

BELFAST CITY AIRPORT

**Belfast City Airport - Environmental Noise Directive Round
Four - Noise Action Plan 2023-2028
May 2026**

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

In 2002, the European Parliament agreed the Directive 2002/49/EC, commonly referred to as the Environmental Noise Directive ('END'), to enable a standardised assessment of environmental noise across Europe and set the framework for the future management and ongoing assessment of noise. END is implemented in Northern Ireland by the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 ('the 2006 Regulations'), which outline a number of stages to manage and, where necessary, improve environmental noise.

Following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, it is important to clarify the ongoing obligations under the Environmental Noise (Northern Ireland) Regulations. While the UK is no longer an EU member state, the requirement to prepare and implement noise action plans remains in place under national law. These regulations, originally aligned with EU directives on environmental noise management, continue to mandate the development of noise action plans aimed at managing and mitigating noise pollution in designated areas. As required by the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 a fourth noise action plan is now being prepared based on Belfast City Airport's (BCA's) 2021 strategic noise maps. This is to cover the period 2023-2028.

1.2 A description of the agglomeration, the major roads, the major railways or major airports and other noise sources taken into account

BCA is a regional airport serving a range of destinations, mainly in Great Britain with some European routes. Situated on the south shore of Belfast Lough adjacent to the A2, one of the main arterial routes into the city, BCA is a key strategic gateway to the province. In 2021, BCA catered for 813,426 passengers (12,849 atms) representing approximately 25% of the air traffic to and from Northern Ireland.

This Noise Action Plan relates solely to aircraft noise from BCA. The other elements of the Belfast Agglomeration Action Plan are road, rail and industrial noise for which separate action plans are being developed by their respective Competent Authorities. Descriptions of the major roads, major railways, major airports and other noise sources outside the Belfast Agglomeration are contained within these action plans as required under END¹.

¹ For further details refer to: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/noise> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

1.3 The authority responsible

The 2006 Regulations state that the *Competent Authority*² for drawing up action plans for *Major Airports*³ and other airports that are to be mapped is the relevant airport operator. For this Action Plan, the Competent Authority is Belfast City Airport.

1.4 The legal context

Directive 2002/49/EC (END)⁴ requires Member States to produce strategic noise maps for the main sources of environmental noise, i.e. major roads, major railways, major airports and agglomerations. Action plans are to be produced based on the results of the strategic noise mapping.

END is implemented in Northern Ireland by the 2006 Regulations⁵, which outline a number of stages to manage and, where necessary, improve environmental noise.

Under the ***Airports (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 ('the 1994 Order')***⁶, the Department for Regional Development (now Department for Infrastructure ('DfI')) has the power to direct airport authorities to take action for limiting noise and vibration or mitigating their impact. The 1994 Order also makes a provision for BCA to provide facilities for consultation with its stakeholders. Please note that the powers under the Airport (NI) Order 1994 are not with the planning remit (Regional Planning Policy & Casework Directorate within DfI), but they fall under the DfI Gateways Branch.

A ***Planning Agreement*** between BCA and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), last revised on the 22 July 2019⁷ contains several obligations and restrictions on the operations at BCA which are detailed in Section 1.10.

1.5 Any limit values in place in accordance with Article 5

Currently, there are no noise limit values set under END for the UK nor do the 2006 Regulations set any limit values. BCA is designated as a Competent Authority under the ***Aerodromes (Noise Restrictions) (Rules and***

² The other Competent Authorities as per the 2006 Regulations are the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (for industrial sources within agglomerations), the Department for Infrastructure (for major roads and all roads within agglomerations), the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (Translink) (for major railways and railways within agglomerations) and airport operators (Belfast International Airport).

³ A 'major airport' is defined in END as "a civil airport, designated by the Member State, which has more than 50,000 movements per year (a movement being a take-off or a landing), excluding those purely for training purposes on light aircraft".

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:189:0012:0025:EN:PDF> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/387/contents/made> [Accessed 11th October 2024]

⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1994/426/contents/made> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

⁷ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/gb-bca-planning-agreement-process> [Accessed 16 October 2024].

Procedures) Regulations 2003 and has used the powers granted by the Regulations to prohibit the noisiest aircraft types.

1.6 Summary of the results of the noise mapping

The extent of the Round 4 Belfast Agglomeration covers 208.5km², with 1.73km² (<1% of the agglomeration area) exposed to noise levels from Belfast City Airport greater than 55 dB L_{den}. During the night-time, less than 1 km² (<1% of the agglomeration area) is exposed to noise levels greater than 50 dB L_{night}.

An estimated total of 1,207 dwellings are exposed to noise levels greater than 55 dB L_{den} from Belfast City Airport within the Belfast Agglomeration, which statistically contain an estimated population of 2,383. During the night-time period, it is estimated that no dwellings are exposed to noise levels greater than 50 dB L_{night}.

1.7 An evaluation of the estimated number of people exposed to aircraft noise

Total population living within dwellings exposed in noise contours within the Belfast Agglomeration for BCA:

L_{den} 55-59 dB = 2,383; L_{den} >60 dB = 0.
L_{night} >50 dB = 0.

1.8 Identification of problems and situations that need to be improved

1.8.1 Noise Management Areas

The DAERA 2013 guidance⁸ sets out a methodology for the detailed assessment of strategic noise maps and the identification of action planning priorities. This methodology should be used to identify Important Areas which are then investigated to determine whether they should be identified as Candidate Noise Management Areas (CNMAs). According to the 2013 guidance, CNMAs are *“areas identified by high levels of environmental noise and the aim is to reduce, where possible, noise in such areas by making them formal Noise Management Areas”*⁹.

The methodology is as follows: airport operators should use the L_{Aeq,16h} indicator for prioritisation and should identify the total population affected by noise levels of more than 50 dB L_{Aeq,16h}. From this, airport operators should identify where the top 1% of the population affected by the highest noise levels is located based on the results of the strategic noise mapping. These areas (referred to

⁸ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/noise-technical-guidance-competent-authorities-roads-railways-and-airports>

⁹ DoE 2013, *Op. cit.*, p.21

as Important Areas) should then be targeted by airport operators for further investigation¹⁰. In preparing this Noise Action Plan and in the assessment of Important Areas, BCA has taken into consideration the current noise management measures in place (8.2.5.1), BCA's Corporate Responsibility (CR) programme (8.2.5.2), noise complaints received by BCA (8.2.5.3), community attitudes to aircraft noise (8.2.5.4), the regulatory and policy framework for controlling environmental noise relevant to the Airport's operations and any limit values in place (8.2.5.5).

On consideration of: 1) the noise reduction measures and controls in place to help reduce noise for people exposed to noise levels within and well below noise exposure relating to the top 1%; 2) community attitudes towards the noise environment resulting from BCA, including those from the top 1%; and 3) the regulatory/policy framework in place, designation of Important Areas as Candidate Noise Management Areas is not appropriate. However, this position will be kept under review taking into account the noise levels experienced in these areas (determined by the annual summer noise contours) and/or changes to UK aviation policy and having regard to any subsequent change to Environmental Noise Directive guidance issued by the Department.

BCA will continue to implement its existing noise management programme and will take further actions detailed in Section 9 to prevent and reduce noise for people exposed to noise levels within and well below noise exposure relating to the top 1% and any potential effects on health and wellbeing in addition to the Airport's ongoing CR programme geared towards supporting neighbouring communities. BCA will keep under review the effectiveness of its current noise management measures in relation to Important Areas presented in Figure 2. Where relevant, any further practicable and cost-effective noise reduction measures will be recommended and presented to the Forum for consultation within the period covered by this Action Plan.

1.8.2 Quiet Areas

To date, three Quiet Areas have been designated, which are: Conor Park/Stricklands Glen in Bangor; Bashfordlands in Carrickfergus; and Carnmoney Hill Upper in Newtownabbey.

Bashfordlands and Carnmoney Hill are not under the flight path of BCA and do not fall within the BCA's 50 dB noise contour. Conor Park/Stricklands Glen is under the flight path for departures on Runway 04 and arrivals on Runway 22. However, given the altitude of aircraft at this point, the area does not fall within BCA's 50 dB noise contour. Therefore, no specific actions relating to these Quiet Areas are proposed at this time.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

1.9 A record of the public consultations organised in accordance with Article 8(7)

In accordance with Article 8(7) of END, BCA carried out a public consultation exercise on its draft Round 4 Noise Action Plan. Details can be found in Section 7.0.

1.10 Any noise-reduction measures already in force and any projects in preparation

BCA has in force a range of measures designed to prevent and reduce noise, its associated potential health effects, and to engage with and support neighbouring communities. These measures will help reduce noise for people exposed to noise levels within and well below noise exposure relating to the top 1% (presented in Figure 2). These measures may be summarised under the following headings:

Covenants in current Planning Agreement

These include:

- Publication of an Annual Performance Report
- Permitted operating hours;
- A limit on the number of flights per annum;
- Restriction on noisier aircraft types;
- Belfast Lough bias;
- Noise management measures;
 - Limit on noise contour area;
 - Annual noise contour reporting requirement;
 - Operate and maintain an integrated noise and track keeping system;
 - Use of continuous descent approached at the aerodrome;
 - Departure noise limits;
 - Availability of fixed electrical ground power;
- Operating a noise insulation scheme.

Preventing and reducing air noise:

- Penalty system on flights after 21:30 hours;
- Noise abatement procedures for arriving and departing aircraft.

Noise monitoring and reporting:

- Monitoring and reporting on track keeping performance;

Voluntary Measures

- Publication of flight statistics and noise related data on the BCA website and provision to the Airport Consultative Committee (The Belfast City Airport Forum – ‘the Forum’).

Corporate Responsibility programme

BCA also has a comprehensive CR programme in place which is geared towards making a positive impact in its community and to be a key contributor to economic and social development in the region. Initiatives are set out in Section 8.2.5.2 of the Action Plan but can be summarised under the following headings:

- **Community Fund:** from penalties on flights outside permitted hours. Since the inception of the fund in 2009, BCA has supported over 218 projects to the value of £615,000.
- **Supporting education:** as part of its CR programme, BCA has sought to foster sustainable partnerships with educational bodies at a local and regional level and support programmes such as *Adopt a School*, *Time to Read* and *STEM*¹¹.
- **Employment and skills development:** through the Airport's comprehensive programme of work experience, tailored work placements, High Flyers Apprenticeship Scheme, and Ignite youth leadership programme. Now in its 10th year, Belfast City Airport's High Flyers programme has had a 100% success rate in graduating young people across Northern Ireland from apprentices to full time employment.
- **Supporting health and wellbeing:** through the Community Fund and wider CR programme and partnering with local charities such as Aware NI & The Welcome Organisation. We are currently partnered with Air Ambulance NI for 2024-25 as our Charity of the year partner. We are also members of the BITC Take 5 Health & Wellbeing Accreditation.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** through the Forum, airport tours, one-to-one meetings and political briefings.
- **Communication on noise issues:** through responding to individual noise concerns, and communicating key information relating to noise to stakeholders, including the local community, through regular publication of noise-related performance data and management measures.

Over 2,600 salaried hours are dedicated to CR initiatives each year which represents a 30% increase in hours invested in CR since publication of the Round 2 Noise Action Plan. The time dedicated to CR initiatives equates to a circa £46,000 investment¹².

BCA is committed to continuing its CR programme, and through listening to the needs of the local community, adapting the programme so that it will continue to address the issues that are most pressing and relevant, particularly in relation to education, employment, health and wellbeing. The CR programme is reviewed yearly for this purpose.

¹¹ For more information on these programmes, please refer to Section 8.2.5.2 of the Action Plan.

¹² Based on an average salary.

1.11 Actions which the Competent Authorities intend to take in the next five years, including any measures to preserve Quiet Areas

Appendix F sets out the actions BCA intends to take in the next five years.

1.12 Long-term strategy

This Action Plan will be reviewed, and updated if necessary, following any major development which affects the noise situation or the designation of further Quiet Areas by the Department, and at least every five years after it is approved.

BCA will continue to adhere to UK government policy as set out in the APF and other legislative requirements which may be introduced and will adopt any revised standards or limit values set for the industry by the UK government. The Action Plan will be reviewed in light of any significant policy changes.

BCA will also continue to be actively involved in the work of the Northern Ireland Environmental Noise Directive Steering Group (NIENDSG) to assess, prioritise and agree what actions are necessary.

BCA will continue to implement its existing noise management programme and will take further actions detailed in Section 9 of the Plan to prevent and reduce noise and any potential effects on health and wellbeing in addition to the Airport's ongoing CR programme geared towards supporting neighbouring communities.

1.13 Financial information: budgets, cost-effectiveness assessment, cost-benefit assessment

BCA is committed to the future costs, estimated at approximately £177,000 per year, for noise management and in support of this Action Plan.

1.14 Provisions envisaged for evaluating the implementation and the results of the Action Plan

To monitor and assess the Airport's effectiveness with regards to this Action Plan, several performance indicators/evaluation metrics are set out in Appendix F. BCA's performance against these indicators/metrics will be regularly reviewed internally and a report on progress will be provided to the Forum on an annual basis.

The annual report of noise contours as required under BCA's Planning Agreement will give an indication of any change in population exposure due to noise from BCA over the duration of this Action Plan. BCA will continue to record and evaluate noise complaints received and will undertake a further Community Attitudes Survey before the next Noise Action Plan is prepared. In addition, the

results of future rounds of noise mapping will be used to assess the impact of the noise management actions set out.

1.15 Estimates in terms of the reduction of the number of people affected

It is not possible to quantify the exact number of people who already benefit from the noise management programme which is currently in place at BCA, but it is likely to be significant. The programme contains noise reduction measures already in force. With respect to any future noise management measures, the estimation of any potential reduction in terms of the number of people affected will form part of the evaluation process.

This noise action plan provides data on the estimated number of people exposed to noise. An estimated 2,383 people are exposed to noise levels greater than 55 dB L_{den} from Belfast City Airport. Using the dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ indicator, the top 1% of the population (44 dwellings) are exposed to noise levels of 56-57 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$. These top 1% are not considered a specific problem/situation that needs to be improved through the use of a specific Noise Management Area.

Annex V of the END requires “estimates in terms of the reduction of the number of people affected (annoyed, sleep disturbed, or other)”. The noise action plan has not identified any additional controls above and beyond measures already in force. Therefore, no estimates of reductions in the number of people affected have been made.

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose

This Action Plan is prepared pursuant to the European Parliament and Council Directive for the assessment and management of environmental noise 2002/49/EC referred to as the Environmental Noise Directive ('END') and the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 ('the 2006 Regulations'). The purpose of the Action Plan is to describe how Belfast City Airport ('BCA') as the designated Competent Authority intends to prevent and reduce noise arising from its aircraft operations within the Belfast Agglomeration¹³, in line with the requirements of END and the 2006 Regulations.

It is one of a set of five action plans, the others being:

- The Roads Noise Action Plan
- The Railways Noise Action Plan
- The Industrial Noise Action Plan
- The Belfast International Airport Noise Action Plan

This is the fourth action plan to be produced by BCA under END and 2006 Regulations. It covers the period 2023-2028 and is based on the results of strategic noise mapping of aircraft operating at BCA in 2021 under the terms of the 2006 Regulations.

Annex V of the END sets out what action plans must include. This is detailed in Appendix A.

2.2 Requirement for noise action planning

END deals with noise from roads, rail, air traffic, industry and in agglomerations. The aim of END is to define a common approach intended to avoid, prevent or reduce on a prioritised basis, the harmful effects due to exposure to environmental noise.

The three main objectives of END are:

- To determine exposure to environmental noise, through noise mapping;
- To ensure information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public; and
- To prepare action plans based upon the noise mapping results, to prevent and reduce environmental noise where necessary, where exposure levels can induce harmful effects on human health and to preserve environmental noise quality where it is good.

¹³ For the definition of Agglomeration, see glossary in Appendix C.

END is implemented in Northern Ireland by the 2006 Regulations and applies to environmental noise levels in built-up areas, in public parks or in other quiet areas in agglomerations, and other noise-sensitive buildings and areas. The 2006 Regulations apply to noise from road, railway and airport sources, as well as industrial noise. The 2006 Regulations do not apply to noise that is caused by the person exposed to the noise, noise from domestic activities, noise created by neighbours, noise at workplaces, or noise inside means of transport or due to military activities in military areas.

2.3 Current status of END implementation

The 2006 Regulations outline several stages to manage, and where necessary, improve environmental noise. The stages to date are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: END stages

Stage	Detail	Due /Completion Date
1	Produce the first round of strategic noise maps for major roads, rail, airports and agglomerations	31 March 2007
2	Competent Authorities to draw up first round action plans to manage noise	30 April 2008 (18 July 2008 for industry and consolidated plans)
3	Produce the second round of strategic noise maps for major roads, rail, airports and agglomerations	31 March 2012
4	Competent Authorities to draw up second round action plans to manage noise	30 April 2013 (<i>extended by the Department until 18 July 2013</i>) ¹⁴
5	Produce the third round of strategic noise maps for major roads, rail, airports and agglomerations	31 March 2018
6	Competent Authorities to update, review, and if necessary, revise, action plans to manage noise	At least every five years after the date on which an action plan is adopted or approved
7	Produce the fourth round of strategic noise maps for major roads, rail, airports and agglomerations	21 November 2024
8	Competent Authorities to update, review, and if necessary, revise, action plans to manage noise	At least every five years after the date on which an action plan is adopted or approved

¹⁴ Agreed informally with the Department.

The first round ('Round 1') of strategic noise maps for BCA were produced based on aircraft movements in 2006. These maps were adopted by the then Department of the Environment, now Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ('the Department') and published on the Northern Ireland Noise website¹⁵ in 2007.

The Department published guidance in accordance with the 2006 Regulations for the purpose of identification of priorities for action plans in June 2008. This allowed the process of preparing draft Round 1 action plans and the subsequent public consultation on these plans to take place. On completion of this consultation, BCA's Noise Action Plan was finalised and was adopted formally by the Minister in June 2010 and submitted, in summary, to the European Commission. The Round 1 Noise Action Plan covered a five-year period from 2008 to 2013.

Under the 2006 Regulations, a second round ('Round 2') of strategic noise maps were produced for BCA based on aircraft movements in 2011. These maps were formally adopted by the Department and were published on the Northern Ireland Noise website in 2012.

On 18 February 2013, the Department issued *Noise Mapping and Action Planning Technical Guidance – Noise from Airports*¹⁶ ('the 2013 guidance') to assist with the implementation of Round 1 action plans, interpretation of Round 2 strategic noise maps and the preparation of Round 2 action plans.

A Round 2 draft Noise Action Plan was prepared based on BCA's 2011 strategic noise maps and having regard to the 2013 guidance issued by the Department. This draft Action Plan was subject to a formal public consultation between 14 June and 9 August 2013. On completion of this consultation, BCA's Noise Action Plan was finalised and was adopted formally by the Minister in January 2014 and submitted, in summary, to the European Commission. The Round 2 Noise Action Plan covered a five-year period from 2013 to 2018.

Under the 2006 Regulations, a third round ('Round 3') of strategic noise maps were produced for BCA based on aircraft movements in 2016. These maps were formally adopted by the Department and were published on the Department's website in January 2018.

A Round 3 Noise Action Plan was prepared based on BCA's 2016 strategic noise maps. In preparing this Action Plan, BCA has given regard to the 2013 guidance issued by the Department.

¹⁵ Now published on the Department's own website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/noise-maps>

¹⁶ DoE, 2013, *Op. cit.*

Under the 2006 Regulations, a fourth round ('Round 4') of strategic noise maps were produced for BCA based on aircraft movements in 2021. These maps are included in Appendix D and will be published on the Department's website. Appendix E details the data inputs the noise modelling is based on.

A Round 4 draft Noise Action Plan has now been prepared based on BCA's 2021 strategic noise maps. In preparing this Action Plan, BCA has given regard to the 2013 guidance issued by the Department.

The 2006 Regulations also require Member States to 'preserve environmental noise quality where it is good' through the identification and protection of designated Quiet Areas within agglomerations. As there is no prescriptive definition of what constitutes a Quiet Area, the Department developed criteria and a methodology for the identification and designation of Quiet Areas based on an extension of established good practice across the UK and Europe and following a public consultation including key stakeholders in Northern Ireland. The *Policy Guidance on the Identification, Designation and Management of Quiet Areas*¹⁷ was published in September 2016. As shown in 1.8.2, this guidance lists three quiet areas that were designated by the Minister on 20 September 2016 and explains how these areas are protected. The three areas are:

1. Conor Park/Stricklands Glen, Bangor West
2. Bashfordlands, Carrickfergus
3. Carnmoney Hill – Upper, Newtownabbey

The Department also launched a consultation on the designation of Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area on 2016. However, it has not been designated yet.

2.4 Status of Round 3 Noise Action Plan

BCA has reported on progress with regard to actions set out in the Round 3 Action Plan to the Airport Forum on a yearly basis. This has included:

- **Action:** BCA has maintain restricted operating hours. **Status: Complete**
- **Action:** BCA has maintained a bias of flights over Belfast Lough and has sought to maximise flights over Belfast Lough where it was safe and feasible to do so. **Status: Complete**
- **Action:** BCA has implemented a sound insulation scheme in alignment with the APF. **Status: Ongoing. The scheme threshold is 63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$. The airport checks every year as part of the annual performance report for eligible dwellings.**

¹⁷ DoE, 2016, *Op. cit.*

- **Action:** BCA has continued to operate and maintain its Noise & Track Monitoring System. **Status:** *Complete*
- **Action:** BCA has continued to commission independent noise specialists to prepare its annual summer contours to evaluate the noise climate. **Status:** *Complete*

2.5 Scope of the Noise Action Plan

END requires that action plans are designed to manage noise issues and effects at places near a major airport and for places near any airport within any relevant Agglomeration which is defined as having more than 100,000 inhabitants (for Round 2 and subsequent rounds thereafter).

2.6 Effects of noise

END defines environmental noise as *“unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise from road, rail, airports and from industrial sites”*¹⁸.

The extent to which noise affects people depends on its nature, intensity, duration, the activity being undertaken by the individual at the time of exposure and the individual's sensitivity. The effects of noise are also dependent on the quality of the sound and the individual's attitude towards it. A sound that one person may find relaxing, such as rain against a window, may irritate another.

Noise has the potential to affect health in a variety of ways. Auditory effects occur as a direct impact of the noise, (i.e. noise of sufficient intensity to physically damage the hearing organs). Such risks are more commonly associated with occupational health or prolonged exposure to loud music. The Airport does not present any direct auditory risk to local communities, and occupational and passenger risk is well addressed through existing operational procedures.

Non-auditory health effects associated with exposure to environmental noise can include annoyance, sleep disturbance, and impacts on academic performance, and subject to the exposure level and type, can lead to hypertension, which is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

The health effects that may result from aircraft noise that are considered within this Noise Action Plan are annoyance, sleep disturbance and academic performance, as these impacts are supported by the most reliable research, are immediate, and typically precede the less well understood cardiovascular and

¹⁸ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:189:0012:0025:EN:PDF> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

psychological health effects¹⁹. This Action Plan is thereby designed to prevent and reduce noise impacts in order to protect health and to contribute positively to the quality of life and wellbeing of neighbouring communities.

2.7 Action Plan layout

Section 3 of this Action Plan provides a description of BCA and the agglomeration under consideration. Section 4 outlines the authority responsible. Section 5 contains information on the regulatory and policy framework including any limit values in place. Section 6 summarises the findings of the noise mapping process. Section 7 outlines the public consultation process. Section 8 gives details of the action planning process. Section 9 outlines the actions BCA intends to take to prevent and reduce noise over the duration of the Action Plan. Section 10 sets out BCA's long term strategy. Section 11 details the financial information available. Section 12 sets out the provisions envisaged for evaluating the implementation and the results of the Action Plan and Section 13 provides an estimate of the reduction in the number of people affected as a result of this Action Plan.

¹⁹ ERCD Report 0907, 2010. *Environmental Noise and Health: A Review*, [online] Available at: <https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/13857> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

3. Characteristics

3.1 Belfast Agglomeration

The Regulations²⁰ state that DAERA are to prepare maps that identify all agglomerations:

- Having a population in excess of 100,000 persons; and
- A population density equal to or greater than 500 people per km²; and
- Which it considers to be urbanised.

The Belfast urban area remains the only agglomeration area in Northern Ireland for the Round 4 noise mapping. In Round 4, the Belfast Agglomeration area from Round 3 was re-evaluated and redefined using Census 2021 data at the data zone level, as well as 1 km and 100 m grid areas. The updated Round 4 Belfast Agglomeration area continues to accurately represent the densely populated regions surrounding the Belfast urban area, complies with the Regulations, aligns with the population distribution throughout Belfast, and has been adopted for Round 4.

The Round 4 Belfast Agglomeration has a total area of 208.5 km², representing a 0.9 km² decrease on the Round 3 Belfast Agglomeration boundary. The Belfast Agglomeration boundary for Round 4 was developed through merging and dissolving the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) 2005 and 2015 settlement boundaries, then clipping the dissolved boundaries to the OSNI Largescale NI boundary.

The Round 4 Belfast Agglomeration data capture extent was developed through buffering the agglomeration boundary by 3km and clipping to the OSNI Largescale NI boundary.

The Belfast Agglomeration encompasses Belfast and parts of the Lisburn and Castlereagh, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Mid and East Antrim, and Ards and North Down council areas. Noise sources identified within the Belfast Agglomeration include roads, railways, industry and BCA. Figure 1 shows the extent of the Agglomeration and the location of BCA within it.

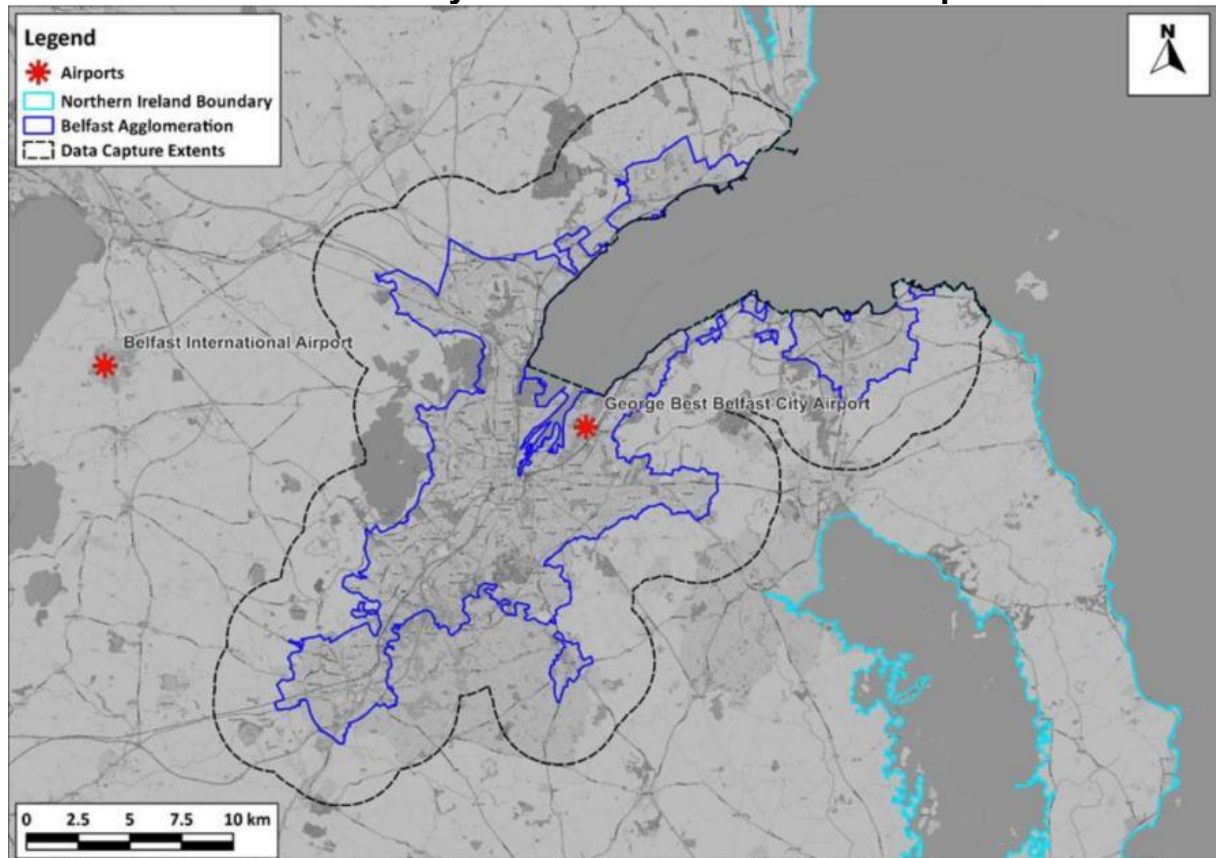
Descriptions of the major roads, major railways, major airports and other noise sources outside the Belfast Agglomeration are contained in other relevant action plans referred to previously.

²⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/387/contents/made>

3.2 Airport description

BCA is owned by 3i Infrastructure Fund. It is a regional airport serving a range of destinations, mainly in Great Britain with some European routes. Situated on the south shore of Belfast Lough adjacent to the A2, one of the main arterial routes into the city, BCA is a key strategic gateway to the province.

Figure 1: Belfast Agglomeration Data Capture Extents, Including George Best Belfast City and Belfast International Airports



In 2021, BCA catered for 12,849 aircraft movements, which represents a 70% decrease in movements compared to 2016, upon which Round 3 strategic noise mapping was based.

Although not meeting the threshold to be defined as a *Major Airport* under the END (i.e. having movements of 50,000 per year, excluding training on light aircraft), noise mapping has to be undertaken for BCA as it falls within the Belfast Agglomeration.

The runway at BCA is aligned in a north-easterly to south-westerly direction at 040/220 degrees. There is housing to the south and east of the Airport (towards Belfast city centre) but the Airport is surrounded to the north and west by Belfast Lough and the Belfast Harbour industrial estate.

Current opening hours at BCA are 06:30 hours to 21:30 hours with extensions for delayed aircraft permissible from 21:31 hours to 23:59 hours, in exceptional circumstances.

4. The authority responsible

The 2006 Regulations state that the *Competent Authority*²¹ for drawing up Action Plans for Major Airports and other airports that were mapped is the relevant airport operator. For this Action Plan, the Competent Authority is Belfast City Airport. The relevant contact details for BCA in relation to this plan are as follows:

Environment Department
Belfast City Airport
Sydenham Bypass
Belfast
BT3 9JH

Email: environment@bca.aero

The Northern Ireland Environmental Noise Directive Steering Group ('NIENDSG') was set up by the Department in 2005 to provide input into the development of the strategic noise maps for Northern Ireland and subsequent Action Plans. This group is made up of representatives from each Competent Authority including:

- Department for Infrastructure
- Translink
- Belfast City Airport
- Belfast International Airport
- The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

²¹ The other Competent Authorities as per the 2006 Regulations are the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (for industrial sources within agglomerations), the Department for Infrastructure (for major roads and all roads within agglomerations), the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (Translink) (for major railways and railways within agglomerations) and airport operators (Belfast International Airport).

5. The regulatory and policy framework

5.1 International

The International Civil Aviation Organisation ('ICAO') is the United Nation's body that oversees the worldwide civil aviation industry. At an international level, ICAO sets standards and regulations for environmental protection. ICAO has adopted a set of principles and guidance constituting the so-called **Balanced Approach**²² to aircraft noise management, which encourages ICAO Contracting States to:

- Mitigate aviation noise through selection at a local level, the optimum combination of four key measures:
 1. Reducing noise at source (from use of quieter aircraft),
 2. Making best use of land (plan and manage the land surrounding airports),
 3. Introducing operational noise abatement procedures (by using specific runways, routes or procedures),
 4. Imposing noise-related operating restrictions (such as a night time operating ban or phasing out of noisier aircraft);
- Select the most cost-effective range of measures;
- Not introduce noise-related operating restrictions unless the authority is in a position, on the basis of studies and consultations, to determine whether a noise problem exists and having determined that an operating restriction is a cost-effective way of dealing with the problem.

ICAO has also set standards for aircraft noise certification which are contained in Volume 1 of Annex 16 to the Convention on Civil Aviation. This document sets maximum acceptable noise levels for different aircraft during take-off and landing, categorised as Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 14. Chapter 2 aircraft have been prevented from operating within the EU since 2002, unless they are granted specific exemption, and therefore the vast majority of aircraft fall within Chapter 3, 4 and 14 parameters. These aircraft are quieter than Chapter 2 aircraft. Chapter 4 standards have applied to all new aircraft manufactured since 2006. These aircraft must meet a standard of being 10 dB quieter than Chapter 3 aircraft. Chapter 14 was adopted by the ICAO in 2014. This represents an increase in stringency of 7 dB compared with Chapter 4 and applies to new aircraft submitted for certification after 31 December 2017.

In its **Guidelines for Community Noise**²³ the World Health Organisation makes several recommendations for noise levels in specific environments to avoid certain health effects occurring. However, in practice, in town centres and densely populated residential areas, ambient noise levels will generally be at, or above, these levels.

²² <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Pages/noise.aspx> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

²³ Berglund, B., Lindvall, T. & Schwela, D., 2000. *Guidelines for Community Noise*. London: World Health Organisation.

According to a report by the Health Protection Agency (HPA)²⁴, 50% of the UK population lives in areas where daytime sound levels exceed those recommended in the WHO Guidelines for Community Noise.

In its **Night Noise Guidelines for Europe** the World Health Organisation²⁵ makes recommendations for noise levels during the night-time period to protect human health. Similarly, the HPA have reported that two-thirds of the UK populations live in areas where the night-time guidelines recommended by the WHO are exceeded²⁶.

5.2 European

EU Member States must comply with published regulations and directives. Those significant to this Action Plan are as follows:

Directive 2002/49/EC²⁷ relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, referred to as the **Environmental Noise Directive** ('END'), requires Member States to produce strategic noise maps for the main sources of environmental noise, i.e. major roads, major railways, major airports and industry. END also requires strategic noise maps to be produced for agglomerations with a population of more than 250,000 persons and a certain population density in 2007 and those with a population of more than 100,000 persons and a certain population density²⁸ in 2012 and subsequent rounds. Action plans must be produced based on the results of the noise mapping.

Directive 2006/93/EC²⁹ replaced Directive 92/14/EEC and banned the use of Chapter 2 aircraft in the EU from 1st April 2002.

Regulation 598/2014³⁰ repealed Directive 2002/30/EC in 2014 and establishes rules and procedures for the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions. It maintains previous requirements such as the adoption of ICAO's balanced approach.

²⁴ Moorhouse, A., 2010. *Environmental Noise and Health in the UK A report by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Noise and Health*. Health Protection Agency, [online] Available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140714120950/http://www.hpa.org.uk/noise> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

²⁵ World Health Organisation, 2009. *Night Noise Guidelines for Europe*, [online] Available at:

<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/326486/97892289041737-eng.pdf> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

²⁶ Moorhouse, A., 2010, *Op. cit.*

²⁷ For further information see the European Commission Environmental Noise Directive website:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/noise/directive_en.htm [Accessed 16 October 2024]

²⁸ In the Regulations, the population density used is equal to or greater than 500 people per km².

²⁹ <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/35c76c9e-5fa6-46eb-82f0-d08d320f9ed8/language-en> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

³⁰ <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b6947ca7-f1f6-11e3-8cd4-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

5.3 National

The ***Aeroplane Noise Regulations 1999***³¹ require that all civil propeller and jet aeroplanes registered in the UK shall have a noise certificate. A similar requirement applies to any foreign registered aeroplane which cannot land or take off in the UK without a noise certificate granted by the competent authority in the state where it is registered.

The ***Aerodromes (Noise Restrictions) (Rules and Procedures) Regulations 2003***³² provide designated airports with additional powers to introduce operating restrictions. Using the power granted to it by these Regulations, the operation of those aircraft types which are only ‘marginally compliant’³³ with ICAO’s Chapter 3 noise certification standard has been prohibited at BCA.

The UK government’s policy on aviation, including the management of noise, is set out in the ***Aviation Policy Framework (‘APF’)***³⁴. The APF was published on 22 March 2013 following a two-year process involving an extensive scoping exercise and public consultation on a draft version of the framework.

The APF sets out the government’s high-level objectives for the aviation sector and the policies to achieve these objectives. The APF replaced the 2003 ***Future of Air Transport - White Paper***³⁵, more generally known as the *Air Transport White Paper* (‘ATWP’). The APF includes the government’s overall policy objective on noise³⁶ and a number of measures to reduce and mitigate noise.

The APF considers the 57 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ contour as *“the average level of daytime aircraft noise marking the approximate onset of significant community annoyance”*³⁷. However, the government acknowledges that *“this does not mean that all people within this contour will experience significant adverse effects from aircraft noise. Nor does it mean that no-one outside of this contour will consider themselves annoyed by aircraft noise”*³⁸.

In addition, the APF expects airport operators: *“to offer households exposed to levels of noise of 69 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ or more, assistance with the costs of moving”*³⁹ and; *“to offer acoustic insulation to noise-sensitive buildings, such as schools and hospitals, exposed to levels of noise of 63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ or more. Where*

³¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/1452/contents/made>

³² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2003/1742/regulation/2/made> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

³³ Aircraft that meet the Chapter 3 noise certification standard by a margin of 5 dB or less: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-01-1683_en.htm [Accessed 16 October 2024]

³⁴ DfT, 2013, *Op. cit.*

³⁵ DfT, 2003. *The Future of Air Transport*. Norwich: The Stationery Office.

³⁶ The government’s overall objective on noise is *“to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise”* (DfT, 2013, p.57).

³⁷ DfT, 2013, *Op. cit.*, p.58

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.58

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.63

*acoustic insulation cannot provide an appropriate or cost-effective solution, alternative mitigation measures should be offered*⁴⁰.

Where airport operators are considering developments which will result in an increase in noise, the APF expects, as a minimum, airport operators *“to offer financial assistance towards acoustic insulation to residential properties which experience an increase in noise of 3 dB or more which leaves them exposed to levels of noise of 63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ or more*⁴¹.

Although the APF remains the current national aviation policy document, in October 2017 the DfT reported on the outcome of consultations regarding changes to UK airspace which included a review of criteria and metrics for assessing aircraft noise. The response states that *“the policies set out within this document provide an update to some of the policies on aviation noise contained within the APF, and should be viewed as the current government policy*⁴². Proposals include:

- The creation of an Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) as an advisory non-departmental public body;
- The removal of the 3-dB minimum change requirement for financial assistance towards acoustic insulation to residential properties moved into the 63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ level or above; and
- The acknowledgement that a level of 54 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ now corresponds to the onset of significant community annoyance and replaces the 57 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ level in the APF and that some adverse effects of annoyance can now be seen to occur down to 51 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$.

UK Airspace Policy: A framework for balanced decisions on the design and use of airspace (2017)⁴³. In 2017, the government released a consultation on an update to UK airspace policy to meet the needs of passengers, communities, the aviation sector and the wider economy.

Within this policy, there is again an endorsement of the ICAO ‘Balanced Approach’ as outlined above. There is a recognition of the economic benefits of aviation, which must be balanced against the negative impacts of noise to surrounding communities in order to achieve sustainable growth. It is recognised that the aviation sector is a major contributor to the economy, and policy supports its growth within a framework which maintains a balance between the benefits of aviation and its costs, particularly climate change and noise. It is accepted that this is especially important for those who live close to airports and bear a particular burden of the costs. The policy therefore aims to

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.63

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.63

⁴² DfT, 2017a, p.7

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-airspace-policy-a-framework-for-the-design-and-use-of-airspace>

strengthen the arrangements for involving communities near airports in decisions which affect them. The key changes in the policy are:

- The creation of an Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) – This body will be established to help ensure that the noise impacts of airspace changes are properly considered and give communities a greater stake in decisions relating to noise management. It will have a role in facilitating industry and communities to communicate effectively in order to achieve balanced decisions and provide expertise on noise management.
- Changes to aviation noise compensation policy, to improve fairness and transparency. Airspace changes have been incorporated into the existing compensation policy so that compensation policy is the same for all changes which affect noise impacts, regardless of whether they are a result of infrastructure change or airspace change.
- A new requirement for presentation of options analysis in airspace change, to enable communities to engage with a transparent airspace change process and ensure all options are considered. The Civil Aviation Authority's airspace change process has been revised to take account of this change.
- New metrics and appraisal guidance to assess noise impacts and their impacts on health and quality of life. In particular this will ensure noise impacts are considered much further away from airports than at present. These adverse effects should be assessed using a risk-based approach above the lowest-observed adverse-effect level (LOAEL), using the DfT's transport appraisal guidance WebTAG. Supplementing this risk-based approach with frequency-based noise metrics will ensure that aircraft noise and its impacts can be accurately factored into decisions.

The **Civil Aviation Act 2012**⁴⁴ placed a new duty on the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to make information about the environmental performance of the aviation sector available to the general public and measures taken to limit adverse environmental effects. Following a public consultation launched in May 2013, The CAA published its policy for carrying out its information duties under this Act in January 2014⁴⁵.

Air Navigation Guidance (2017) ⁴⁶ serves as guidance to the CAA on its environmental objectives when carrying out its air navigation functions, and to the CAA and wider industry on airspace and noise management.

⁴⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/19/contents/enacted> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

⁴⁵ The Civil Aviation Authority, 2014. CAP 1143 *The Civil Aviation Authority's policy for carrying out its information duties under the Civil Aviation Act 2012*, [online] Available at: <https://www.caa.co.uk/our-work/publications/documents/content/cap1143/> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

⁴⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-air-navigation-guidance-2017>

To ensure a consistent and transparent assessment of the options within and across proposals, a single appraisal methodology should be followed. Options must follow WebTAG to aid objective decision making. ICCAN is mentioned as a source of best practice guidance on aviation noise for participants in the airspace change process.

The Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) was established in 2019 in the UK to address issues related to aircraft noise and improve public trust in aviation noise management. However, ICCAN ceased operations on **30th September 2021** as part of a government decision to streamline aviation regulation. Its responsibilities were transferred to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to consolidate expertise and reduce duplication of functions. The decision to close ICCAN was made to ensure a more integrated approach to managing and regulating noise issues within the aviation sector.

CAP1616 Airspace Design: Guidance on the regulatory process for changing airspace design, including community engagement requirements (revision i Version dated November 2023 Effective from January 2024.)⁴⁷ was published in January 2024 and superseded the previous CAP725: Airspace Change Process Guidance Document. This guidance sets out the framework for the stages of the process and activities involved, from the conception of the need for a change to the airspace design, to consulting and engaging with those potentially impacted, assessing the impacts of different design options from a safety, operational and environmental perspective, to the ultimate regulatory decision. Additionally, if the change is approved, this guidance covers implementation and subsequent review of that change.

CAP1616 introduces new noise metrics that must be considered when changes to the flightpaths are made below an altitude of 7,000 feet. This includes the use of 'N' Contours which identify the number of overflights an area is likely to experience that register above a prescribed noise level, for example 65 dB(A). The new guidance also requires airspace change sponsors to use DfT's WebTag tool when carrying out an options appraisal of new procedures in order to help understanding of health impacts relating to noise. There is also an expectation that Airports, regardless of whether or not an Airspace Change has been carried out, will make route utilisation statistics publicly available. This is in order to help improve transparency and allow the public to better understand aircraft operations in their location.

Sustainable Aviation (SA)⁴⁸ is a long-term strategy which sets out the collective approach of UK aviation to tackling the challenge of ensuring a sustainable future for the aviation industry. SA was launched in 2005 and brings together the main players from UK airlines, airports, manufacturers and air

⁴⁷<https://www.caa.co.uk/data-and-publications/publications/documents/content/cap1616i/> [Accessed 11th May 2026]

⁴⁸<http://www.sustainableaviation.co.uk/> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

navigation service providers. Signatories to the strategy are committed to collectively delivering significant reductions in carbon dioxide emissions, nitrogen oxide emissions and aircraft noise. BCA became a signatory to the strategy in 2005.

In April 2013, SA published a Noise Road-Map which was updated in 2025⁴⁹. This document is a blueprint for managing noise from aviation sources to 2050. It sets out the aviation industry's expert view of how UK aviation can continue to develop in a sustainable fashion. It shows that, as well as meeting people's increasing aspiration to fly, and helping the economy flourish through increased connectivity and trade, the aviation industry can also make major improvements in reducing the noise of flying owing to the development and introduction of quieter aircraft, better operational procedures and controls on how land around airports is developed. Furthermore, this can be achieved while passenger numbers are expected to more than double by 2050, and with air freight expected to increase more than seven-fold over the same period.

In their latest progress report on their long-term strategy⁵⁰, SA notes in relation to noise that they have made good progress against their commitments in the 2013 Road-Map.

Aviation 2050: The Future of UK Aviation, A consultation (December 2018)⁵¹ outlines proposals for a new aviation strategy and addresses a wide range of associated issues. The Strategy sets out that the Government intends to put in place a stronger and clearer framework in order to ensure the sector is sufficiently incentivised to reduce noise, or to put mitigation measures in place where reductions are not possible.

Aviation 2050 also set out in paragraph 3.122 that the Government proposed the noise insulation measures including:

- *"To extend the noise insulation policy threshold beyond the current 63 dB L_{Aeq,16h} contour to 60 dB L_{Aeq,16h}".*
- *"To require all airports to review the effectiveness of existing schemes. This should include how effective the insulation is and whether other factors (such as ventilation) need to be considered, and also whether levels of contributions are affecting take-up";*
- *"The Government or the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise (ICCAN) to issue new guidance to airports on best practice for noise insulation schemes, to improve consistency".*

⁴⁹ Sustainable Aviation, 2025. *Quieter Roadmap*, [online] Available at: https://www.sustainableaviation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SA_QuieterRoadmap_Report_Feb25.pdf [Accessed 28 March 2025]

⁵⁰ Sustainable Aviation, 2017. *Progress Report 2015-2017*, [online] Available at: <http://www.sustainableaviation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SA-Progress-repoindeprt-2015-17-1.pdf> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

⁵¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/aviation-2050-the-future-of-uk-aviation>

Flightpath to the Future (2022) ⁵² is a strategic framework for the aviation sector that supports the Department for Transport's vision for a modern, innovative and efficient sector over the next 10 years.

FtF contains a ten-point plan for the future of UK aviation. Point 4 includes that the Government will *"continue to work with the sector to reduce the localised impacts of aviation from noise and air pollution"*.

FtF also details how the CAA has assumed most of the functions previously performed by ICCAN and that the Government will work closely with the CAA on these issues. *"This will include collaboration on the CAA's plans to create a new Sustainability Panel, designed to provide independent expert advice on a range of environmental issues including carbon, noise and air quality."*

It is also stated that:

"the Government set out new policy proposals to tackle these localised impacts through the Aviation 2050 consultation (2018). These included a clearer noise policy framework alongside measures to incentivise best operational practice to reduce noise and measures to improve airport noise insulation schemes. As the sector recovers, and air travel volumes increase again, these aims remain very relevant and we will set out next steps in 2022/23".

The publication of the Airports National Policy Statement ("ANPS") formed part of the Government's wider programme of "next steps".

Overarching Aviation Noise Policy (March 2023) ⁵³. In March 2023 the government published their revised overarching aviation noise policy statement with the intention to *"provide clarity for airports and their stakeholders preparing or responding to noise action plan consultations"*. The revised overarching aviation noise policy statement is:

"The government's overall policy on aviation noise is to balance the economic and consumer benefits of aviation against their social and health implications in line with the International Civil Aviation Organisation's Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management. This should take into account the local and national context of both passenger and freight operations, and recognise the additional health impacts of night flights."

"The impact of aviation noise must be mitigated as much as is practicable and realistic to do so, limiting, and where possible reducing, the total adverse impacts on health and quality of life from aviation noise."

The above text is the policy statement. Additional contextual information is reproduced below:

⁵² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flightpath-to-the-future-a-strategic-framework-for-the-aviation-sector>

⁵³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aviation-noise-policy-statement/overarching-aviation-noise-policy>

“In Aviation 2050 we consulted on setting a new objective “to limit, and where possible, reduce total adverse effects on health and quality of life from aviation noise.” This was to bring national aviation noise policy in line with airspace policy updated in 2017. Consultation responses had general support for focus on the total adverse effects, although some respondents highlighted the potential ambiguity of “limit, and where possible, reduce”, with some suggestions that policy should be to reduce aviation noise. We consider that “limit, and where possible reduce” remains appropriate wording. An overall reduction in total adverse effects is desirable, but in the context of sustainable growth an increase in total adverse effects may be offset by an increase in economic and consumer benefits. In circumstances where there is an increase in total adverse effects, “limit” would mean to mitigate and minimise adverse effects, in line with the Noise Policy Statement for England.”

The Aviation Noise Policy Statement, published by the Department for Transport, sets out the UK Government’s overarching approach to the management of aviation noise. While responsibility for environmental noise policy is devolved and the Statement does not have direct statutory effect in Northern Ireland, it remains a relevant national policy reference.

5.4 Regional / Local

Powers relating to how noise is managed at individual airports and to set noise controls at airports, as well as controls set through the planning system, are devolved in relation to Northern Ireland. Specific proposals, such as the implementation of EU Regulation 598/2014 on ICAO’s balanced approach will therefore be for the Devolved Administrations.

Under the ***Airports (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 (‘the 1994 Order’)***⁵⁴, the former Department for Regional Development (now Department for Infrastructure (DFI)) has a power to direct airport authorities to take action for limiting noise and vibration or mitigating their effect and as such, has a role to play in relation to civil aircraft noise at airports in Northern Ireland. The 1994 Order also makes a provision for airports to provide facilities for consultation with its stakeholders on any matter concerning the management or administration of the Airport which affects their interests. BCA set up the Belfast City Airport Forum (‘the Forum’) in line with this provision.

The Directive 2002/49/EC is implemented in Northern Ireland by the ***Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (‘the 2006 Regulations’)***⁵⁵. The 2006 Regulations required the Competent Authorities to produce an Action Plan in 2008, 2013 and every five years thereafter, based on the results of the noise mapping. The 2006 Regulations also require the noise

⁵⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1994/426/part/III?view=plain> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

⁵⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2006/387/contents/made> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

maps to be reviewed and revised, if necessary, from time to time and whenever a major development occurs affecting the existing noise situation. The 2006 Regulations do not apply to noise caused by the person exposed to the noise, noise from domestic activities, noise created by neighbours⁵⁶, noise at work places⁵⁷, noise inside means of transport or noise due to military activities in military areas.

The Noise Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (NPSNI)⁵⁸ published in September 2014 is designed to provide clarity regarding current policies and practices to enable noise management decisions to be made in the wider context, at the most appropriate levels, in a timely and cost-effective manner. The NPSNI sets out 3 objectives which are underpinned by the principles of sustainable development:

1. Avoid or mitigate significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;
2. Mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and
3. Where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life.

By setting out these clear policy aims, the NPSNI provides the necessary clarity and direction to enable decisions to be made regarding what is an acceptable noise burden to place on society, and the overarching objective to support healthy communities.

If a proposed development is likely to be a source of noise, its location and measures regarding the level or timing of noise emissions may be controlled through the planning system. A **Planning Agreement** is in force between BCA and DfI.

On 1 February 2018, DfI received an Investigation Report from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman into a complaint regarding delayed flights after 9.30pm at BCA. In response to this report, on 1 November 2018, DfI published **Guidance and Administrative Framework for Monitoring of Delayed Aircraft after 9.30pm at George Best Belfast City (BCA)**⁵⁹. This provides guidance on the meaning of exceptional circumstances for use by its staff and an administrative framework, including operating procedures for analysing data, record keeping and recording reasons for decisions.

⁵⁶ The Noise Act 1996 gives district councils in Northern Ireland, specific powers to deal with noise at night from domestic premises. Noise from domestic activities is also controlled under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

⁵⁷ Noise at work is governed by the Control of Noise at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

⁵⁸ Department of the Environment, 2014. *Noise Policy Statement for Northern Ireland*, [online] Available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/noise-policy-statement-ni.PDF> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

⁵⁹ Department for Infrastructure, 2018. *Guidance and Administrative Framework for Monitoring of Delayed Aircraft after 9.30pm at George Best Belfast City (GBBCA)*, [online] Available at: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/george-best-belfast-city-airport-planning-agreement> [Accessed 16 October 2024]

The ***Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP)*** for BCA⁶⁰ contains information about the aerodrome for aircrew. It includes relevant noise restrictions, such as those on the timing of engine ground runs and aircraft types and preferred runways for arrivals and departures. It also sets out the Airport's noise abatement procedures (detailed further in Section 8.2.5.1).

A list of the current regulations and policy for controlling noise in Northern Ireland, as well as local and national sustainable development plans, policies and strategies considered during the action planning process, is contained in Appendix B.

5.5 Any limit values in place

Currently there are no noise limit values set under END for the UK nor do the 2006 Regulations set any limit values.

As stated above, the APF sets out thresholds above which it expects airport operators to offer households assistance with the costs of moving (69 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ or higher) and to offer acoustic insulation to households and noise sensitive buildings (63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ or higher).

BCA is designated as a Competent Authority under the ***Aerodromes (Noise Restrictions) (Rules and Procedures) Regulations 2003*** and has used the powers granted by the Regulations to prohibit the noisiest aircraft types.

The covenants in the current Planning Agreement include the following:

- **Annual Performance Report** - to submit the Annual Performance Report (APR) by 31st March in each calendar year. Within the APR to report on the performance and compliance with the covenants in the Planning Agreement.
- **Operating hours** - no Scheduled Aircraft except Delayed Aircraft shall use the Aerodrome during Prohibited Hours. Only in exceptional circumstances to permit Delayed Aircraft to use the Aerodrome during Extended Hours.
- **Aircraft Movements** - A limit on the number of flights per annum - Not to accept more than 48,000 Air Traffic Movements in any period of twelve months.
- **Aircraft Types** - Restriction on noisier aircraft types - To accept at the Aerodrome in respect of jet aircraft only Air Traffic Movements that comply with the certificate limits as laid down in Chapter 3 of Annex 16 and which are not "Marginally Compliant".
- **Approaches** - Belfast Lough bias - To maintain a bias in favour of approaches and climb outs by Aircraft over Belfast Lough

⁶⁰ EGAC Belfast/City, [online] Available at: <https://nats-uk.ead-it.com/cms-nats/opencms/en/Publications/AIP/ & https://www.aurora.nats.co.uk/htmlAIP/Publications/2026-04-16-AIRAC/html/index-en-GB.html>

[Accessed 20 April 2026]. Please note that the EGAC AD 2.2 AERODROME GEOGRAPHICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DATA AIP is updated every month.

- **Noise management**
 - Limit on noise control area - The area enclosed by the 57 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ contour shall not exceed 5.2 square kilometres.
 - A Quota Count restriction of 4,665 per summer period.
 - Annual noise contour reporting.
 - Operate and maintain an integrated noise and track keeping system.
 - Use of continuous descent approached at the aerodrome.
 - Departure noise limits. To be reviewed every 5 years.
 - Fixed electrical ground power to be available at all taxi-in/push-out stands.
- **Sound insulation scheme** – A sound insulation scheme is to be implemented for eligible dwellings exposed to levels exceeding 63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$.

6. Summary of the results of the noise mapping

6.1 Round 4 noise mapping process

Strategic noise maps were prepared by Noise Consultants Limited and Acustica Ltd on behalf of BCA⁶¹ and were based on aircraft movements during the calendar year of 2021 using the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT 3e) modelling software, which implements the calculation methodology described in the fourth edition of ECAC Doc.29. The development of the airport noise model required several data inputs, those which relate directly to the Airport, and those which relate to air traffic movements.

The datasets and calculation methodology, and therefore calculation extents for deriving the statistics found in the Round Four report differ from those used in previous rounds of noise mapping.

The first three rounds of strategic noise maps have been developed using computation methods set out in Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. 140/2006) (ECAC Doc 29 2nd Edition), however Round 4 requires the use of the Common Noise Assessment Methods for Europe (CNOSSOS-EU) method (ECAC Doc 29 4th Edition). It is therefore not appropriate to make direct comparisons between the exposure statistics derived for Round 4 with those derived for earlier rounds due to the changes both in the calculation and exposure assessment methodologies.

Following the assessment of noise levels, analysis was undertaken using datasets (GIS dataset and Residential Population Location Dataset) developed to present dwelling and population locations.

Noise maps were presented as noise contours for several indicators relating to the average noise level in decibels (dB) over specific periods of time – as follows:

- L_{day} – annual average daytime noise level (07:00-19:00 hours);
- $L_{evening}$ – annual average evening noise level (19:00-23:00 hours);
- L_{night} – annual night-time noise level (23:00-07:00 hours);
- L_{den} – annual average 24-hour noise level (day-evening-night) but with evening values weighted by 5 dB(A) and the night values weighted by 10 dB(A).

The maps were also produced for $L_{Aeq,16h}$ (07:00-23:00 hours) as this is the primary indicator used by UK airports when mapping aircraft noise⁶².

⁶¹ Noise Consultants Limited and Acustica Ltd were commissioned by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to prepare noise maps. As part of the commission, noise maps have been prepared, all associated population exposure data and supplementary reports as required under the 2006 Regulations and the Directive.

⁶² DoE, 2013, *Op. cit.*

It is important to highlight the difference between how the annual $L_{Aeq,16h}$ noise contours are calculated for END purposes, and the $L_{Aeq,16h}$ noise contours which are prepared annually for BCA in line with the Airport's Planning Agreement. As shown in Table 2, the primary difference between the two is that the Planning Agreement contours only consider flights in the summer 92-day period (16 June-15 September) and are based on the average modal split over the 92 days. Furthermore, all flights are included regardless of whether they occur outside the 07:00-23:00 period. END contours take into account all flights in the year but only those occurring during the 07:00-23:00 period. They are based on the average modal split over the whole year.

Table 2: Comparison between END and Planning Agreement $L_{Aeq,16h}$ contours

$L_{Aeq,16h}$ contours	END	Planning Agreement
Reporting period:	Annual	Summer 92-day period (16 June-15 Sept)
Flights included:	Flights between 07:00-23:00	All flights (irrespective of time)
Modal Split⁶³:	Average over year	Average over summer 92-day period

Consequently, the END and Planning Agreement contours for the $L_{Aeq,16h}$ indicator cannot be directly compared. The thresholds set out in the APF in terms of $L_{Aeq,16h}$ are also based on the summer 92-day period.

Noise maps for BCA within the Belfast Agglomeration can be found in Appendices D and data specification in Appendix E.

The results of the strategic noise mapping process help to provide an understanding of:

- Where environmental noise is located;
- The approximate magnitude of noise levels within the assessment area; and
- The approximate number of people exposed to various levels of environmental noise.

There are limitations with strategic noise maps as the noise levels represented by the maps do not necessarily correspond to the noise level which would be experienced at any given point on a given day but reflect the long-term average. However, as the noise maps for BCA have been validated using actual noise measurements and flight information from the Airport's Noise and Track Monitoring System (detailed further in Section 8.2.4) they do provide a good indication of the overall exposure of the population to environmental noise.

⁶³ See glossary in Appendix C.

6.2 Area exposed to BCA noise bands

The results of the area analysis of the noise contours for the various noise bands are set out in Table 3 (in terms of km²).

Table 3: Area exposed to BCA noise bands

L _{den}		L _{night}		L _{Aeq,16h}	
Noise Band dB	R4 2021 (km ²)	Noise Band dB	R4 2021 (km ²)	Noise Band dB	R4 2021 (km ²)
50-54	N/A	45-49	0	50-54	N/A
55-59	2	50-54	0	55-59	2
60-64	0	55-59	0	60-64	0
65-69	0	60-64	0	65-69	0
70-74	0	65-69	0	70-74	0
>75	0	>70	0	>75	0

6.3 Commentary on the results of the area analysis

For Round 4 there is a requirement to use the Common Noise Assessment Methods in Europe (CNOSSOS-EU) methodology (equivalent to ECAC Doc 29 4th Edition, December 2016), which is somewhat different to the methodology used in previous rounds.

The area exposed to aircraft noise follows the north-east to south-west orientation of the runway. As arriving aircraft approach the airfield along the line of the 'extended runway centreline', while departing aircraft follow the noise abatement tracks (as described in Section 8.2.5.1), the shape of the contours is not entirely symmetrical. Contours to the north-east of the airfield are slightly to the north of the runway centreline owing to departing aircraft following the required 6-degree left turn after take-off over Belfast Lough. Contours to the south-west of the airfield are slightly to the south of the runway centreline as almost all traffic departing over the city executes a left turn to get on track to its destination.

It can also be noted that the contours exhibit bulges around the runway ends. This is due to the additional engine thrust required at an aircraft's 'start-of-roll' (i.e. when it commences moving along the runway prior to take-off).

6.4 An evaluation of the estimated number of dwellings and population exposed to noise

The number of dwellings and people in dwellings assigned to the buildings within the model were determined through analysis of OSNI Pointer, OSNI Fusion and CENSUS 2021 data⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ Belfast City Airport Modelling Report, 6th February 2025 Revision 4

The results of the dwelling and population exposure assessments for BCA are set out in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Dwellings exposed to BCA noise bands

L_{den}		L_{night}		L_{Aeq,16h}	
Noise Band dB	R4 2021	Noise Band dB	R4 2021	Noise Band dB	R4 2021
50-54	10,190	45-49	0	50-54	7,974
55-59	1,207	50-54	0	55-59	925
60-64	0	55-59	0	60-64	0
65-69	0	60-64	0	65-69	0
≥70	0	≥65	0	≥70	0

Table 5: Population exposed to BCA noise bands

L_{den}		L_{night}		L_{Aeq,16h}	
Noise Band dB	R4 2021	Noise Band dB	R4 2021	Noise Band dB	R4 2021
50-54	18,789	45-49	0	50-54	14,753
55-59	2,383	50-54	0	55-59	1,837
60-64	0	55-59	0	60-64	0
65-69	0	60-64	0	65-69	0
≥70	0	≥65	0	≥70	0

6.5 Commentary on the results of population analysis

There is no population exposed to noise levels of 60 L_{den} or above due to BCA. There are 2,383 residents exposed to 55-59 L_{den} and 18,789 exposed to 50-54 L_{den} due to BCA.

The current operating hours at the Airport also mean that no population is exposed to L_{night} levels of 50 dB or above due to BCA.

6.6 Noise sensitive premises

The results of the noise sensitive premises assessment are set out in Table 6.

Table 6: Noise sensitive premises exposed to BCA noise

Noise Band dB L _{Aeq,16h}	Schools / Colleges	Hospitals & hospices	Noise Band dB L _{night} ⁶⁵	Hospitals & hospices
50-54	N/A	N/A	45-49	N/A
55-59	2	0	50-54	0
≥60	0	0	≥55	0
Total	0	0	Total	0

The noise premises assessment identified that there are 2 schools / colleges exposed to 50 dB L_{Aeq,16h} or greater due to BCA. There are no schools / colleges exposed to 63 dB L_{Aeq,16h} or above due to BCA, which is the threshold at which the APF expects airport operators to provide acoustic insulation for noise sensitive buildings.

The noise mapping exercise identified no hospitals or hospices exposed to 50 dB L_{Aeq,16h} or above or 50 dB L_{night} or above due to BCA.

Although not at a level to qualify for noise insulation, BCA remains committed to its community and assisting and supporting the needs of local schools and other educational institutions through its CR programme. Details of this support are set out in Section 8.2.5.2 of the Action Plan and are reviewed and refined by BCA on an annual basis outside of the Noise Action Plan to better respond to the relative needs and circumstance of the schools the Airport supports.

6.7 Comparison between Round 3 and Round 4 results

The Round 3 of strategic noise maps have been developed using computation methods set out in Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. 140/2006) (ECAC Doc 29 2nd Edition), Round 4 requires the use of the Common Noise Assessment Methods for Europe (CNOSSOS-EU) method (ECAC Doc 29 4th Edition). It is therefore not appropriate to make direct comparisons between the exposure statistics derived for Round 4 with those derived for earlier rounds due to the changes both in the calculation and exposure assessment methodologies. Furthermore, the unusual air traffic movements during 2021 due to the COVID pandemic further limit the usefulness of a like-for-like comparison.

⁶⁵ This metric is not relevant for schools and colleges as it relates only to the night-time period 23:00-07:00 when schools and colleges are closed.

7. Public consultations

In accordance with Article 8(7) of END, BCA carried out a public consultation exercise on its draft Round 4 Noise Action Plan.

The consultation document and contact details were published on the Airport's website and social media accounts. Public advertisements regarding the consultation were placed in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter.

BCA also consulted with its Airport Consultative Committee (the Forum) on its draft Noise Action Plan at a special meeting on 15th April 2025.

The public consultation started on 4th April 2025 and closed on 30th May 2025.

A consultation response was received by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). This related to description of covenants/obligations within the planning agreement. The draft had described some of these as voluntary. The noise action plan has been updated to take into account these comments.

No further consultation responses were received.

8. Action planning process

8.1 Key stages of the action planning process

The action planning process includes several key stages – as follows:

1. Analysis of the strategic noise maps;
2. Application of noise assessment criteria to identify Important Areas and Candidate Quiet Areas;
3. Validation of noise levels experienced in Important Areas;
4. Identification of Candidate Noise Management Areas;
5. Identification of Formal Noise Management Areas and Quiet Areas;
 - 5.1 review of possible prevention and mitigation measures,
 - 5.2 cost benefit analysis,
 - 5.3 selection of most appropriate mitigation measures.

8.2 Identification of problems and situations to be improved

8.2.1 Analysis of the strategic noise maps

Analysis of the strategic noise maps (as discussed in Section 6) aimed to identify the number of people in dwellings affected by the noise levels from BCA, and was undertaken to inform the scope of this Action Plan.

8.2.2 Noise assessment criteria

The methodology for the detailed assessment of the strategic noise maps to inform the identification of priorities for action plans is set out in the 2013 guidance. This methodology should be used to identify Important Areas which then are investigated to determine whether they should be identified as Candidate Noise Management Areas (CNMAs). According to the 2013 guidance, CNMAs are *“areas identified by high levels of environmental noise and the aim is to reduce, where possible, noise in such areas by making them formal Noise Management Areas”*⁶⁶.

The methodology is as follows: airport operators should use the $L_{Aeq,16h}$ indicator for prioritisation and should identify the total population affected by noise levels of more than 50dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$. From this, airport operators should identify where the top 1% of the population affected by the highest noise levels is located based on the results of the strategic noise mapping. These areas (referred to as Important Areas) should then be targeted by airport operators for further investigation⁶⁷.

The methodology for the identification and designation of Quiet Areas is set out in the 2016 policy guidance on the identification, designation and management

⁶⁶ DoE, 2013, *Op. cit.*, p.21

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

of quiet areas. Filters (criteria) are applied to open spaces within the Belfast agglomeration. The criteria are:

1. Land Type Filter - Publicly available parks and open space within an agglomeration;
2. Noise Level Filter - Noise level less than 55 L_{den} ; and
3. Minimum Area Filter - Minimum area of 5 hectares.

This methodology should be used to identify Candidate Quiet Areas. However, as noise maps indicate modelled noise levels (not measured levels) and as land use can change, district councils are given the opportunity, if they consider it necessary, to visit Candidate Quiet Areas and consider the appropriateness of an area for designation. In addition, Candidate Quiet Areas will be subject to a public consultation prior to designation. Once formally designated, district councils are required to manage the local noise environment within Quiet Areas to avoid increases in noise from any source.

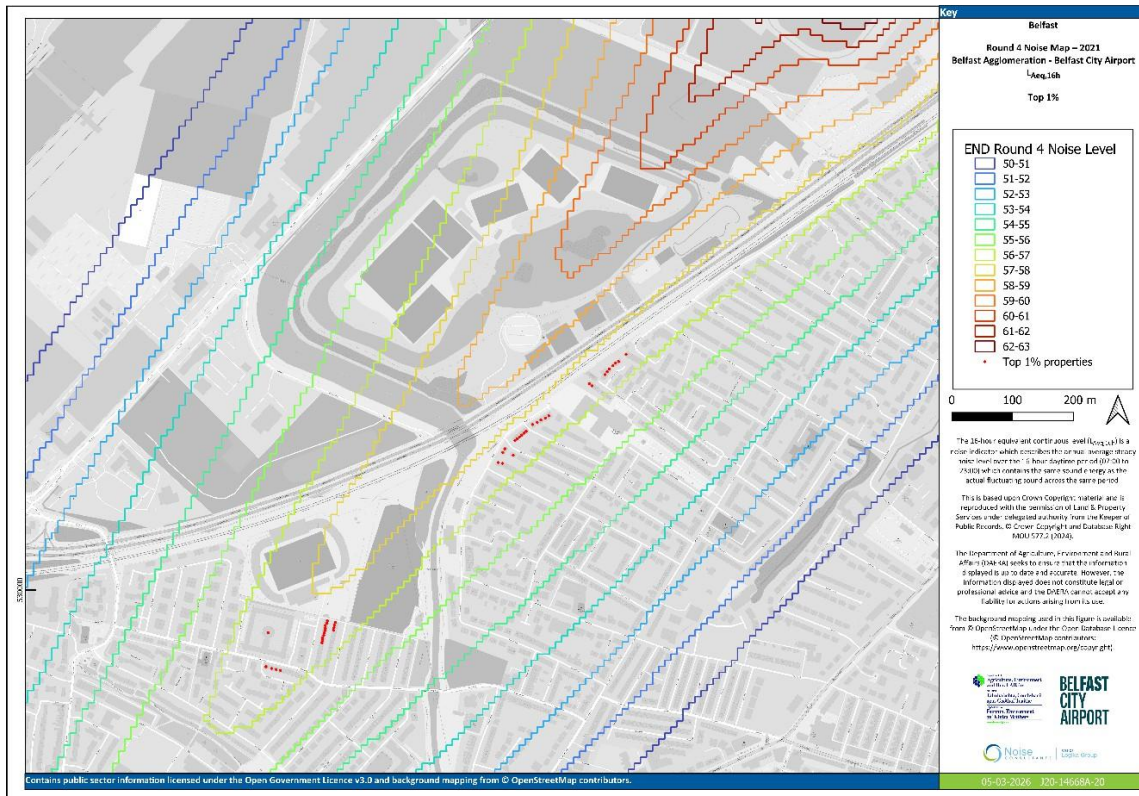
8.2.3 Identification of Important Areas

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Northern Ireland commissioned Noise Consultants Limited (NCL) to identify and provide data on the top 1% of the population which are affected by the highest levels of noise from Belfast City Airport (BCA), according to the results of the Round 4 strategic noise mapping⁶⁸.

44 dwellings have been identified with a population of 159. The noise exposure was within the band 56-57 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$. The location of the dwellings can be seen below in Figure 2.

⁶⁸ Round 4 Noise Mapping for Northern Ireland, Belfast City Airport – Top 1% Exposed -NCL Report dated 24 March 2026

Figure 2: Belfast Agglomeration - Belfast City Airport, $L_{Aeq,16h}$, Top 1%



8.2.4 Validation of Noise Exposure in Important Areas

Having identified the areas containing the top 1% of the population most affected by noise, the 2013 guidance advises airport operators to confirm that the noise levels indicated by the strategic noise maps are actually experienced in those areas.

The Round 4 Noise Mapping Data provided by DAERA states the following with regards to accuracy

“Section 2.1.2 of CNOSSOS-EU sets out a quality framework. It states the following on the accuracy of input values:

“All input values affecting the emission level of a source shall be determined with at least the accuracy corresponding to an uncertainty of ± 2 dB(A) in the emission level of the source (leaving all other parameters unchanged).”

The approach to assembling the noise model for Northern Ireland had the objective of ensuring that the source emission levels are calculated in a manner which conforms to the CNOSSOS-EU ± 2.0 dB(A) quality criteria.”

Independent noise consultants Bickerdike Allen Partners LLP have reviewed the noise contours produced by Noise Consultants Limited and Acustica Limited

on behalf of DAERA. It is considered that the noise levels indicated by the strategic noise maps represent those that were experienced in those areas.

8.2.5 Assessment of Important Areas

Once Important Areas have been identified, the 2013 guidance requires the airport operator to assess the extent to which noise needs to be reduced in these areas and prioritise the areas most in need of protection through designation as formal Noise Management Areas⁶⁹. Furthermore, the 2013 guidance states that *“when contemplating implementing noise mitigation measures in a particular area, the acceptability of the current noise level in that area should be considered. If the noise levels are not deemed acceptable further action to reduce the noise should be considered as part of the action planning process”*⁷⁰.

BCA already has in place a range of noise reduction measures and controls which help reduce noise for people exposed to noise levels at and well below the noise exposure relating to the top 1% (Important Areas). These measures are set out in section 8.2.5.1.

In its assessment of Important Areas, BCA has taken into account the following:

- Noise reduction measures already in force and projects in preparation (8.2.5.1);
- BCA’s Corporate Responsibility programme (8.2.5.2);
- Noise related complaints received by BCA (8.2.5.3);
- Results from the 2003, 2013, 2017 and 2024 Community Attitudes Surveys commissioned by BCA (8.2.5.4); and
- The relevant regulatory and policy framework and any limit values in place, as detailed previously (8.2.5.5).

8.2.5.1 Noise reduction measures already in force and projects in preparation

BCA has in force several measures designed to prevent and reduce noise, its associated potential health effects and to engage with and support neighbouring communities. These measures will help reduce noise for people exposed to levels within and well below noise exposure relating to the top 1% (presented in Figure 2). Some of these measures are stipulated in the Airport’s Planning Agreement. These measures are listed below as well as how they are managed by BCA. Additional voluntary measures are also set out.

Covenants within current Planning Agreement

⁶⁹ DoE, 2013, *Op. cit.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.14

Annual Performance Report

BCA is to produce an Annual Performance Report. The details are reproduced below.

“1.1 To submit the Annual Performance Report by 31st March in each calendar year and within the Annual Performance Report to report on the performance and compliance with the covenants in this Agreement in the preceding calendar year in a form which complies with this Agreement and which shall include all the annual reporting requirements contained in this Agreement or as agreed with the Department from time to time and which shall be published on the Company's website.

1.2 To hold meetings and or discussions with the Department in order to review compliance with this Agreement and promptly address any legitimate compliance issues identified and raised by the Department and shall thereafter promptly implement the Department's required actions for improvement.

1.3 To include all outstanding actions for improvement (if any) required by the Department in the Annual Performance Report.

1.4 To implement such actions for improvement within the timeframe required by the Department.”

BCA is to report on the compliance of the 2019 Planning agreement measures and where not complying is to identify and raise issues and promptly implement the required actions for improvement.

Operating hours

The following hours of operation apply.

“2.1 That no Scheduled Aircraft except Delayed Aircraft shall use the Aerodrome during Prohibited Hours

2.2 That no Delayed Aircraft shall use the Aerodrome except during Permitted Hours or Extended Hours.

2.3 Only in exceptional circumstances to permit Delayed Aircraft to use the Aerodrome during Extended Hours save that Diverted Aircraft may use the Aerodrome at any time.

2.4 That the Company shall:

2.4.1 provide to the Department a bi-monthly written report listing the Delayed Aircraft using the Aerodrome outside of Permitted Hours and the circumstances for any aircraft using the Aerodrome during Extended

Hours in sufficient detail to permit the Department to assess compliance with paragraphs 2.1 -2.3

2.4.2 annually on 31st March every year as part of the Annual Performance Report submit to the Department written details of every Delayed Aircraft using the Aerodrome outside of Permitted Hours and the circumstances for any aircraft using the Aerodrome during Extended Hours in sufficient detail to permit the Department to assess compliance with paragraphs 2.1 - 2.3 and

2.4.3 administer a fining mechanism in respect of all Delayed Aircraft using the Aerodrome during Extended Hours in accordance with the scheme set out at Annex B and ensure that all such fines are promptly lodged in full in the Community Fund and include a written report of the payments into and out of the Community Fund in each subsequent Annual Performance Report.

Any delayed aircraft Company that operated during Extended Hours, must provide to the Department a bi-monthly written report listing the Delayed Aircraft using the Aerodrome outside of Permitted Hours and the circumstances of the occurrence. A fine will be applied by BCA.

A limit on the number of flights per annum

BCA is limited to no more than 48,000 air traffic movements in any period of 12 months.

BCA maintains a record of all air traffic movements and shall include a report regarding compliance with this obligation in each Annual Performance Report and agreed actions for improvements if any in each Report.

Restriction on noisier aircraft types

The following restrictions on aircraft types apply.

“To accept at the Aerodrome in respect of jet aircraft only Air Traffic Movements that comply with the certificate limits, as laid down in Chapter 3 of Annex 16, of the standards adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organisation Council and which are not Marginally Compliant Aircraft and shall include a report regarding compliance with this obligation in each Annual Performance Report and agreed actions for improvements if any in each Annual Performance Report.”

BCA staff are responsible for ensuring adherence to the prohibition and the conditions under which exemptions are granted.

At present (2024), most of the scheduled flights at BCA are made by aircraft that meet the more stringent 'Chapter 4' or 'Chapter 14' noise standards. Such flights include those by:

- ATR72-600
- Airbus A319
- Airbus A320
- Embraer 190
- Embraer 170/175
- ATR42-500

Note that in some cases aircraft might be shown as certified to Chapter 3 despite the aircraft meeting the Chapter 4 standards. This arises because when the aircraft type was certified Chapter 4 did not exist. Chapters 3 and 4 are only applicable to jet aircraft and larger propeller aircraft.

Approaches/Belfast Lough bias

The 2019 agreement requires BCA to *“To maintain a bias in favour of approaches and climb-outs over Belfast Lough and to use all reasonable endeavours to maximise the use of approaches and climb-outs over the Lough.”*

The Belfast Lough bias will benefit the population under the flight path at the city end of BCA, in particular, people living in close proximity to the Airport, including the top 1%. It is the responsibility of Air Traffic Control to ensure that flights operate over Belfast Lough, where possible, taking into account the operating environment including weather conditions and prevailing traffic. Wind speed and wind direction are major factors in determining the direction of flights as aircraft must take off and land by flying into the wind. For this reason, operating flights over Belfast Lough is not always feasible. For example, when the wind is coming from a southerly or westerly direction, most aircraft will usually be required to depart over Belfast city. Conversely, when the wind is coming from a northerly or easterly direction, most aircraft will be required to depart over Belfast Lough. The ultimate decision on runway direction lies with the aircraft captain for safety reasons. BCA records data on aircraft movements over Belfast Lough to monitor compliance with this obligation.

Annual noise contour reporting

As required by the 2019 planning agreement, independent noise specialists, Bickerdike Allen Partners LLP (BAP), prepare an annual *Noise Contour Report* on behalf of BCA using actual noise data recorded by the Airport's NMTs. This report quantifies and maps the area within the contours for the various noise levels (57, 60 & 63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$) as well as the magnitude of their areas, population and number of dwellings exposed at each level. The report is lodged with the DfI as well as with Forum members for scrutiny purposes. The contours are also published within the Annual Performance Report.

Since the installation of the NTMS at BCA, actual noise data (available since June 2008) as opposed to aircraft manufacturer certified data has been used to validate the annual noise contours produced.

Noise contour limit

The noise contour control cap placed a limit on the size of the noise footprint of the Airport. It is set in terms of a maximum allowable area (in km²) of the summer period 57 dB L_{Aeq,16h} contour.

Quota count limit

A quota count limit applies. It is set in terms of a maximum count of 4,665 for the summer period. Further details are reproduced below. *“Subject to paragraph 6.4 the Quota Count of an aircraft on taking off or landing shall be calculated on the basis of the Noise Classification for that aircraft on takeoff or landing as appropriate as follows”*

Noise level EPNdB	Quota Count
< 81.0	Exempt
81.0 - 83.9	0.125
84.0 – 86.9	0.25
87.0 – 89.9	0.5
90.0 – 92.9	1
93.0 – 95.9	2
96.0 – 98.9	4

Noise and track keeping system

The agreement requires BCA to *“Operate and maintain an integrated noise and track keeping system.”* The airport installed a Noise and Track Monitoring System (NTMS) consisting of two main aspects: active noise monitors (installed June 2008 and January 2009) and a track keeping system (completed August 2009). The location of the fixed NMTs was guided by expert advice from BAP and agreed with the DoE and the Department for Regional Development (now DfI), in consultation with the Forum. One of the NMTs was relocated in 2023 following consultation with DfI. The NTMS monitors and records the noise levels from aircraft movements and the tracks flown by them.

The noise data are primarily used to validate the contours in the annual *Noise Contour Report* and track keeping data to check airline adherence to noise abatement procedures and to investigate individual noise complaints.

Continuous descent approaches

The Planning Agreement states that *“To require within 12 months of the date of this Agreement the use of Continuous Descent Approaches at the Aerodrome, subject to the constraints of safety and the operational performance requirements of the individual aircraft and consistent with flight safety and shall provide an up-date on the implementation of and compliance with this obligation by providing data showing the percentage of the total arrivals in year x-1 that Implemented Continuous Descent Approaches and agreed actions for improvements (if any) in the Annual Performance Report for year x.”*

While data was not formally required until 2020 BCA have provided this information since 2019 and will continue to do so.

Departure noise limits

The agreement requires that *“Within 12 months of the date of this Agreement to Introduce a departure noise limit of 83 dB $L_{A_{\text{Smax}}}$ at monitoring terminal MP01 as shown on the attached plan and 87 dB $L_{A_{\text{Smax}}}$ at monitoring terminal MP02 as shown on the attached plan such departure noise limit to be reviewed and agreed between the parties on the fifth anniversary of this Agreement and on every subsequent fifth anniversary thereafter and the departure noise limit will be from the date of review the reviewed noise limit and to administer a fining mechanism in respect of all aircraft which breach the limits set out.”*

This was implemented and, at the time of writing, the first five-year review has been carried out by BCA. A report is currently being reviewed by DfI.

Noise insulation scheme.

“The Company shall put in place a noise insulation scheme in accordance with the framework agreed with the Department and annexed hereto in Annex D or as varied in the future by the agreement of the Company and the Department and shall include a written report on the operation of this scheme and the Department's required actions for improvements (if any) in each Annual Performance Report.”

Details of the sound insulation scheme are included in Annex D of the 2019 agreement. The scheme has an eligibility threshold of ≥ 63 dB $L_{A_{\text{eq}},16\text{h}}$ based on the summer daytime noise contour. No residential dwellings have been affected by this level of noise, and the scheme is not yet operating.

Restrictions on engine testing

There are procedures in place surrounding the timing and location of aircraft ground engine running. All engine ground runs shall be subject to prior approval by the Airfield Operations Department and all engine ground runs are prohibited between 22:30 hours and 06:00 hours. Engine ground runs at BCA are restricted on the apron at *engine idle* setting for short periods of time only. All other engine runs, including high powered engine runs, can only take place on the north side of the airfield away from residential areas.

BCA's noise management policy and procedures are contained within the Airport's Environmental Management System which is certified to BS8555:2003 Phase 5. In particular, regulations and operating procedures relating to the management of noise are defined and disseminated through a number of Noise Management Instructions and enforced by various BCA departmental Managers, Air Traffic Control and Airfield Operations Department.

Voluntary Measures

Preventing and reducing air noise

Noise abatement procedures

BCA has in force a series of noise abatement procedures for both arriving and departing traffic. These are designed to reduce noise disturbance on the local community while ensuring the safe and efficient management of air traffic at BCA. These procedures can be summarised as follows:

- **Runway 22 – arriving traffic [arriving over Belfast Lough]**

Aircraft are to cross the North Down coast at an altitude not below 2,500 feet before establishing on the final approach track at 5 nautical miles from the runway threshold, descending at an angle of 3 degrees.

- **Runway 22 – departing traffic [departing over Belfast city]**

- i) Propeller aircraft up to 13,000 kilos Maximum Take-off Weight [MTOW] are to climb to an altitude of 1,500 feet before commencing a turn.
- ii) Propeller aircraft greater than 13,000 kilos MTOW are to climb to an altitude of 2,000 feet before commencing a turn.
- iii) All jet-propelled aircraft are to climb to an altitude of 3,000 feet before commencing a turn.

- **Runway 04 – arriving traffic [arriving over Belfast city]**

Aircraft are to establish on the final approach track no later than 5 nautical miles from the threshold at an altitude of 1,500 feet, descending to the runway threshold at an angle of 3 degrees.

- **Runway 04 – departing traffic [departing over Belfast Lough]**

On achieving 500 feet, all departing aircraft are required to turn left onto a track of 033 degrees (M) and not to undertake a subsequent right turn until:

- i) Propeller aircraft up to 13,000 kilos MTOW climb to an altitude of 1,500 feet.
- ii) Propeller aircraft greater than 13,000 kilos MTOW climb to an altitude of 2,000 feet.
- iii) All jet-propelled aircraft climb to an altitude of 3,000 feet.

These are published procedures in BCA's AIP. They are also verbally reinforced to aircrew by Air Traffic Control. The effect of these measures is to localise noise disturbance from arriving aircraft to those areas under the 'extended runway centreline' of the flight track, made necessary by the need for aircraft to be stabilised on the approach track approximately 5 miles from the runway to ensure a safe landing. For departing aircraft, these measures will assist in minimising the noise impact.

Noise monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting on track keeping performance

BCA's NTMS, enables automatic detection of non-conformances with the Airport's noise abatement procedures and provides a reporting tool for non-conformances. BCA provides its airlines with regular reports on conformance with noise abatement procedures and has set a target of 95% conformance in line with other UK airports.

Public reporting

BCA monitors and records data in relation to passenger volumes, aircraft movements, flights after 21:30 hours, and the percentage of flights over Belfast Lough, and publishes this information on the Airport's website on a rolling three-month basis. BCA also publishes the following information on its website:

- Details of the noise management programme;
- How to contact BCA with concerns about noise and BCA's policy for responding to concerns;
- Criteria and application form for the Community Fund;
- Details of the Forum and meeting minutes; and
- Contact details for any queries or concerns relating to noise or other environmental issues.

8.2.5.2 Corporate Responsibility programme

Running parallel to and complementing the Noise Action Plan, is BCA's Corporate Responsibility (CR) programme. BCA's CR policy sets out a clear commitment to make a positive contribution in the community in which it operates, to protect the environment and to be a key contributor to the economic and social development of the region. BCA aims to enrich and support the local community, with an emphasis on supporting young people through strengthening relationships with schools and helping young people realise their aspirations through capacity building and skills development. Each year, BCA develops a CR Action Plan to deliver its CR objectives. This provides the framework for planning, delivering and evaluating its CR programme. It is developed for involvement by the whole management team, organised and co-ordinated by the CR Department and fully supported by the Board of Directors.

Community Fund

The Community Fund was launched in February 2009 with the aim of supporting the local community while discouraging delays beyond 21:30 hours. The Community Fund is used to support a variety of worthwhile projects in communities within East Belfast (including Important Areas as identified in Section 8.2.3 and presented in Figure 2), North Down and the greater Belfast area.

The agreed penalty system for delayed aircraft and departure noise exceedances for Community Fund purposes is set out in the tables below.

Time band	Community Fund contribution per delayed aircraft (£)
2131-2145	134
2146-2200	167
2201-2215	200
2216-2230	401
2231-2245	534
2246-2300	735
2301-2315	935
2316-2330	1,069
2331-2345	1,202
2346-2359	1,336

Excess over Departure Noise Limit dB L_{ASmax}	Community Fund contribution per aircraft (£)
No greater than 3 dB(A)	668
Greater than 3 dB(A)	1,336

There is also an additional £300 Community Fund contribution for each delayed flight over 480 per annum. There are also 'extension charges' levied on airlines for the airfield to remain open beyond scheduled operating hours.

A formal application process and approval criteria is in place for the Community Fund and there is a dedicated committee which meets regularly to review applications and award funding. The committee also engages directly with local community groups to identify projects that can benefit from the Community Fund.

Since the inception of the fund in 2009, BCA has supported over 218 local community groups to the value of £615,000.

Supporting Education

Although not at a level to qualify for noise insulation, there are a number of schools and other educational institutions that fall within the noise footprint of BCA as identified within Section 6.7 of this Action Plan. BCA remains committed to assisting and supporting the needs of local schools and other educational institutions. BCA has created sustainable partnerships with educational bodies on a local and regional level with the ambition of raising the confidence and achievements of young people.

Supporting employment and skills development

BCA is conscious of the challenge faced by young people in securing employment in today's economic climate, and how income and employment is a key determinant of health, wellbeing and quality of life. BCA has a comprehensive programme in place to support employment and skills development in neighbouring communities.

Supporting health and wellbeing

BCA is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of its staff and local community through its CR programme. Over the duration of the Round 3 Noise Action Plan, BCA has supported a range of initiatives including:

Charity Partnerships

AANI (£68,652 raised to date – Nov24) – COY partner 2024/25

Air Ambulance NI is a charity that provides a helicopter emergency medical service across Northern Ireland. They work in partnership with the NI ambulance service to provide the helicopter emergency medical service for the region. Their helicopter operates 365 days of the year operating for 12 hours every day attending some of the most traumatic incidents across the province. To date our key fundraising initiatives for AANI have included; Participation in the Belfast Marathon, BCA runway run, they also attended Airport Safety Week.

Aware NI (Over £17k raised 2022/23)

Aware NI are the depression charity for Northern Ireland and the only charity working exclusively for those with depression and bipolar disorder. They deliver mental health and wellbeing programmes into communities, schools and colleges. Some of the main fundraising initiatives included; Participation in the Belfast Marathon, Go Yellow day at BCA, Airport Fire Service Five a side football tournament, Christmas raffle, Safety Week and also the 5 peaks challenge which a member of the BCA Executive team took part in.

The Welcome Organisation (£30,000 raised 2020/21)

The Welcome Organisation is a Belfast-based charity providing a range of potentially life-saving services for people affected by homelessness, including a Street Outreach service and a Drop-in centre. One of the key fundraising initiatives carried out throughout this partnership was the big sleep out campaign with BCA staff volunteering to sleep outside over night at Belfast city airport to raise vital funds and awareness for the charity.

Community Fund

In total, over 2,600 salaried hours are dedicated to CR initiatives each year, which amounts to approximately a 30% increase in hours dedicated to CR since publication of the previous Noise Action Plan and equates to a circa £46,000

investment⁷¹. BCA is committed to continuing its CR programme and by listening to the needs of the local community, for example, through the Forum, to adapting the programme so that it will continue to address the issues that are most pressing, particularly in relation to education, employment, health and wellbeing.

Communication on Noise Issues

Noise Complaint Handling System

BCA maintains a noise complaint handling system. Complainants may lodge complaints via a dedicated noise complaint telephone hotline, website enquiry form or email. All complaints are centrally logged on a database and investigated by the Environment Department. Where appropriate, complainants receive a response containing details of the investigation carried out. Where investigations reveal a failure to follow procedures, these are reported to the organisation / department in question. A summary report of complaints is reported to the Forum at each meeting.

Sustainability Strategy

Belfast City Airport's current sustainability strategy outlines our commitment to building a brighter and more sustainable future, it focuses on three main pillars; Our Environment, Our People & Our Community (including our commitment to reducing noise impact). We remain committed to making our contribution to the wider sustainability efforts of the industry and society and create a positive social impact.

Social media

In addition to its website, BCA is active across social media (Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn) where we engage with a large local demographic. Members of the public can provide comments/post concerns (including those in relation to noise) and BCA can either respond to them directly, via the platform, or offline depending on the nature and complexity of the comment/concern in question.

Stakeholder engagement

Being aware of the environment in which it operates and its responsibility to the local community, BCA has developed various methods to engage with its stakeholders, including local residents.

The Belfast City Airport Forum

As required under the Airports (Northern Ireland) Order 1994, and under the Airports (Designation) (Facilities for Consultation) Order (Northern Ireland) 1997, BCA established the Belfast City Airport Forum ('the Forum') to discuss those matters concerning the development and operation of the Airport that

impact on airport users and the neighbouring community. The first meeting was held on 25 March 1993. Meeting with airport management three times per year, the purpose of the Forum is to enable BCA to exchange information and ideas with those groups which have an interest in matters concerning the Airport and to allow the views of interested parties to be raised and taken into account by BCA.

The Forum comprises an independent Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and representatives from local councils, community groups from East Belfast, South Belfast, and North Down, airline base captains, business and economic interests, NI Consumer Council, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Department for Infrastructure and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The following reports are prepared for the Forum and are circulated in advance of meetings:

- A historical summary of aircraft movements after 21:30 hours;
- A breakdown of aircraft movements after 21:30 hours by time-band and airline;
- The percentage of flights over Belfast Lough;
- Aircraft movements after 23:00 hours;
- Aircraft movements by aircraft type;
- A summary of noise complaints by type and area;
- A summary of CR activity.

The Forum also has an Environmental Sub Group to enable more detailed consideration of environmental matters, for example, scrutinising the annual Noise Contour Report. The Environmental Sub Group meets three times per year in advance of full Forum meetings. The Chairperson of the Environmental Sub Group is responsible for reporting outcomes from the meeting to the Forum.

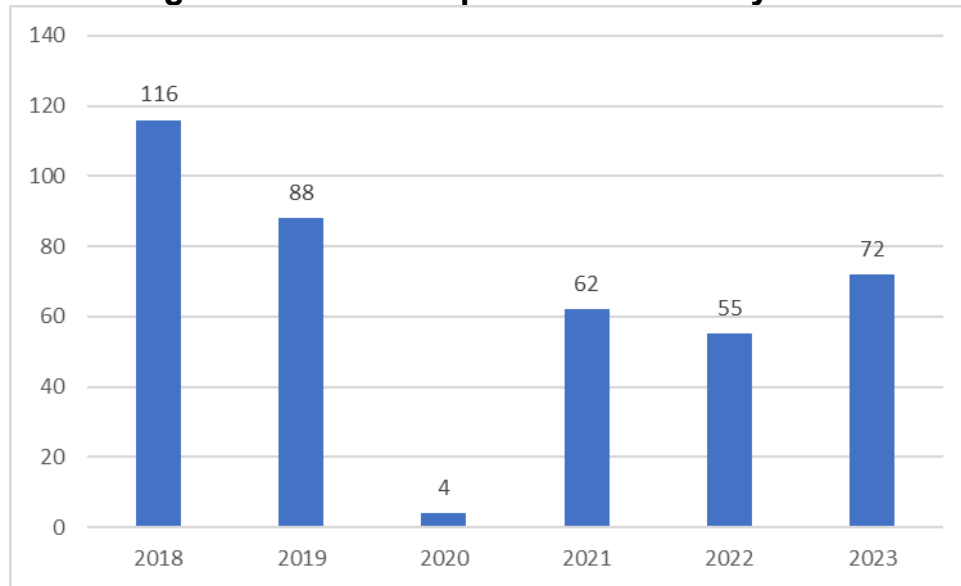
Airport tours/one-to-one meetings/political breakfasts

BCA regularly facilitates airport tours for local schools, community groups and political representatives on request. BCA also hosts political breakfasts to brief local politicians on issues that may be affecting their local constituents.

8.2.5.3 Analysis of noise complaints received by BCA

Figure 3 shows that the number of noise complaints received by BCA fluctuates year on year. 2020 and 2021 were lockdown years in the UK thus the data is not comparable with the remaining years. The overall number of complaints received, on average, has not increased considerably and is showing an overall downward trend when compared to pre-covid years.

Figure 3: Noise complaints received by BCA



Furthermore, the number of noise complaints received by BCA is relatively low in comparison to the number of complaints received by Belfast City Council for all noise sources (industrial, commercial and leisure premises, domestic, construction, transport and noise in the street) which average over 6,090 per year⁷². Table 7 shows the main areas where complaints regarding aircraft noise from BCA arise.

⁷² Noise complaint statistics for Northern Ireland 2018-2023: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/noise> [Accessed 12th November 2024]

Table 7: Top areas where noise complaints arise

Year	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
Area	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Comber / D'adee / Bangor / Dundonald	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Carnalea / Crawfordsburn	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Helen's Bay	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Craigavad	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Seahill / Cultra / Marino	10	11%	0	0%	18	29%	12	22%	1	1%
Hollywood	3	3%	0	0%	24	39%	3	5%	25	35%
Kinnegar	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Knocknagoney / Old Hollywood Road	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Sydenham / Inverary	3	3%	1	25%	3	5%	0	0%	3	4%
Ballymacarret	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
City Centre	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Beersbridge / Albertbridge	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Newtownards Road / Ballymacarret / Connswater	30	34%	1	25%	0	0%	16	29%	16	22%
Donegall Road	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Ravenhill / Cregagh / Castlereagh	9	10%	1	25%	0	0%	2	4%	1	1%
Ormeau / Annadale	13	15%	0	0%	6	10%	6	11%	5	7%
Stranmillis / Malone	10	11%	1	25%	0	0%	2	4%	1	1%
Drumbeg / Tullyard	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
G'wally / C'duff / N'breda / K'breda / Rosetta / Four Winds	6	7%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%
Not given	3	3%	0	0%	8	13%	12	22%	18	25%
Total	88	100%	4	100%	62	100%	55	100%	72	100%

Table 7 shows that the number of noise related complaints per area, with Hollywood and Newtownards Road / Ballymacarret / Connswater being the ones with higher complaints.

8.2.5.4 Analysis of results from the BCA Community Attitudes Survey

In line with the commitment set out in the Round 3 Noise Action Plan, BCA has commissioned a Community Attitudes Survey to follow up on similar surveys carried out in 2003, 2013 and 2018. The purpose of the 2024 survey was to assess how attitudes have changed since 2018, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Round 3 Noise Action Plan and inform future developments. The 2024 survey was issued to 5,000 randomly selected households in the postcode areas covering south and east Belfast and North Down, which are overflowed by aircraft to/from BCA, and Enniskillen and Antrim town as control areas, which are not overflowed by aircraft operating at BCA. While most of these areas were consistent with previous survey waves, the areas of Kinnegar, Crawfordsburn, Helen's Bay, Stranmillis and Malone were new for the 2024 survey wave.

The survey was conducted by an independent research consultant, SYSTRA⁷³ between 23rd August and 6th September 2024. The response rate to the 2024 Community Attitudes Survey was 8% which represented an increase in the response rate to the 2018 survey which was 5.5%. This is in line with industry evidence of the public's reduced willingness to participate in postal surveys. The achieved sample size means 95% Confidence Intervals of no more than $\pm 4.9\%$ for all reported findings.⁷⁴

The survey aimed to assess the extent to which respondents felt that noise impacted their quality of life. Among various factors considered, such as personal security, cleanliness, and air quality, noise was consistently rated as one of the least significant influences. Overall satisfaction with noise levels increased compared to the previous survey, while dissatisfaction declined.

The proportion of respondents who frequently noticed noise was slightly lower in the most recent survey compared to the previous one. Meanwhile, the percentage of participants who reported rarely or never noticing noise remained consistent.

A small percentage of respondents in the 2024 survey reported being highly disturbed or annoyed by aircraft noise, showing a decline compared to 2018. The majority of participants indicated that they were only slightly or not at all affected by aircraft noise in their homes over the past year, with this proportion increasing since the previous survey.

8.2.5.5 Consideration of the legal/policy framework and any limit values in place

In preparing this Noise Action Plan and in its assessment of Important Areas, BCA has considered the relevant regulatory and policy framework and any limit values in place. BCA acknowledges that the noise exposure for the top 1% of people exposed to the highest noise levels from BCA is above the level marking the approximate onset of significant community annoyance as per the APF. Significantly, however, BCA has identified that the top 1% of the population affected by the highest noise levels from BCA falls below the threshold in the APF for airport operators to offer assistance to households with the cost of relocation or the provision acoustic insulation to households or other noise sensitive buildings.

8.2.6. Identification of Candidate Noise Management Areas

On consideration of:

⁷³ Formerly MVA Consultancy.

⁷⁴ That is, if 50% of the sample reported that they considered aircraft to be noisy then we could be 95% certain that between 45.1% and 54.9% of the population consider aircraft to be noisy. This is considered sufficient for the survey purpose.

- 1) the noise reduction measures and controls in place to help reduce noise for people exposed to noise levels within and well below noise exposure relating to the top 1%;
- 2) community attitudes towards the noise environment resulting from BCA, including those from the top 1%; and
- 3) the regulatory /policy framework in place, designation of Important Areas as Candidate Noise Management Areas is not appropriate.

However, this position will be kept under review taking into account noise levels experienced in these areas (determined by the annual summer noise contours) and/or changes to UK aviation policy and having regard to any subsequent change to Environmental Noise Directive guidance issued by the Department.

BCA will continue to implement its existing noise management programme and will take further actions detailed in Section 9 to prevent and reduce noise for people exposed to noise levels within and well below noise exposure relating to the top 1% and any potential effects on health and wellbeing in addition to the Airport's ongoing CR programme geared to supporting neighbouring communities. BCA will keep under review the effectiveness of its current noise management measures in relation to Important Areas presented in Figure 2. Where relevant, any further practicable and cost-effective noise reduction measures will be recommended and presented to the Forum for consultation within the period covered by this Action Plan.

BCA recognises that people do not experience noise in an averaged manner and will also consider the need to employ any alternative measures (in line with industry best practice as set out by Sustainable Aviation⁷⁵) which may better reflect how aircraft noise is experienced in different localities so that it can seek to better support its local community through its noise management and wider CR programme.

8.3 Identification of Quiet Areas

Through application of the criteria in the 2016 guidance (in draft form), DAERA identified a number of Candidate Quiet Areas which were subject to public consultation between 21 September and 16 November 2015. Three areas were formally designated within the 2016 guidance which was published on 20 September 2016. These were:

- Conor Park/Stricklands Glen, Bangor West;
- Bashfordlands, Carrickfergus; and
- Carnmoney Hill – Upper, Newtownabbey.

Bashfordlands and Carnmoney Hill are not under the flight path of BCA and do not fall within BCA's 50 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ noise contour. Conor Park/Stricklands Glen

⁷⁵ Sustainable Aviation strategy and associated Noise Roadmap: SA, *Op. cit.*

is under the flight path for departures on Runway 04 and arrivals on Runway 22, however, given the altitude of aircraft at this point, the area also does not fall within BCA's 50 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ noise contour. Therefore, no specific actions relating to these Quiet Areas are proposed at this time.

DAERA launched a further consultation on the designation of Lagan Meadows as a Quiet Area. The consultation ran between 21 September and 19 October 2016. BCA awaits the outcome of this consultation.

8.4 Action planning programme of work

The action planning programme of work is set out in Table 8.

Table 8: Action planning programme of work

	Action	Estimated Completion Date
1	Analysis of the strategic noise maps	Completed
2	Application of the Noise Assessment Criteria (Identification of top 1% affected)	Completed
3	Validation of noise exposure in Important Areas	Completed
4	Identification of Candidate Noise Management Areas	Assessment carried out and none identified at present
5	Review of noise levels experienced in Important Areas and/or changes to UK aviation policy/END guidance issued by the Department that will affect the determination in respect of Candidate Noise Management Areas, and review the effectiveness of current noise management measures in relation to Important Areas	2023-2028
6	Assessment of the costs and benefits of any potential noise mitigation measures in respect of any Candidate Noise Management Areas identified	As required
7	Review Noise Action Plan following the designation of further Quiet Areas	As required
8	Review Noise Action Plan following any major developments which affect the existing noise situation	As required

9. Actions which the Competent Authorities intend to take

Appendix F sets out the actions BCA intends to take over the duration of this Noise Action Plan, including measures to preserve Quiet Areas. These are to prevent and reduce noise and any potential effects on health and wellbeing in addition to the Airport's ongoing CR programme geared towards supporting neighbouring communities.

Those measures highlighted in green in the table show mandatory actions required in the Airport's current Planning Agreement or other legislation.

10. Long term strategy

This Action Plan will be reviewed, and updated if necessary, following any future changes to Planning requirements which affect the noise situation or the designation of further Quiet Areas by the Department, and at least every five years after it is approved.

BCA will continue to adhere to UK government policy as set out in the APF and will adopt any revised standards or limit values set for the industry by the UK government. The Action Plan will be reviewed in light of any significant policy changes.

BCA will continue to be actively involved in the work of The Northern Ireland Environmental Noise Directive Steering Group (NIENDSG) to assess, prioritise and agree what actions are necessary.

It is anticipated that throughout the 5-year period of the Action Plan, additional studies to assess further the impact of aircraft noise and its mitigation may be required. BCA is committed to working with the Department and the NIENDSG to identify and undertake such studies as are deemed appropriate and cost effective.

As stated previously, BCA will continue to implement its existing noise management programme and will take further actions detailed in Section 9 in addition to the Airport's ongoing CR programme in order to protect health and to contribute positively to the quality of life and wellbeing of neighbouring communities.

11. Financial information

BCA is committed to the future costs, estimated at approximately £177,000 per year, for noise management and in support of this Action Plan. This figure includes costs associated with the operation and support of the NTMS, administration (Forum, noise complaint handling, reporting and

communications), production of the annual Noise Contour Report, IT support for noise statistics and estimated Community Fund contributions.

12. Provisions envisaged for evaluating the implementation the NAP

To monitor and assess the Airport's effectiveness with regards to this Action Plan, several performance indicators/evaluation metrics are set out in Appendix F. Performance against these indicators/metrics will be regularly reviewed internally and a progress report delivered to the Forum on an annual basis.

The following indicators will also be used to assess the noise climate over the duration of this Action Plan:

Annual Noise Contour Report

Under the terms of the Airport's Planning Agreement, noise contours based on the $L_{Aeq,16h}$ measure are produced annually for the summer 92-day period and the estimated population exposure within each noise contour calculated. While the summer contours are not the same as the END contours (as among other things, they are based on different time periods – see Table 2), they will nevertheless give an indication of the extent of variation in noise contours and population exposure from year to year. They may be used, therefore, as an evaluation of the implementation and results of the Action Plan.

Community Attitude Survey

Prior to the next round of action planning for END, BCA will repeat the Community Attitude Survey. The results of the survey will be evaluated and compared with the results of earlier surveys to detect trends in attitudes towards aircraft noise. Emerging trends from the surveys will be used to evaluate the implementation and results of the Action Plan and, along with the noise maps from the next mapping round, will form the basis for the next round of action planning.

Noise complaints received by BCA

BCA will continue to record, investigate and evaluate noise related complaints for the purposes of assessing the noise impact due to BCA operations, in particular, the impact on Important Areas and Quiet Areas.

Review of noise maps

The results of future rounds of noise mapping will be used to assess the impact of the noise management actions set out.

13. Estimates in terms of the reduction of the number of people affected

It is not possible to quantify the exact number of people who already benefit from the noise management programme which is currently in place at BCA, but it is likely to be significant. The programme contains noise reduction measures already in force. With respect to any future noise management measures, the

estimation of any potential reduction in terms of the number of people affected will form part of the evaluation process.

This noise action plan provides data on the estimated number of people exposed to noise. An estimated 2,383 people are exposed to noise levels greater than 55 dB L_{den} from Belfast City Airport. Using the dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ indicator, the top 1% of the population (44 dwellings) are exposed to noise levels of 56-57 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$. These top 1% are not considered a specific problem/situation that needs to be improved through the use of a specific Noise Management Area.

Annex V of the END requires “estimates in terms of the reduction of the number of people affected (annoyed, sleep disturbed, or other)”. The noise action plan has not identified any additional controls above and beyond measures already in force. Therefore, no estimates of reductions in the number of people affected have been made.

14. Appendices

Appendix A: Annex V of the Directive

Annex V of the Directive requires that Action Plans must include the elements detailed in Table A.1 below. The location of these elements within the plan is given for ease of reference.

Table A.1

No	Description	Location in Plan
1	A description of the agglomeration, the major roads, major railways or major airports and other noise sources taken into account	Section 3
2	The authority responsible	Section 4
3	The legal context	Section 5
4	Any limit values in place in accordance with Article 5	Section 5.5
5	A summary of the results of the noise mapping	Section 6
6	An evaluation of the estimated number of people exposed to noise	Section 6.4
7	Identification of problems and situations that need to be improved	Section 8.2
8	A record of the public consultations organised in accordance with Article 8(7)	Section 7
9	Any noise-reduction measures already in force and any projects in preparation	Section 8.2.5.1
10	Actions which the Competent Authorities intend to take in the next five years, including any measures to preserve Quiet Areas	Section 9
11	Long-term strategy	Section 10
12	Financial information (if available): budgets, cost-effectiveness assessment, cost-benefit assessment	Section 11
13	Provisions envisaged for evaluating the implementation and the results of the action plan	Section 12
14	Estimates in terms of the reduction of the number of people affected (annoyed, sleep-disturbed, or other)	Section 13

Appendix B: Regulatory and policy framework relating to environmental noise

List of current regulations and policy for controlling environmental noise in Northern Ireland

Air Navigation Order 2005
Air Navigation (Environmental Standards) Order 2002
The Airports (NI) Order 1994
Land Acquisition and Compensation (Northern Ireland) Order 1973
Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978
Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
Noise Insulation Regulations (NI) 1995
Aeroplane Noise Regulations 1999
Aeroplane Noise (Amendment) Regulations 1999
Air Navigation (General) Regulations 2017
The Aerodromes (Noise Restrictions) (Rules and Procedures) Regulations 2003
The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (NI) 2004
The Civil Aviation Act 2006 (as amended)
The Civil Aviation Act 2012
The Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
The Environmental Noise (Amendment) (NI) Regulations 2018
The Environmental (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
The Environment (Legislative Functions from Directives) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
Directive 88/337/EC (as amended)
Directive 2002/49/EC
Directive 2006/93/EC
Delegated Directive (EU) 2021/1226
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
Regulation (EU) No 598/2014
Directive 2015/996/EU

Relevant policy and guidance publications

Aviation 2050: The Future of UK Aviation (December 2018)
Flightpath to the Future (2022)
Overarching Aviation Noise Policy (March 2023)
BS 6472 2008 - Guide to evaluation of human exposure to vibration in buildings
BS 7385 Part 1 1990 – Evaluation and Measurement for Vibration in Buildings – Guide for measurement and evaluation of their effects on buildings
BS 7385 Part 2 1993 - Evaluation and Measurement for Vibration in buildings - Guide to damage levels from groundborne vibration

BS 7445 Part 1: 2003 - Description and measurement of environmental noise - Guide to quantities and procedures

BS 7445 Part 2: 1991 - Description and measurement of environmental noise - Guide to the acquisition of data pertinent to land use

BS 7445 Part 3: 1991 - Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise Part 3: Guide to Application to Noise Limits

BS 8233 2014 - Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings

Civil Aviation Authority, CAP 1165 Managing Aviation Noise, May 2013

Civil Aviation Authority, CAP 1164 Aircraft Noise, Sleep Disturbance and Health Effects, June 2014

Civil Aviation Authority, CAP 1278 Aircraft Noise and Health Effects: Recent Findings, March 2016

Civil Aviation Authority, CAP 1143 The Civil Aviation Authority's policy for carrying out its information duties under the Civil Aviation Act 2012, January 2014

Civil Aviation Authority, CAP1506 - Survey of noise attitudes 2014: Aircraft, February 2017

Civil Aviation Authority, CAP1616i - Environmental Assessment Requirements and Guidance for Airspace Change Proposals. Version date November 2023, Effective January 2024

Civil Aviation Authority, CAP 1588 - Aircraft Noise and Annoyance: Recent findings, February 2018

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Noise Mapping and Action Planning Technical Guidance – Noise from Airports, 2013

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Policy Guidance on the Identification, Designation and Management of Quiet Areas - September 2016

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DERFA), Low Frequency Noise, 2002

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DERFA), Guidance for Airport Operators to produce airport noise action plans under the terms of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), 2009

Defra, Estimating Dose-Response Relationships between Noise Exposure and Human Health in the UK. Project Report and Technical Report, 2009

Department of the Environment, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 Section3 Part 7 Traffic Noise and Vibration Land Compensation - Your Rights Explained

Part 1 1997 - Code of Practice for basic info and procedures for noise & vibration control

Department of the Environment (DoE) Circular 10/73 Planning and Noise (19 January 1973)

Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Guidance and Administrative Framework for Monitoring of Delayed Aircraft after 9.30pm at George Best Belfast City (BCA), 2018

Department for Transport, Future of Air Transport White Paper, 2003

Department for Transport, Aviation Policy Framework, 2013

Department for Transport, Consultation Response on UK Airspace Policy: A framework for balanced decisions on the design and use of airspace, 2017
 Department for Transport, Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Decision Document, 2017
 Department for Transport, Airport Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the South East of England, 2018
 Department for Transport, Aviation 2050 The future of UK aviation. A consultation, 2018
 DMRB Screening Method Spreadsheet Version 1.02 November 2003
 Transport Assessment; Guidelines for Development Proposals in N. Ireland Nov 06 DRD/DOE
 potential health effects – October 2010
 Environmental Impact Assessment (August 1999)
 Environment Agency Horizontal Guidance for Noise Part 2 - Noise Assessment and Control, 2001
 ERCD Report 0907 Environmental Noise and Health: A Review, 2010
 ERCD Report 0908 Aircraft Noise and Children's Learning, 2010
 ERCD, Report 1208 Aircraft Noise, Sleep Disturbance and Health Effects: A Review, 2013
 European Commission Working Group Assessment of Exposure to Noise (WG-AEN), Position Paper, Presenting Noise Mapping Information to the Public, March 2008
 Research On High Freq. Noise and It Effects – May 2003
 The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Balanced Approach
 The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Convention on Civil Aviation, Annex 16, Volume 1
 Noise Policy Statement for Northern Ireland, September 2014
 Noise pollution: economic analysis - December 2014
 ODPM -PPG24: Planning and Noise (1994)
 World Health Organisation, Guidelines on Community Noise, 2000
 World Health Organisation, 2009, Night Noise Guidelines for Europe, 2009
 Health Protection Agency, Environmental Noise and Health in the UK A report by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Noise and Health, 2010
 World Health Organisation, Methodological guidance for estimating the burden of disease from environmental noise, 2012
 World Health Organisation, Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region, 2018

In addition to the above, this Action Plan has considered the wider context of local and national sustainable development plans, policies and strategies, including but not necessarily limited to, the following:

Regional Development Strategy 2035
 Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation

Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015
Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012
Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015
Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015
Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2015
Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations
Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
Noise Insulation Regulations
Air Quality Regulations and Action Plans
A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland, 1993
Renewable Energy Action Plan
Local Authority Open Spaces policies
Planning Policy Statements and design guides
Emerging climate change initiatives
Mosaic GI strategy for Northern Ireland
Urban Regeneration Strategies
Noise Abatement Policy
Sustainable Aviation Strategy and Road Maps

Appendix C: Glossary of acoustic and technical terms

Term	Definition
Agglomeration	Major Continuous Urban Area as set out within the Regulations.
Agglomeration (Round 1)	A part of a territory, delimited by the Member State, having a population in excess of 250,000 persons and a population density such that the Member State considers it to be an urbanised area. The population density must exceed 500 persons per square kilometre.
Agglomeration (subsequent rounds)	A part of a territory, delimited by the Member State, having a population in excess of 100,000 persons and a population density such that the Member State considers it to be an urbanised area. The population density must exceed 500 persons per square kilometre.
Attribute Data	A trait, quality, or property describing a geographical feature, e.g. vehicle flow or building height.
Competent Authority	The Competent Authorities will be responsible for aspects such as making and, where relevant, approving noise maps and Action Plans for agglomerations, major roads, major railways and major airports. They will also be responsible for delimiting Quiet Areas within agglomerations and open countryside and collecting noise maps and Action Plans. The Competent Authorities are as follows: Agglomerations – Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Major roads – Department for Infrastructure Major railways – Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company Major airports – Airport Operator
Data	Data comprises information required to generate the outputs specified, and the results specified.
dB	Decibel The human ear can detect sound waves exerting pressures ranging from 20 micropascals up to 100,000,000 micropascals. Because these numbers are so unwieldy a logarithmic scale (the decibel scale) is used.

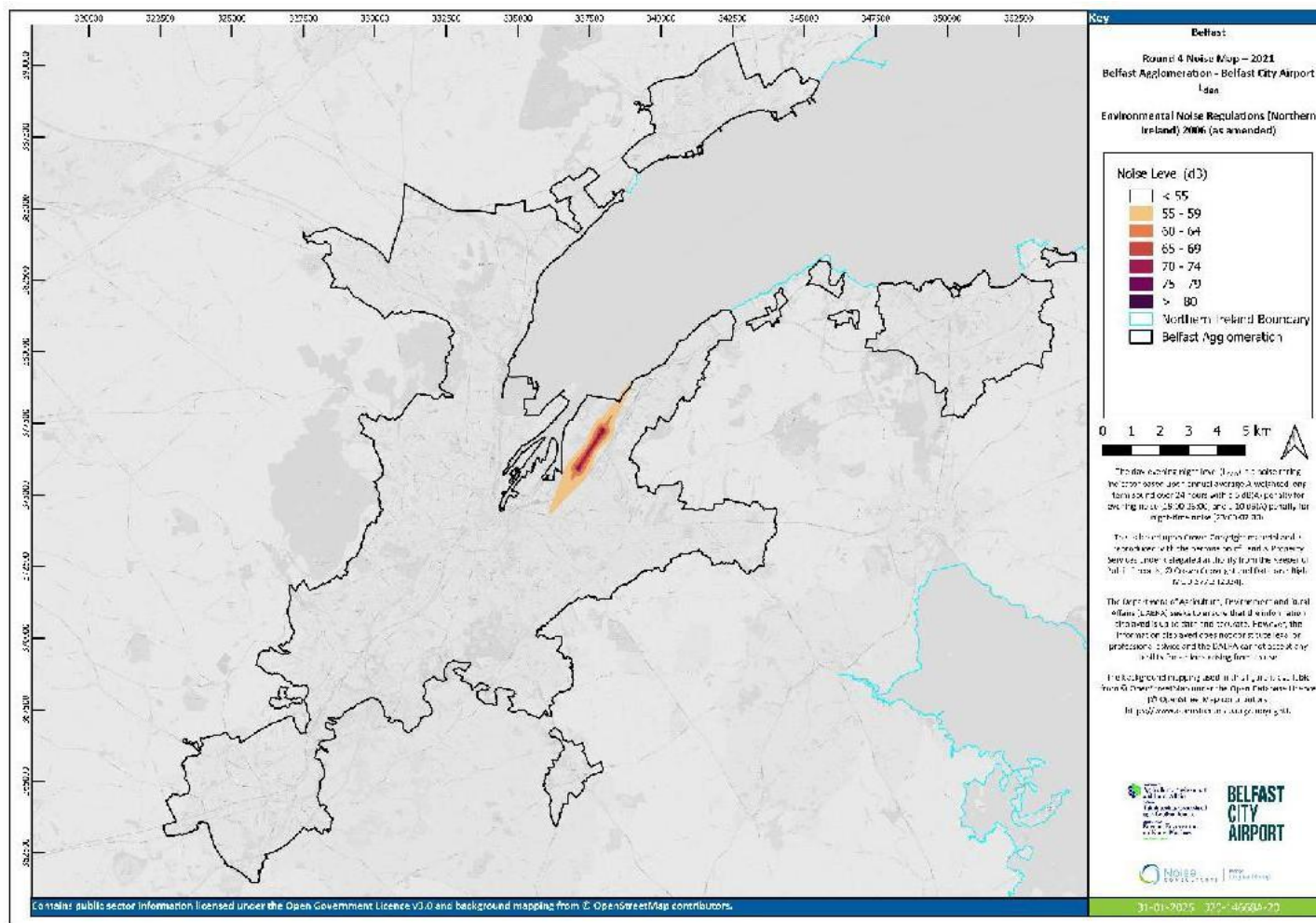
Term	Definition
	The typical threshold of human hearing, 20 micropascals, is set as 0 decibels. It follows from this that the loudest sounds we can hear before suffering immediate hearing damage (around 100,000,000 micropascals) correspond to around 130-140 decibels.
dB(A)	Internationally accepted unit for most noise measurement and represents the sound pressure level weighted to correspond to the frequency response of the human ear. The human ear is most sensitive to sound waves with frequencies of a few thousand Hz. A sound wave with the same sound pressure amplitude outside this range will sound noticeably quieter than one in this range with the same sound pressure amplitude. Describing the loudness of a sound purely in terms of decibels based on sound pressure can therefore be misleading.
EC	European Commission
END	Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and Council relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, otherwise known as the Environmental Noise Directive.
BCA	Belfast City Airport
GIS	Geographic Information System
INM	Integrated Noise Model
Irish National Grid (ING)	The official spatial referencing system of Ireland.
Limit Values	Member States are required to inform the Commission of existing limit values or limit values in preparation (Article 5, paragraph 4 of the END).
Major Airport	The END defines a major airport as: a civil airport, designated by the Member State, which has more than 50,000 movements per year (a movement being a take-off or landing), excluding those purely for training purposes on light aircraft (Article 3(p)).
Major Railway	The END defines a major railway as: a railway designated by the Member State which has more than 30,000 train passages per year (approximately 80 train passages per day) (Article 3(o)). However, for the first round of mapping in 2007 the qualifying figure was 60,000 train passages per annum (Article 7, paragraph 1).

Term	Definition
Major Road	The END defines a major road as: a regional, national or international road, designated by the Member State, which has more than 3 million vehicle passages per annum (approximately 8,200 vehicles per day) (Article 3(n)).
Modal Split	The split between flight type (arrivals and departures) and runway direction (towards Belfast City (Runway 04) or towards Belfast Lough (Runway 22)).
NA	Not Applicable
Noise Bands	Areas lying between contours of the following levels (dB): L_{den} 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, >74 L_d 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, >74 L_e 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, >74 L_n 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, >69
Noise Levels	Free-field values of L_{den} , L_d , L_e , L_n , and $L_{A10,18h}$ at a height of 4m above local ground level
Noise Level - L_d - Daytime	L_d (or L_{day}) = $L_{Aeq,12h}$ (07:00 to 19:00). For strategic noise mapping this is the annual average
Noise Level - L_e - Evening	L_e (or $L_{evening}$) = $L_{Aeq,4h}$ (19:00 to 23:00) For strategic noise mapping this is the annual average
Noise Level - L_n - Night	L_n (or L_{night}) = $L_{Aeq,8h}$ (23:00 to 07:00) For strategic noise mapping this is the annual average
Noise Level - L_{den} – Day/Evening/Night	A noise rating indicator based upon L_d , L_e and L_n as follows: $L_{den} = 10 * \lg \frac{1}{24} \{ 12 * 10^{((L_{day})/10)} + 4 * 10^{((L_{evening}+5)/10)} + 8 * 10^{((L_{night}+10)/10)} \}$
Noise Level – $L_{Aeq,16h}$	$L_{Aeq,16h} = L_{Aeq,16h}$ (07:00 – 23:00) For strategic noise mapping this is the annual average.
Noise Mapping	The presentation of data on an existing or predicted noise situation in terms of a noise indicator.
Noise Mapping (Input) Data	Two broad categories: (1) Spatial (e.g. road centre lines, building outlines). (2) Attribute (e.g. vehicle flow, building height – assigned to specific spatial data).
Noise Mapping Software	Computer program that calculates required noise levels based on relevant input data.

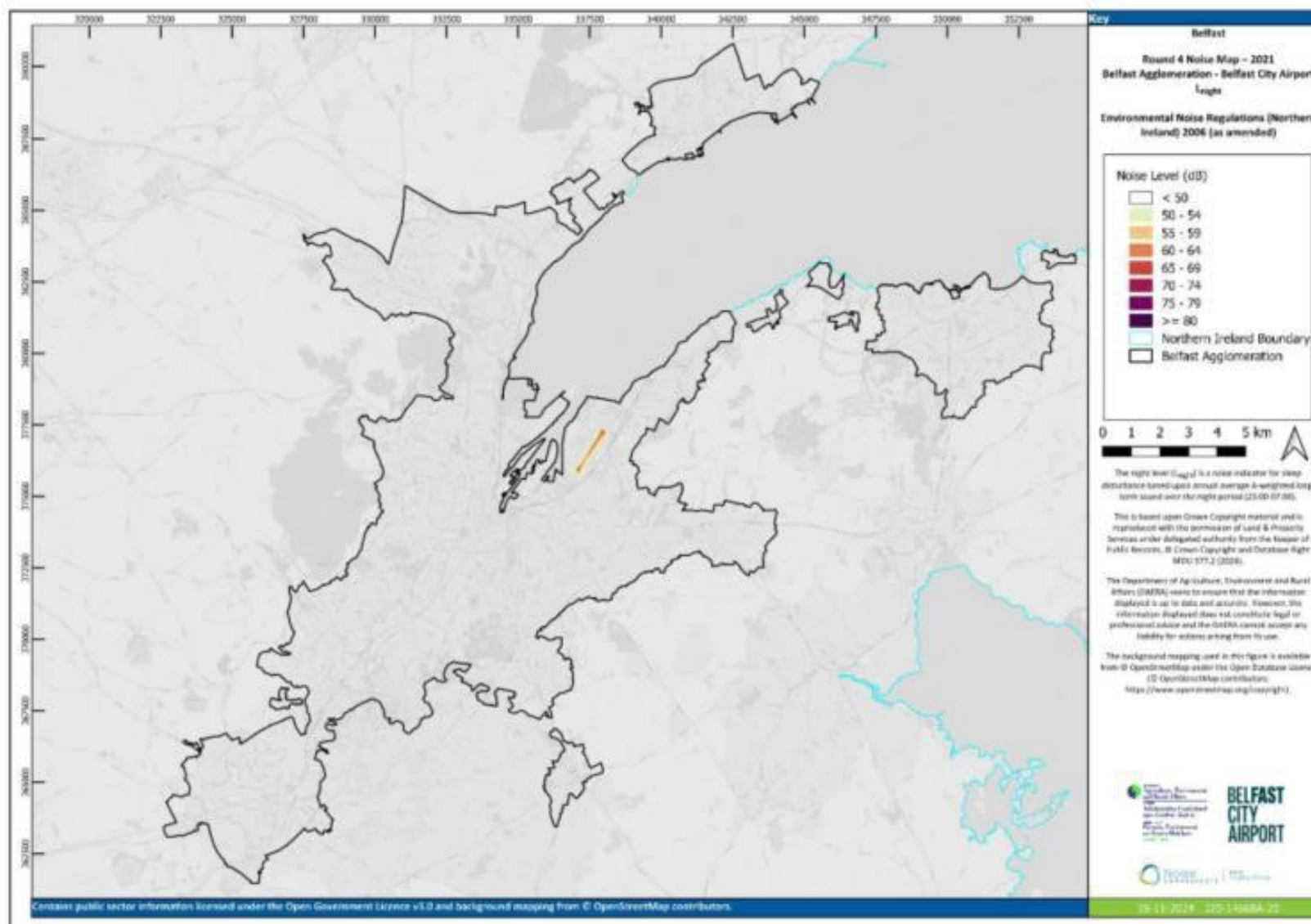
Term	Definition
Noise Model	All the input data collated and held within a computer program to enable noise levels to be calculated.
Output Data	The noise outputs generated by the noise model.
OSNI	Ordnance Survey for Northern Ireland.
Processing Data	Any form of manipulation, correction, adjustment factoring, correcting, or other adjustment of data to make it fit for purpose (includes operations sometimes referred to as 'cleaning' of data).
Quiet Area	Article 3(l) and 3(m) of the END define a 'Quiet Area in an agglomeration' as an area, delimited by the Competent Authority, for instance which is not exposed to a value of L_{den} or of another appropriate noise indicator greater than a certain value set by the Member State, from any noise source.
Spatial (Input) Data	Information about the location, shape, and relationships among geographic features, for example road centre lines and buildings.

Appendix D: Strategic noise maps for BCA within Belfast Agglomeration

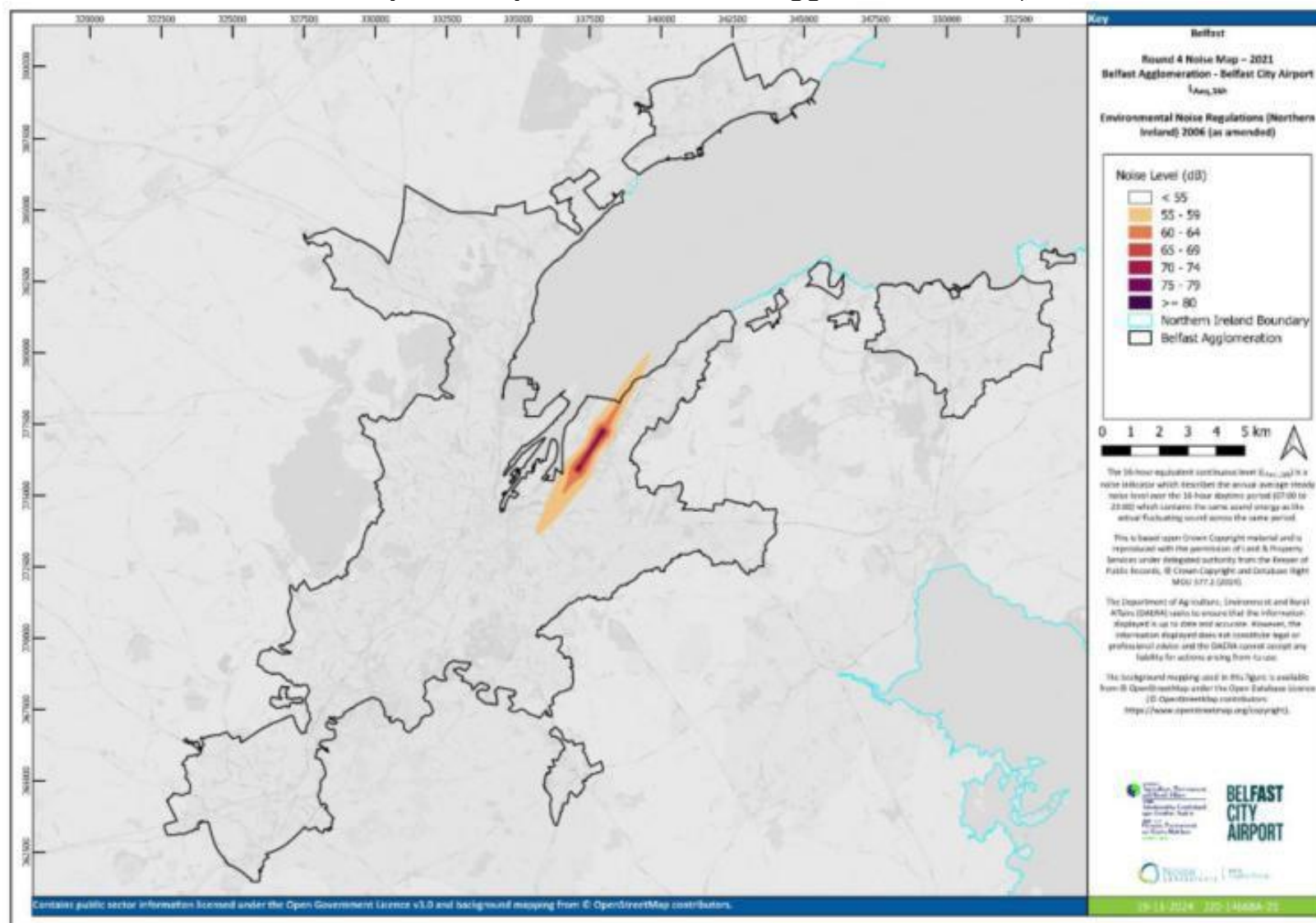
Noise maps for Airport within Belfast Agglomeration L_{den}



Noise maps for Airport within Belfast Agglomeration Lnight



Noise maps for Airport within Belfast Agglomeration $L_{Aeq,16h}$



Appendix E Dataset Specification

Full details of the BCA noise modelling can be found within Noise Consultants Limited and Acustica Ltd report reference 14668A-20-R09-05-F03 – Belfast City Airport Modelling Report dated 6/02/2025.

Appendix F Noise Actions

No	Action	Timescales	Target (where relevant)	Performance indicator / evaluation metric	People Affected	Enforcement Authority (where relevant)
	Preventing & reducing air noise					
1	BCA will operate in accordance with any covenants relating to operating hours either in its current or any future Planning Agreement(s).	Ongoing	N/A	No. of flights outside scheduled operating hours as % of total flights	Residents and noise sensitive premises	Dfl
2	BCA will operate within any covenants relating to the noise contour area limit in its current or any future Planning Agreement(s).	Ongoing	Currently 57 dB L _{Aeq,16h} Contour area ≤5.2km ²	Annual APR report	Residents and noise sensitive premises	Dfl
3	BCA will operate within the covenants relating to limits on annual Air Traffic Movements in its current or any future Planning Agreement(s).	Ongoing	Currently ATMs ≤48,000	Annual APR report	Residents and noise sensitive premises	Dfl
3	BCA will maintain a bias of flights over Belfast Lough where it is safe and feasible to do so, in accordance with the covenants in its current or any future Planning Agreement(s).	Ongoing	+50% of flights operating over Belfast Lough	% of flights operating over Belfast Lough on a monthly basis	Residents and noise sensitive premises to south-west of airfield	Dfl
4	BCA will operate within the covenants relating to Noise Quota limits in its current or any future Planning Agreement(s).	Ongoing	Currently Quota Count ≤4,665	Annual APR report	Residents and noise sensitive premises	Dfl

No	Action	Timescales	Target (where relevant)	Performance indicator / evaluation metric	People Affected	Enforcement Authority (where relevant)
	Preventing & reducing air noise					
5	BCA will continue to encourage adherence by airlines to its published noise abatement procedures.	Ongoing	95% adherence per month	% adherence by airline on monthly basis	Residents and noise sensitive premises outside BCA flight paths	BCA
6	BCA will continue to penalise airlines who exceed fixed departure noise limits as agreed with Dfl (to be reviewed every five years).	Ongoing	Departure noise limits	Number & type of aircraft breaches in Annual APR report	Residents and noise sensitive premises	Dfl
7	BCA will continue to investigate the feasibility of introducing a (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure for Runway 04 to enhance track keeping performance by airlines.	Ongoing	Report to Environmental Sub Group	N/A	To be determined	BCA
8	BCA will implement a sound insulation scheme in accordance with the covenants set out in its current or any future Planning Agreement(s).	Reviewed annually	N/A	Future residents or noise sensitive premises falling within 63 dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$ as per annual summer 92-day contours	Any future residents or noise sensitive premises within 63dB $L_{Aeq,16h}$	Dfl
9	BCA will continue the requirement for all arrivals to use Continuous Descent Approaches at the airport, subject to the constraints of safety and the operational	Ongoing	N/A	Implementation and adherence to CDA thereafter	Residents and noise sensitive premises	BCA

No	Action	Timescales	Target (where relevant)	Performance indicator / evaluation metric	People Affected	Enforcement Authority (where relevant)
	Preventing & reducing air noise					
	performance requirements of the individual aircraft and consistent with flight safety				under the flight path above 1,800 feet	
10	BCA will continue to review its current noise management measures and undertake further assessments on the noise environment, where necessary, in consultation with the Forum.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	To be determined	BCA
	Noise monitoring & reporting					
11	BCA will continue to operate and maintain its Noise & Track Monitoring System.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dfl
12	BCA will continue to prepare reports on airline adherence to its published noise abatement procedures for the Forum.	Ongoing	3 times per year	Track keeping report to Forum	N/A	
13	BCA will continue to produce flight statistics /noise complaint reports for the Forum.	Ongoing	3 times per year	Flight statistics and analysis of noise complaints reports to Forum	N/A	
14	BCA will continue to publish flight and noise related statistics on BCA website.	Ongoing	Monthly	Up to date flight and noise related statistics on BCA website	N/A	

No	Action	Timescales	Target (where relevant)	Performance indicator / evaluation metric	People Affected	Enforcement Authority (where relevant)
Preventing & reducing air noise						
15	BCA will continue to commission independent noise specialists to prepare its annual summer contours to evaluate the noise climate.	Ongoing	N/A	Annual Noise Contour Report submitted to DfI and to Forum	N/A	DfI
16	BCA continue to publish Annual Performance Reports in accordance with the covenants in its current or any future Planning Agreement(s).	Ongoing	Yearly	Annual	N/A	DfI
Corporate Responsibility						
19	BCA will continue to support local schools and community projects to offset noise impact through the Community Fund and its ongoing CR programme.	Ongoing	N/A	Number of projects supported, and funds donated	N/A	
Communication on noise issues						
20	BCA will continue to operate a noise complaint handling system and endeavour to respond to individuals within target timescales	Ongoing	Investigated response within 15 working days as far as possible	Number of noise complaints received and timescales for response	N/A	
21	Maintain and operate Belfast City Airport Forum/Consultative Committee.	Ongoing.	3 meetings annually (or as agreed with Committee members	Performance against planning agreement measures	N/A	

N.B. The actions listed above include covenants and restrictions contained within the Planning Agreement (<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/george-best-belfast-city-airport-planning-agreement>); the “performance indicator/evaluation metric” listed are not within the planning agreement. These indicators are used by BCA. DfI assess compliance with the planning agreement rather than performance.