment in the NAO to identify and implement additional suitable and effective remedial action.	
Broader Considerations The EEA Environmental Noise in Europe 2025 report identified transport noise among the top three environmental health threats, just behind air pollution and temperature related factors. The EPA noise that there is a target under the Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP) to reduce, by 30%, the share of people chronically disturbed by noise from transport against 2017 levels. The EPA recommends that the EEA report and ZPAP target should be referenced in the finalising of the NAO and RD.	The ZPAP targets are referenced in relation to the Plan's relationship to other Plans and Environmental Protection Objectives, at paragraph 2.3.8 of this Report. The EEA Environmental Noise in Europe report is referenced in paragraph 4.2.8 of this Report. It is not the concern of the SEA to report on how other Plans and Environmental objectives influence the finalising of the RD. This detail is covered in the documentation detailing the development of the RD.

Public Responses

3.2.6 Responses from the public and other non-statutory bodies have been taken into account by ANCA, and changes made to this Final Environmental Report, where such was considered to be necessary or appropriate. However, direct responses to each submission and where they have been addressed are not provided in this Report. The Consultation Report (ANCA, 2026), Section 4.5 explains how submissions in relation to the SEA have been taken into account by ANCA during the preparation of the Regulatory Decision (ANCA, 2026). Logika has been involved in the preparation of the responses to those submissions in the Consultation Report, agrees with them and adopts them for the purposes of this Final Environmental Report.

3.3 Scope of the SEA

3.3.1 The Dublin Airport LAP aims support the continued sustainable growth of Dublin Airport, however highlights the infrastructural constraints to this growth. The aforementioned Infrastructure Application has been developed to deal with a number of these constraints. While the RD will secure the measures for a noise management regime that will allow the airport to grow, it is neutral on whether that growth actually occurs. Therefore, the RD does not constrain the planning authority or An Coimisiún Pleanála in any way in making whatever decision they consider appropriate on any application for further development necessary to deliver growth (i.e. the Infrastructure Application or any future applications). Consequently, any such development (e.g. relating to a new terminal or road/rail development) will have to be subject to EIA and AA (or screening for EIA and AA) and planning scrutiny on its own terms and its impacts will be fully assessed and considered at that stage.

3.3.2 Given the above, and that ANCA's remit is confined to aircraft noise (as noted in Chapters 1 and 2), this SEA Final Environmental Report deals only with the direct and indirect impacts relating to the management of aircraft noise.

3.3.3 Of the environmental factors listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, **Table 3-3** below notes which have been scoped out and which have been scoped in to undergo Environmental Assessment, with

reasons provided. The scope, as detailed within the Scoping Report (Logika Consultants, 2026) remains unchanged based on the consultation responses.

Table 3-3: Scoping in/out of environmental factors

Environmental aspect (factor)	Scope	Reason for scoping in/ out
Air Quality	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport which would ultimately effect air pollution or generation of emissions. Therefore, there will be no air quality effects.
Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in changes to overflying of designated sites or other sensitive receptors. Therefore, there will be no biodiversity effects.
Carbon and Climate Change	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in changes to the amount of fuel burnt and therefore the level of carbon emissions. Therefore, there will be no carbon and climate change effects.
Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Heritage	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in changes to the amount of fuel burnt and therefore the setting of heritage assets or directly impact any heritage assets or archaeological resource. Therefore, there will be no cultural heritage and archaeological heritage effects.
Geology, Soils and Land Use	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in impacts to Geology, Soils and Land Use. Therefore, there will be no geology, soils and land use effects.
Landscape and Visual (Landscape)	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in changes to the landscape character or tranquillity. Therefore, there will be no landscape and Visual effects.
Material Assets	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in impacts to Material Assets. Therefore, there will be no material assets effects.
Noise and Vibration	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in impacts to Noise and Vibration. The implementation of the measures will result in a betterment to the noise environment for receptors, which will mitigate the effects of aircraft noise associated with the Proposed Development.

Environmental aspect (factor)	Scope	Reason for scoping in/ out
		The EPA, in their response to the consultation on the draft Environmental Report, raised the exclusion of noise from the assessment undertaken (EPA, 2026) on the basis that there could be significant positive effects. The Noise Problem Report prepared by Noise Consultants Ltd indicates a modest increase in noise exposure as a result of the Proposed Development, forecast to be approximately 3% of the population >= 45 dB Lden and 3.3% of the population >= 40 dB Lnight, with similar trends in the HA and HSD metrics. In response to the forecasted increases in exposed people, and through the application of the Balanced Approach, ANCA identified a more expansive noise insulation scheme as the appropriate measure to address the noise problem as identified with the Infrastructure Application.This forms the basis of ANCA's Regulatory Decision. The noise insulation scheme proposed will result in a reduction in HA and HSD between 2%-17**%**dependent upon the level of uptake in the scheme and the level of reduction in noise levels achieved by interventions This reduction to the modest increase in noise exposure is not considered to be a significant effect on the environment. The Regulatory Decision has no associated vibration impacts, positive or negative. In light of the above, ANCA considers that it is appropriate for noise and vibration effects to remain scoped out of further SEA, as it has concluded no significant positive or negative noise and vibration effect is predicted to arise as a result of the Regulatory Decision.
Population	In	There is the potential for positive effects on the Population through the implementation of the proposed measure to mitigate the effects of aircraft noise associated with the Proposed Development.
Human Health	In	There is the potential for positive effects on Human Health of the proposed measure to mitigate the effects of aircraft noise associated with the Proposed Development.
Water and Hydrology	Out	The implementation of the proposed measure will not alter the operating procedures at Dublin Airport and consequently result in impacts to Water and

Environmental aspect (factor)	Scope	Reason for scoping in/ out
		Hydrology. Therefore, there will be no water and hydrology effects.
Interrelationships between the above factors	In	The interrelationship between the effects of the scoped in aspects will be considered later in this Report.

3.4 Consideration of Alternatives

3.4.1 Consideration of reasonable alternatives, in particular to avoid the potential for, or reduce the level, of likely significant effects, is a key feature of the SEA process as defined by the SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations. These have been considered by means of a three-step process, as set out in the Guidance on Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015):

1) Alternatives identification and development;

2) Alternatives assessment and comparison; and

3) Alternatives selection and documentation.

3.4.2 Realistic alternative mechanisms for delivering the objectives of the RD are identified, and an assessment of the impacts of each of these options, or a combination of options, against the SEA objectives.

3.5 Future Baseline and Assessment case

3.5.1 The impacts of the DRD and subsequent RD must be described relative to an identified baseline scenario, which describes how matters would develop in the absence of the RD.

3.5.2 In 2022, following consultation, ANCA defined an NAO for Dublin Airport (the 2022 NAO). The 2022 NAO was defined in response to a potential noise problem resulting from Planning Application F20A/0668. The 2022 NAO set a noise management framework to secure environmental improvement and contribute to a sustainable transport network.

3.5.3 Due to a further noise problem being identified as a result of the Infrastructure Application, as described in paragraph 1.1.15 – 1.1.16, amendments were proposed to the 2022 NAO. These amendments ultimately provide more stringent criteria which Dublin Airport has to apply with. These amendments form part of the future baseline.

3.5.4 For the purposes of this Final Environmental Report, the future baseline assumes that daa will seek to grow the airport in line with the existing policy, such as those within the proposed amendments to the 2022 NAO. It is the assumption that the previously mentioned Infrastructure Application is consented and the proposals are carried forward. As set out in various adopted and Government-approved plans listed in Section 2.3, the national, regional and local policy direction for the future of Dublin Airport is to increase passenger numbers to approximately 40 mppa in 2030, and approximately 54 mppa from 2050, through further terminal development and infrastructure. As stated in Section 1.1 the Infrastructure Application concerns the development of infrastructure to support growth up to 40 mppa, meaning this level of growth is likely to occur. As such, this Final Environmental Report adopts a baseline that assumes that growth occurs in line with existing policy.

3.5.5 It is not just passenger numbers (and associated ATMs) that are relevant to compare between the future baseline and the assessment case. The modernisation and improvement of aircraft, e.g. in terms of updated engine technology is also relevant, as this will occur (with associated improvements in noise, air pollution and carbon emissions) even without the RD in place. Such considerations are therefore accounted for within the future baseline to ensure a realistic assessment of the impact of the final RD.

3.6 The Assessment Framework

3.6.1 The EPA SEA guidance document (EPA, updated 2018) states that objectives, targets and indicators must be established in order to clearly assess environmental impacts of a proposed plan or programme (including selected alternatives). The guidance further states:

"Objectives and targets set aims and thresholds which should be taken into consideration to effectively assess the impact of proposed plans on the environment. Indicators are used to illustrate and communicate this environmental impact in a simple and effective manner."

3.6.2 The SEA objectives, targets and indicators have been developed for each scoped-in environmental aspect using the SEA baseline (including current problems and relevant environmental objectives as set out in existing policy) presented in Chapter 4. These are set out in **Table 3-4**, below.

Table 3-4: SEA Objectives, Targets and Indicators

Environmental Aspect	Objectives	Targets	Indicators
Population	Protect amenity of local residents from effects of traffic, parking, or loss of privacy	No significant adverse effect on amenity and population trends	Maintained (*or improved**) population amenity and population trends
Human Health	Protect human health	Compliance with air quality legislation. Compliance with WHO guidelines on noise.	Identified breaches of air quality limits (*or improved air quality**). Population level exposed (*whether fewer or more*) to aircraft noise with reference to WHO noise guidelines and associated health endpoints.
*given the nature of the RD, improvements are anticipated which would align with the objectives for each environmental aspect. For this reason, the indicators have been reviewed.			

3.6.3 Based on the above objectives, targets and indicators, the methodology for assessing the likely impact of the RD on each of the environmental aspect/ SEA objectives is given in **Table 3-5**. The assessment outcomes are presented in Chapter 5.

Table 3-5: Methodology for Assessment Impacts of the RD

Environmental Aspect	Methodology
Population	Review of the likelihood of significant effects on population amenity and trends (whether adverse or positive)
Human Health	Review of the likelihood of air quality legislation and WHO guidelines being breached and therefore there being likely significant effects or alternative positive effects

3.6.4 Where significant effects are predicted through the assessment, measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate the effects have been proposed; these are set out in Chapter 6, alongside recommendations made for measures that will need to be developed in more detail at later planning stages.

3.7 Assumptions and Difficulties Encountered in Compiling the Required Information

3.7.1 The SEA Regulations require that limitations, assumptions and uncertainties that have impacted on the assessment should be described. In addition, Guidance on Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015) suggest that any significant constraints to generating alternatives, and any data gaps and technical limitations/ deficiencies affecting the development and assessment of alternatives, be reported.

3.7.2 No assumptions or difficulties were encountered.

4 Current State of the Environment Including Characteristics, Problems and Evolution

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Schedule 2 of the 2004 Regulations specifies that an Environmental Report must contain the following information in respect of baseline conditions:

"*(b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.*

(c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.

(d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or the Habitats Directive."

4.1.2 For each of the scoped-in environmental aspects listed in **Table 3-3**, this chapter describes the relevant environmental baseline. As revealed in Chapters 1 and 2, ANCA's remit is focussed on aircraft noise and the purpose of the RD is to set policy objectives surrounding noise management. The area potentially affected by the RD therefore relates only to noise-based receptors surrounding Dublin Airport. For each environmental aspect, a Zone of Influence (ZoI) has been identified which relates to the potential extent of impacts, and baseline data gathered relates to that ZoI.

4.1.3 Information for this chapter has been obtained from online sources, including but not limited to the Fingal Development Plan (2023) and the Ireland State of the Environment Report (2024). All references are provided in text and at the back of this document in full.

4.2 Population and Human Health

Key Policy Context

4.2.1 The Healthy Ireland Framework 2013 – 2025 (2019, updated 2026) sets out a vision to create "A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility". It notes that health and wellbeing are affected by all aspects of a person's life: economic status, education, housing, and the physical environment in which people live and work. The latter "includes not only the study of the direct pathological effects of various chemical, physical, and biological agents, but also the effects on health of the broad physical and social environment, which includes housing, urban development, land use and transportation, industry, and agriculture."

4.2.2 Also at a national level, Chapter 6 of the National Planning Framework (2025) deals with 'People, Homes and Communities', and notes how specific health risks, such as include heart disease, respiratory disease, mental health, obesity and other injuries, can be influenced by spatial planning. Relevant objectives include NPO 36 which supports the delivery of the Healthy Ireland Framework and the National Physical Activity Plan, and NPO 38 which seeks "*a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.*"

4.2.3 At a local level, the FCC's Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 – 2028 (2024) has a vision that "Fingal will be a vibrant, sustainable, progressive and climate resilient county, underpinned by

inclusive, healthy, empowered communities and a dynamic economy.", whilst the FDP (2024) seeks to "put healthy place-making at its heart" and embrace "inclusiveness and a high-quality of life for all". In relation to Dublin Airport, a safety Objective DAO18 seeks to "Promote appropriate land use patterns in the vicinity of the flight paths serving the Airport, having regard to the precautionary principle, based on existing and anticipated environmental and safety impacts of aircraft movements."

4.2.4 In addition, Objective CIOSO7 seeks to "Ensure that proposals do not have a detrimental effect on local amenity by way of traffic, parking, noise or loss of privacy of adjacent residents" and Objective DAO4 seeks to 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."

4.2.5 The Dublin Airport LAP (2020) contains a number of strategic aims and objectives, many of which are relevant to population and health. For example, it aims to "*Support the growth of the Airport as a major economic driver for the region*" (including through Objective ED01). At the same time, it seeks to "*Support continued communication between the Airport and neighbouring communities to protect community amenity and mitigate potential impact from airport growth in the interests of long-term sustainability*" (e.g. through Objective CS01).

Current Baseline Conditions

4.2.6 The EPA (2024) report states that a growing population puts increased pressure on infrastructure and the natural environment. The report notes that protecting the environment is key to protecting population health, allowing people to engage with nature. It goes on to state that addressing environmental risks such as air pollution, noise and water pollution, restoring ecosystems and mitigating climate impacts can lead to a healthier population that can live longer.

4.2.7 Air pollution from transport is dominated by NO_X emissions. Of these, NO_2 is particularly impactful from a health perspective. The EPA Air Quality in Ireland Report 2024 (2024) notes that, as of 2024 there were no exceedances in the measured pollutants, with all levels complying with the EU limit values. It is however noted that PM and NO_2 are the most significant pollutants in Ireland, with both having detrimental effects to human health. Poor air quality in general is linked to incidence of chronic lung disease (chronic bronchitis or emphysema) and heart conditions and asthma levels of among children and young people.

4.2.8 Noise can have a significant and disruptive effect on everyday life and it has been identified by the WHO as the second greatest environmental cause of health problems (after air quality), with the EEA (2025) also reporting that transport noise is among the top 3 health threats, just behind air quality and temperature (climatic) related factors. Environmental noise (including aircraft noise) has been linked with negative health outcomes including cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbance, annoyance and psycho-physiological effects (impacts on quality of life, wellbeing and mental health). In terms of night-time noise levels, the number of people exposed to undesirable night-time noise exposure levels above 55 dB(A) L_{night} from Dublin Airport was 305 in 2021 and 4,465 in 2023, showing a vast increase. The number of people exposed to night-time noise levels above 50 dB(A) L_{night} also substantially rose from 2021 to 2023 from 3,572 to 22,737, over 6 times the 2021 figure. Data from 2006 to 2023 shows a dip in 2021, which can be attributed to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that population exposure in 2023 was higher than any other period. Noise in the vicinity of Dublin Airport is therefore affecting a larger number of people than in previous years, partly due to an increase in noise, and partly due to residential development delivered in the area surrounding Dublin Airport.

4.2.9 Meanwhile, the Dublin Airport Economic Impact Study (2023) reports the substantial contribution that Dublin Airport makes to the national economy. The key findings are that direct employment supported by ongoing operations at Dublin Airport amounts to 19,900 jobs (from 2022 data) - adjusting for part-time and seasonal employment, this equates to 17,800 Full-Time Equivalent jobs (FTEs). The total direct Gross Value Added (GVA) generated by Dublin Airport is estimated to be over €1.8 billion. Adding in multiplier impacts (indirect and induced), the total employment supported by activities at Dublin Airport is estimated to be 44,900 jobs (equating to 39,900 FTEs), earning a total of €2.0 billion and generating €3.9 billion in GVA. The total economic impact of Dublin Airport therefore amounts to 116,100 jobs in Ireland, equivalent to 102,800 full-time jobs, earning a total of almost €4.9 billion, representing 2.3% of the national economy.

Likely Future Trends Without the RD

4.2.10 The EPA (2024) states that to achieve Ireland's climate goals, systemic change is needed, and that such change requires deep integration of spatial, transport and transition planning to implement measures that deliver compact development and to expand the active and public transport infrastructure to achieve the modal shift towards more active travel.

4.2.11 Through increasing stringency on aircraft noise emissions as implemented by ICAO, aircraft have become quieter. However, as Dublin Airport grows and the surrounding area becomes more developed, it is possible that noise and other health impacts on the local population could continue to increase. At the same time, it is likely that the local area will see population growth and job creation.

5 How Public Consultation Submissions Have Been Taken into Account

5.1.1 The Draft Environmental Report was presented for public consultation for a period of 14 weeks from **28th May** to **3rd September 2026**, at the same time as the proposed amendments to the NAO, and a report underlying the NAO and the DRD, and a report underlying the DRD. Consultation on the Draft Environmental Report was also undertaken with the Environmental Authorities. The purpose of the consultation was to give the public and the Environmental Authorities an opportunity to provide submissions and observations on the draft NAO and draft RD, and the findings of the Draft Environmental Report, in accordance with the SEA Regulations. In line with the SEA Directive and Regulations, ANCA must "take account of" the Environmental Report and of any opinions which are expressed upon it as it prepares the NAO and RD for adoption. Therefore, comments received from the Environmental Authorities, members of the public and other stakeholders during the consultation process must be considered and addressed, including if appropriate, changes being made to the final NAO and RD. Responses from the EPA are detailed above in Section 3.2 with details on how they were accounted for in the SEA.

5.1.2 ANCA received a total of**f 1,129** submissions during the consultation period. Comments were received from an Environmental Authority (the EPA), and a large number of private individuals' community groups and business organisations. ANCA subsequently produced a Consultation Report which sets out the key themes that emerged through the consultation and how these were addressed in the RD. The majority of the responses received by ANCA related to the following:

- Impact of aircraft noise on human health;
- Home insulation grant schemes;
- Additional noise mitigating measures and operating restrictions;
- Airport operation times and flight volumes;
- Process, procedure and documentation issues;
- Flight operations and flight paths; and
- Governance and monitoring.

5.1.3 Some of the submissions received by ANCA specifically addressed the SEA or AA, whilst others contained elements relating to the environment more generally.

5.1.4 Following completion of the public consultation exercise, ANCA concluded that there were no changes to the RD, in regard to the substance of the insulation scheme. However, there are changes to clarify aspects of the scheme and changes to align it with other insulation schemes in place at Dublin Airport, which are provided in the RD Report.

5.1.5 These changes did not have a material impact on the SEA process or the findings in this Environmental Report. Nor were any material changes required to the contents of the Final Environmental Report as a result of the review of the consultation responses. Further explanation was provided to address the EPA's comment regarding the assessment of the positive impacts on noise, but this did not result in noise being scoped in and therefore did not change the conclusions of the Environmental Report. Logika has reviewed and agrees with the response to the issues in relation to SEA in the consultation report. The conclusions of the SEA therefore remain the same.

6 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on the Environment

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 As stated in Section 3.5 of this Final Environmental Report, the future baseline for the SEA must take into account national, regional and local policy ambitions to increase passenger numbers. The assessment of the RD in this section is therefore against the 'future baseline'.

6.1.2 The RD will not dictate growth at Dublin Airport in either ATM or passenger terms, or specify a particular fleet mix that operates. Rather it mandates that operations occur within defined noise limits. It is up to Dublin Airport to identify a specific approach that allows growth to occur whilst meeting these defined noise limits. For this reason, the assessment undertaken is necessarily high level. It makes the assumption that adherence to the RD will require Dublin Airport to operate a newer and therefore more efficient aircraft fleet and operate in a more efficient manner in order to ensure that the prescribed noise limits are met. Furthermore, the assumption is made that such efficiency to meet noise limits set will have the benefit on other environmental aspects as outlined in this Final Environmental Report.

6.2 Assessment of the RD

6.2.1 The predicted impacts of the RD (as described in Section 2.3) on each scoped-in environmental aspect is described in detail below in **Table 6-1**. This assessment is based on the assessment case compared to the future baseline.

Table 6-1: Assessment of the RD on the scoped-in Environmental Aspects

Aspect	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects
Population Amenity and Human Health	The noise mitigation measure (namely, a noise insultation scheme) identified allows those eligible to apply for funding support for insulation of all habitable rooms. Dwellings exposed to noise levels exceeding 60 dB Lden could result in a reduction in high annoyance by up to 24% following full or majority insulation. Furthermore, under the new insulation scheme, a further 25% of all properties exposed to levels greater than 60 dB Lden in 2031 compared to the Residential Sound Insulation Grant Scheme (which provides noise insulation to residential dwellings exposed to noise above 55 dB L_{night}). As per the Scoping exercise in Table 3-2 and considering the SEA objectives, targets and indicators detailed above in Table 3-4, the effects of the noise insultation scheme are not determined to constitute a significant effect. These measures further allow the policy objectives set by the proposed amendments to the NAO to be met, ensuring that any growth or other changes as a result of the Infrastructure Application at Dublin Airport that have the potential to affect the noise environment (specifically by causing a noise problem) do so in a managed way and in line with specific limits that have been set. Further, there is the potential that to reduce the need for noise insulation, the measures proposed in the DRD will in fact, increase the potential for more newer aircraft to be operated to and from the Airport. These are likely to be quieter and will also have lower emissions to the air. These effects are not likely to be significant in SEA terms, despite providing mitigation proportionate to the noise problem arising from the proposed development. As stated previously, considering the above, it is considered that the effects of the insulation scheme would not constitute significant effects, they would however help in bettering the noise situation at Dublin Airport.
Interrelationships	No likely significant effects have been identified, therefore there is no potential for interrelationship effects between human health and population.

6.3 Alternatives Assessment and Comparison

6.3.1 The Guidance on Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015) recognises that it is not for the SEA to decide on the options to be considered. Instead, the SEA should focus on the alternative delivery options actually considered in the preparation of the RD. These should be identified by ANCA as the body responsible for drafting the RD. Furthermore, the SEA should focus only on the realistic and reasonable alternatives that emerge during the drafting of the RD, and should explain why other alternatives are not considered to be 'realistic' or 'reasonable' and are not, therefore, subjected to assessment and consultation[2].

[2] In the context of the Guidance on Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015) a 'realistic' alternative is capable of achieving the plan/programme objectives, whilst a 'reasonable' alternative takes account of the

6.3.2 As per section 2.3, a variety of available measures were explored in line with the process of aircraft noise regulation. At the end of this process, none were deemed appropriate on technical grounds other than a land use planning measure, and a noise insulation schemes which was the measure adopted. Land use planning measures are a function of the Planning Authority, so ANCA requested the Planning Authority undertake a review of noise zoning measures. The Planning Authority confirmed it intends to review airport noise zones as part of the process of the review of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

6.3.3 For this chosen measure i.e. noise insulation, different options for eligibility for noise insulation were explored. The option chosen will ensure noise insultation for eligible residential dwellings that are situated within the 60 db L_{den} contour.

6.3.4 For this reason, only one measure (the noise insultation scheme outlined above) was considered a viable measure for the RD. This meant there were no viable alternative measures that needed to be assessed as part of this SEA process. That there were no likely significant adverse environmental effects identified as a result of the implementation of the measure, and in fact, its implementation would likely lead to environmental betterment of the noise situation for some residents living in the vicinity at Dublin Airport further reinforces that there was no need to consider alternatives with regards SEA.

Inter-relationships and Cumulative Effects

6.3.5 Cumulative effects result from a combination of two or more individual effects on a receptor (or in this case, environmental aspect). The Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in SEA (EPA, 2020) states that such effects can occur as a result of plans, programmes, projects and other actions in the past, present and the reasonably foreseeable future. However, as stated in Section 2.3 of this report, the RD and measures it comprises are complementary to and in accordance with existing plans, listed in Section 2.3, and not in any way additional, other than providing more detail on aircraft noise reduction measures when compared with this other plans. For this reason, there is no need for this SEA to consider cumulative effects with actions contained within other plans, programmes, projects and actions.

6.3.6 Interrelationships are described above in **Table 6-1**.

environmental and socioeconomic baseline and trends, as well as legal requirements including those of the Habitats Directive

7 Measures to Prevent, Reduce, Offset and Monitor Significant Environmental Effects

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 The assessment of the RD indicated that there would be no likely significant adverse environmental effects as a result of its implementation. There is therefore no need to put in place any measures to prevent, reduce and / or offset for significant adverse effects with regard the proposed measures. For the same reason, monitoring is not required.

7.1.2 As stated in **Section 6**, by its very nature, the implementation of the RD is to provide measures to allow the policies within the proposed amendments to the NAO to be met, and reduce the number of people exposed to noise. This will ultimately have positive and beneficial outcomes for Population Amenity and Human Health.

7.1.3 There are though, review requirements for the noise insultation scheme, which are set out in the Regulatory Decision Report and area as follows:

Condition 1: … The Applicant shall review *eligibility for the scheme every two years thereafter with eligible residential dwellings situated in the 60 dB Lden contour for the preceding calendar year being eligible under the scheme. …"*

7.1.4 Furthermore, the RD is based on a set of principles, with one relating to monitoring:

"5. Noise insulation schemes can be based on evidence-based noise exposure metrics that can be regularly and reliably monitored, allowing for dynamic eligibility criteria that adapt to the noise situation at Dublin Airport and reduce the impact of forecasting uncertainty."

8 Next Steps

8.1.1 The final stage of the SEA process, as prescribed in the SEA Process Checklist (EPA, 2008)/ SEA Pack (Updated 2023), will now be undertaken to ensure that the requirements of the relevant legislation have been met. Following adoption of the RD, an SEA Statement will therefore be produced to provide information on the decision, specifically:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the RD;
- How the Environmental Report, submissions and observations made the ANCA by the Environmental Authorities and the public, and any consultation under article 14, have been taken into account during the preparation of the RD.
- The reasons for choosing the RD in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the RD.

9 References

ANCA (2026) Consultation Report

Dublin Airport Authority (2023) Dublin Airport Economic Impact Stud

Department of Transport (2015) National Aviation Policy for Ireland

Department of Transport (2018) Review of Future Capacity Needs at Ireland's State airports

Department of Transport (2019, updated 2025) Ireland's Action Plan for Aviation Emissions Reduction

Department of Transport (2019) National Policy Statement on Airport Charges Regulation

Dublin Airport Authority (2019) Dublin Airport Capital Investment Programme 2020+

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (2019) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031

European Environment Agency (EEA) (2025) Environmental noise in Europe 2025

European Protection Agency (EPA) (2024) Ireland's State of the Environment Report

EPA (2008, updated 2018) SEA Process Checklist

EPA (2015) Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment

EPA (2020) Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in Strategic Environmental Assessment

European Commission (2021) Zero Pollution Action Plan

Fingal County Council (FCC) (2024) Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029

FCC (2024) Fingal County Council Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 – 2028

FCC (2023) Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 Written Statement

FCC (2020) Dublin Airport Local Area Plan

FCC (2019) South Fingal Transport Study

FCC (2016) Dublin Airport Central Masterplan

Government of Ireland (2025) National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040 – First Revision

Government of Ireland (2019, updated 2026) Healthy Ireland Framework

Government of Ireland (2018) National Development Plan 2018-2027

Logika Consultants (2026) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the Draft Regulatory Decision.

Meath County Council (2021) Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

National Transport Authority (2016) Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

Noise Consultants (2026) Draft Regulatory Decision Report

A1 EPA Scoping Consultation Response

Email: aircraftnoiseCA@fingal.ie

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Ms Ethna Felten,
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Aircraft Noise Competent Authority
Fingal County Council
County Hall,
Swords,
Co. Dublin

2nd September 2026 Our Ref: SCP260201.2

Re. Draft Regulatory Decision and Amended Noise Abatement Objective for Dublin Airport and SEA Environmental Reports

Dear Ms Felten,

We acknowledge your notice, dated 28th May 2026, in relation to the Draft Regulatory Decision (RD) and Amended Noise Abatement Objective (NAO) for Dublin Airport and Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Reports (SEA ER).

The EPA as a SEA Environmental Authority promotes the integration of environmental commitments, including mitigation and monitoring measures identified as part of the SEA process, into final Plans and Programmes. This submission highlights two environmental issues for further consideration in finalising the RD, NAO and SEA. These are: (a) Assessment of Environmental Effects & SEA Monitoring and (b) Broader Considerations. Appendix I provides additional detailed comments on the amended NAO and draft RD and Appendix II provides additional comments on the SEA ERs.

Assessment of Environmental Effects & SEA Monitoring

The EPA notes the exclusion of noise from the scope of the assessment in Table 3-2 of the two associated SEA ERs[1&2]. The SEA ERs should assess and document the full range of likely significant environmental effects of implementing the NAO and draft RD, including positive effects. Therefore, in the context of population and human health, noise should be considered in the scope of the assessment. Additionally, the SEA monitoring programme should include details of proposed monitoring to measure both positive and negative effects and the related targets of the NAO and draft RD. If the monitoring identifies that the targets are not being achieved during the implementation of the Plan,

[1] https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2026-05/16-drd-sea-draft-environmental-report.pdf
[2] https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2026-05/15-nao-sea-draft-environmental-report.pdf

ANCA should include a commitment in the NAO to identify and implement additional suitable and effective remedial action.

Broader Considerations

The EEA Environmental Noise in Europe 2025[3] report identifies transport noise among the top three environmental health threats, just behind air pollution and temperature related factors. The EPA notes that there is a target under the Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP)[4] to reduce, by 30%, the share of people chronically disturbed by noise from transport against 2017 levels. The EPA recommends that the EEA report and ZPAP target should be referenced in the finalising the NAO and RD.

Information on strategic noise mapping, technical mapping guidance, and noise action plans are available on the EPA website[5]. Round 5 of strategic noise mapping under the Environmental Noise Directive is due to be published at the end of 2027 (using 2026 data for the noise model). The EPA recommends that this information should be considered during any future reviews and/or monitoring of the measures, decision or objective.

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

Yours Sincerely,

Andy Fanning
Programme Manager
Environment & Health Programme
Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring

[3] Environmental noise in Europe 2025 | Publications | European Environment Agency (EEA)
[4] Zero Pollution Action Plan - Environment - European Commission
[5] Noise mapping and action plans | Environmental Protection Agency

Appendix I – Comments on the amended NAO and draft RD

ANCA should ensure that the Plan aligns with key relevant higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework First Revision and the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Explaining Noise Figures

The draft Noise Abatement Objective lists various dB noise figures including for example 40 dB L_{night}, 45 dB L_{den}, 55 dB L_{den}, 55 dB L_{night}, and 65 dB L_{den}. These are all mentioned in the amended NAO either as background or as metrics that will be measured and tracked for different purposes. As part of the draft RD there is also a 60 dB L_{den} contour figure for the proposed sound insulation grant scheme for residential dwellings. The EPA suggests that in the final documents an explanatory section/graphic explaining all the noise figures referred to and referenced in the documents would be helpful. It could, for example, cover an explanation on its meaning, where the figure originated from, it's relevance in the context of noise management at the airport, and why it was chosen or used in the specific instances as referred to in the NAO and/or RD.

The amended NAO refers to additional metrics that will be used to monitor aircraft noise output using two priority noise contours. Clarification should be provided in the NAO to define the 'two priority noise contours'. The EPA notes that maps (Map 1 and Map 2) have been provided in the draft RD Sound Insulation Grant Scheme[6] information, which may be the contours referred to.

Appendix II – Comments on the SEA

The SEA Regulations set out the information to be contained in an Environmental Report.

The EPA note that two separate SEA ERs were completed as part of the process; one for the amended NAO and the other for the draft RD. The EPA recommends that each SEA ER should inform the final NAO and RD.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region is currently under review following the adoption of a revision to the National Planning Framework. Depending on the timing of the finalisation f the NAO and RD, the revised RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region should be considered in completing the SEA and NAO/RD.

Monitoring

[6] Draft Regulatory Decision Sound Insulation Grant Scheme

The monitoring programme, for both positive and negative effects should set out the relevant data sources (information to be used to inform the monitoring), monitoring frequencies and who will be responsible for carrying out the monitoring. Moreover, the monitoring programme should be flexible to take account of specific environmental issues and unforeseen adverse impacts should they arise including the possibility of cumulative effects. If the monitoring identifies adverse impacts during the implementation of the Plan, ANCA should ensure that suitable and effective remedial action is taken.

Guidance on SEA-related monitoring is available on the EPA website at https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/guidance-on-sea-statements-and-monitoring.php

Future Amendments to the Plan
You should screen any future amendments to the Plan for likely significant effects.

SEA Statement – "Information on the Decision"
Once the Plan is adopted, you should prepare an SEA Statement. that summarises:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;
- How the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan;
- The reasons for choosing the Plan adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and,
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan.

You should send a copy of the SEA Statement with the above information to any environmental authority consulted during the SEA process.

Guidance on preparing SEA Statements is available at
https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/guidance-on-sea-statements-and-monitoring.php

Environmental Authorities
Under the SEA Regulations, you should also consult with:

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

A2 EPA Draft Environmental Report Consultation Response

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Ethna Felten,
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Fingal County Council
County Hall
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8th April 2026 Our Ref: SCP260309.1

Re. SEA Scoping for Draft Regulatory Decision relating to Aircraft Noise Management at Dublin Airport

Dear Ms Felton,

We acknowledge your notice, dated 13th March 2026, in relation to the Draft Regulatory Decision relating to Aircraft Noise Management at Dublin Airport (the 'Plan').

In our role as an 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.

Additionally, the EPA is the national authority for overseeing the implementation of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2018, as amended. This includes supervisory and advisory functions in relation to strategic noise mapping and noise action planning (every 5 years) for major roads, major rail, major airports, and for large agglomerations (Dublin, Cork & Limerick). The EPA does not have an enforcement role in relation to noise emissions arising from the operation of Dublin Airport.

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 or programme.

This submission highlights a number of key environmental issues to consider in preparing the Plan and SEA. Specific comments on the SEA Scoping Report are provided in Appendix I.

Governance and implementation

Regarding governance and implementation considerations, the Plan should clearly set out the implementation arrangements and governance structures, including lines of responsibility for implementation and delivery as well as provisions for interim review and progress reporting. The relationship between the Plan, the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies should be clarified. Implications of the Plan in the context of existing Local Authority Plans should also be clarified (e.g. will these require review and updating?).

Synergies with key national plans

It will be important that the Plan documents the synergies between it and other key national plans. The relevant actions of the Climate Action Plan 2024 and the objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework, and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region should be aligned with and considered, as appropriate.

Integration of the SEA and the Plan

The integration of the SEA process into the Plan should reflect the overall objective of the SEA Directive "to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes".

All recommendations from the SEA and AA processes, including mitigation measures and monitoring proposals, should be integrated into the Plan. We recommend that the Plan includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and Plan policies/measures.

Fully integrating the findings and recommendations of the SEA into the Plan will be key to strengthening its overall positive commitments while ensuring that any potential significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan are mitigated.

The SEA Environmental Report and the Plan should include a chapter outlining how the recommendations and mitigation measures from the SEA have been incorporated into the Plan. We recommend that the SEA Environmental Report includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and, where relevant, Plan policies/measures.

Ireland's State of the Environment Report 2024

In 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-/.

The EPA will provide additional comments on the SEA Environmental Report and the Plan at the next stage of the SEA process.

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

Yours Sincerely,

Scientific Officer
Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring

Appendix I – Specific Comments on the SEA Scoping Report

Scope of the SEA

The Plan should clearly set out the scope, remit and implementation related elements of the Plan. These will have implications for the SEA, in terms of guiding the level of assessment applicable at the appropriate level for the Plan. Where it is envisaged that measures proposed in the Plan will be implemented via other plans, which themselves have been or will be subject to SEA, this should be explained in the Environmental Report and taken into account in the assessment.

Where specific measures will be implemented directly, further detail should be provided in the Environmental Report and Plan on the relevant environmental assessments to be carried out at the project stage and relevant mitigation measures to be applied, as appropriate. There may be merit in exploring this issue further with the relevant Environmental Authorities during the Plan preparation and SEA processes.

There may be merit in including a matrix in the SEA environmental report to show the interrelationships between the various topics. This should be accompanied by relevant explanatory text.

Data & Knowledge Gaps

The Plan should identify any significant data and knowledge gaps, including commitments to address these on a priority basis and where relevant, in association with other government departments/ organisations, during the implementation phase of the Plan. This is with a view to strengthening the evidence base for future reviews and iterations of the Plan.

Range of Effects

The SEA Environmental Report should refer to the full range of effects and of the area likely to be affected. This assessment should consider the duration and frequency of effects as well as short, medium and long-term, cumulative and synergistic effects of the Plan. The EPA's *Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in Strategic Environmental Assessment* (EPA, 2020).

Consultation

There is merit also in pointing to Article 13 of the SEA regulations (S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended) which relates to the consultations. The SEA regulations require that the draft Plan is sent to the statutory environmental authorities inviting written submissions.

Additionally, the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority is required to publish a newspaper notice inviting submissions/observations from the public on both the Plan and the SEA environmental report. The SEA regulations refer to a public consultation period of not less than 4 weeks, however, given that the Plan is a key national policy, consideration should be given to undertaking a more appropriate consultation period in the order of 6-8 or 8 -10 weeks. Submissions and observations received should be taken into consideration in finalising the Plan.

Transboundary consultation
Transboundary consultation should be undertaken with environmental authorities in Northern Ireland where the potential for likely significant transboundary effects have been identified. In this regard, the relevant requirements of the SEA protocol[1] under the ESPOO Convention should be considered, for any possible transboundary consultations with non-EU Member States.

Monitoring, Implementation & Reporting
Article 10 of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) requires that the significant environmental effects of implementing a plan/programme (the Plan in this instance) are monitored in order, *inter alia*, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action. The SEA environmental report should include a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring. The Plan should include a commitment to implement SEA related environmental monitoring requirements and the associated reporting.

The Plan should include a commitment to implement the SEA environmental monitoring programme and associated reporting. We suggest including a separate section on '*Monitoring, Implementation and Reporting*' in the Plan, setting out the provisions for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Plan. There may be merits in aligning the periodic reviews of the Plan with existing cyclical reporting e.g. *Ireland's Environment*, *National Planning Framework*, *Water Framework Directive,* etc.

I refer you to the *EPA guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2023)*, and would draw your attention to the high-level monitoring indicators proposed in Table 1 on page 23, that may be useful to you to consider.

The SEA-related monitoring should address positive, negative and cumulative effects where they are likely to occur and should include provision for on-going review to facilitate an early response to any unforeseen environmental issues that may arise. The SEA Environmental Report should specify the monitoring frequency and responsibilities and include provisions for reporting on the monitoring.

To avoid duplication in data collection, the same indicators should be used for the Plan-related and SEA-related monitoring aspects where possible.

Establishing an Environmental Working Subgroup would provide for oversight of the environmental monitoring and reporting and could be considered. The arrangements in place previously for the implementation stages of plans such as the Grid 25 Implementation Plan, Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDP), Wild

[1] UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

Atlantic Way Operational Programme and Food Vision 2030 may be worth considering, as appropriate.

SEA Statement

Following the completion of the public consultation on the SEA environmental report and the Plan, the final stages of the SEA process will be to integrate the environmental considerations of the SEA environmental report into the Plan, as appropriate. In accordance with article 16 of the SEA Regulations the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority is required to publish a SEA Statement alongside the adopted Plan, summarising:

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;
- how the environmental report and consultation comments on it have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (in the Environmental Report and the associated consultation);
- the measures decided concerning monitoring.

The EPA has published *Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring* (EPA, 2023), which should be considered in the preparation of the SEA statement.

Integration with other key Plans and Programmes

We recommend including schematics in the Plan and SEA Environmental Report, showing the links and key inter-relationships with other key relevant national, regional, sectoral and environmental plans.

Available Guidance & Resources

SEA related guidance/resources

The EPA has published guidance notes that may be of assistance in preparing the SEA environmental report.

Guidance on the SEA Scoping Process is included in the Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland (EPA, 2003). You can access these SEA process guidance and topic and sector specific guidance documents along with other resources listed below at:

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), and *Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2012)).

Noise related guidance/resources

The 2025 EEA Environmental noise in Europe 2025 report identified transport noise among the top three environmental health threats, just behind air pollution and temperature related factors. The report draws on information submitted by European Union (EU) Member States and other EEA countries under the 2022 reporting round of the Environmental Noise Directive (END).

The European Commission Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP) aims to reduce, by 30%, the share of people chronically disturbed by noise from transport against 2017 levels. A recent EEA assessment indicates that it is likely that the target will not be met (optimistic scenario results in a cut of 19%, conservative scenario results in an increase of 3%). Major changes would be needed to meet the Zero Pollution Action target, including better urban and transport planning, measures specific to transport noise reductions (such as quieter surfaces, barriers, etc) and significant reductions in road traffic. The environmental assessment should reflect the obligations under the ZPAP.

Information on noise mapping and action plans is available on the EPA website: Noise mapping and action plans | Environmental Protection Agency

The Round 4 Strategic Noise Maps are available on EPA Maps. Airport maps are also available on the DAA website. The Round 4 noise maps are based on 2021 data, as required by the legislation and guidance from the European Environment Agency, and therefore do not include the new airport runway, which commenced operations in August 2022.

The Noise Action Plan for Dublin Airport 2024 -2028 | Fingal County Council was published in 2024 and the 2025 progress report is due by the end of February 2026. Consideration should be given to the actions and monitoring requirements set out in this action plan in the development of the SEA Environmental Report.

The Round 5 noise map for the airport is due to be published at the end of 2027 (using 2026 data). This should be considered during any future reviews and/or monitoring of the plan.

EPA SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool

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.

EPA Appropriate Assessment GeoTool

Our AA GeoTool application has been developed in partnership with the NPWS. It allows users to a select a location, specify a search area and gather available information for each European Site within the area.



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