

**Environmental Noise Directive**

**Action Plan Summary**

**STRATEGIC NOISE ACTION PLAN SUMMARY FOR ABERDEEN AIRPORT**

Prepared by BAA Aberdeen

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## **1. Introduction**

This document represents the summary of the Aberdeen Airport Noise Action Plan and is submitted to the European Commission in accordance with Article 10.2 Annex VI 1.8 & 2.8 of Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise.

The format of the summary follows the requirements of Appendix V of the directive.

This is the first time the airport has produced a Noise Action Plan. Producing the plan has helped to consolidate all the current work on noise management in the airport into one clear concise document. It has also helped to solidify our plans for the next 5 years to improve our noise management. However the plan is not set in stone and we envisage the plan to be a flexible document which can be updated and revised as and when required.

The draft version of the plan was published on our website and we directed our local stakeholders to make comments on the plan. The comments were fed back to an independent consultant to collate and review. We have taken into consideration the comments made by interested parties, and where appropriate we have revised the plan to reflect these comments.

We will continue to engage with local communities and other key stakeholders so that we better understand their concerns and priorities and feed this into the plan when required.

## **2. A description of Aberdeen Airport.**

Aberdeen Airport, as it stands today, covers 215 hectares. It is bounded to the north by open farmland, to the south by the residential areas of Bankhead and Bucksburn, to the west by Kirkhill Industrial Estate and to the east by the village of Dyce.

The airport has developed to become Europe's busiest commercial heliport and the air transport hub of Europe's oil and gas industry.

The core-developed area is around the main passenger terminal building, located on Brent Road. Other main developed areas include the cargo and offshore helicopter bases at Forties Road and the eastern maintenance and helicopter base around Wellheads Drive and Farburn Terrace.

At privatisation in 1987, Aberdeen Airport handled a million passengers a year. Aberdeen Airport is North East Scotland's principal gateway and the transport hub serving Europe's oil and gas capital. It provides fixed wing and rotary air transport services for the 'City and Shire' and the offshore energy sector. As a result, it is the busiest commercial heliport in Europe and the 14th busiest airport in the UK, serving more than 40 domestic and international destinations worldwide.

Today the airport handles more than 3.4 million passengers per year – compared to a previous record of 3.1 million in the twelve months to November 2006. The airport has enjoyed an unprecedented increase in passenger numbers with 42 months of consecutive growth - and for 17 months in a row, Aberdeen was the fastest growing of BAA's seven UK airports.

### **3. The authority responsible.**

The Scottish Government is the Competent Authority for END and is responsible for drawing up Noise Action Plans except in the case of Airports where the Airport operator is the Competent Authority.

BAA have worked closely with the Scottish Governments' consultants to produce the required noise maps and have been fully involved in the Action Plan process in terms of producing the Aberdeen Noise Action Plan.

### **4. The legal context.**

The regulations which transpose the Environmental Noise Directive in Scotland are [The Environmental Noise \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#). The regulations came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and apply to environmental noise to which humans are exposed. The regulations apply to noise from road, railway and airport sources, as well as industrial noise. The 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 work places, or noise inside means of transport or due to military activities in military areas.

There are five main tiers of regulation governing aircraft noise in Scotland:

- International – International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)
- European - The European Union
- National - the UK Government
- Scottish Government
- Local - Local Authorities

However, the airport itself can and does act as another important regulator of aircraft noise in its own right.

#### *International Regulation*

At an international level, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) sets progressively tighter certification standards, known as Chapters for noise emissions from civil aircraft to which member countries' fleets must conform.

Further details of these standards can be found at [ww.dft.gov.uk](http://ww.dft.gov.uk) and [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk).

In addition to these specific requirements, the ICAO requires member states to adopt a "*balanced approach*" to noise management which looks beyond individual aircraft to reduce noise impact through:

- reducing aircraft noise at source

- land-use planning
- changes to operational procedures
- restrictions on the use of the noisiest aircraft.

### *European Regulation*

The European Union (EU) is increasingly assuming responsibility for the regulation of aircraft noise standards. The Directives of most relevance are:

- EC Directive 92/14/EEC, which banned Chapter 2 aircraft from landing in the EU from 1st April 2002. Examples of these are the BAC-1-11 or a B737-200.
- EC Directive 2002/30, which introduced discretionary powers to restrict the operation of marginally compliant Chapter 3 aircraft, where circumstances support this measure. The Directive also required the publication of an environmental noise objective for the airport and the adoption of a balanced approach to noise management including the four dimensions agreed by ICAO.
- EC Directive 2002/49 ('environmental noise directive'), which requires member states to create 'noise maps' of noise from all transport sources in urban areas by 2007, and to adopt action plans to manage noise by 2008. The Directive also aims to harmonise methods for measuring noise across the EU. This is the Directive under which we have produced the Noise Action Plan.

### *National Regulation*

The UK Government has an important role in setting and developing the policy framework for aircraft noise control at UK airports and has prescribed a range of controls on aircraft noise impacts.

The December 2003 *The Future of Air Transport* White Paper outlined several new policies for airports which control, mitigate and compensate for aircraft noise.

Full details of the range of aircraft operations related noise controls are set out in statutory notices and published in the UK Aeronautical Information Package (UKAIP) and elsewhere as appropriate. These controls include aspects such as Continuous Descent Approaches (CDAs), noise abatement procedures and night flight limits.

The 1982 and 2006 Civil Aviation Acts grant the Government and airports powers to introduce noise control measures, including mitigation.

Following a lengthy consultation, the DfT also implemented the following specific noise abatement objectives for the course of this current night flight regime which runs from 2006 to 2012:

- Minimise sleep disturbance resulting from overflight of the noisiest types of aircraft;
- Mitigate the effects of noise (in particular sleep disturbance effects) by encouraging the adoption by the airport of night-noise-domestic insulation schemes;
- Limit the 6.5 hour 48 dB LAeq contour (for the winter and summer seasons combined) to 55km<sup>2</sup> by 2011-2012.

### *Scottish Regulation*

The regulation of aviation and air transport (including the Civil Aviation Act) has been reserved to the Secretary of State and has not been devolved to the Scottish Parliament. However certain functions, such as aircraft noise are exercisable by the Scottish Ministers.

Noise from aircraft in flight is not treated as nuisance. Ground noise, other than normal aircraft movements, at the airport may be controlled by the local authority.

### *Airport Operators*

The Civil Aviation Act 2006 clarified the scope of the powers available to airport operators in aircraft noise management. An airport may charge aircraft operators for use of the aerodrome by reference to the noise or emissions from an aircraft. This enables the airport operator to introduce differential charging to help incentivise the use of quieter and cleaner aircraft. The airport can also levy financial penalties on an aircraft operator which breaches noise abatement requirements imposed by the UK Government, as is the case at Edinburgh Airport.

Information on the financial incentives used by BAA Edinburgh to encourage the use of quieter aircraft and operational practices are listed in the airport Conditions of Use. Available from [www.baa.com/cou](http://www.baa.com/cou).

## **5. Any limit values in place in accordance with Article 5.**

None

## **6. A summary of the results of the noise mapping.**

All member states were required to produce agglomeration strategic noise maps for major roads, rail, airports, and industry (including port area if appropriate) by the end of June 2007. The Airport met this target and the data, as required under Article 10(2) of the Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC), was submitted via the Scottish Government on the 19th December 2007 to the European Commission.

The location of Aberdeen Airport and the alignment of the runways mean that relatively fewer people are impacted by the airport's operation when compared to some other UK airports.

The prevalence of northerly winds mean that approximately 58% of aircraft arrivals come from the south, over the communities of Bucksburn, Northfield and Mastrick areas. Around 58% of departures are to the north over the city affecting such areas as Cothal.

These areas, due to their proximity to the runway and the imaginary extended centre line from the runway for departing and approaching aircraft means they will be exposed to the over flight of aircraft. Helicopters differ from fixed wing aircraft as they fly by using Visual Flight Rules (VFR) as permitted under the Air Navigation Order.

This means the community of Dyce are also affected by noise from helicopter movements.

## **7. An evaluation of the estimated number of people exposed to noise.**

Detailed below are the areas and populations exposed to certain noise contours. We have included data from  $L_{den}$ .

**Table 1: Estimated Areas, Population and Households Within 2006  $L_{den}$  Aberdeen Airport Noise Contours**

<b>Contour Level dB(A)</b>	<b>Area (Km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Households</b>
>55	16.4	16,300	6,900
>60	5.9	3,300	1,400
>65	2.1	200	100
>70	0.8	0	0
>75	0.3	0	0

## **8. Identification of problems and situations that need to be improved.**

Currently the noise contours relating to aircraft noise for the airport do not accurately reflect the levels of annoyance experienced by residents living close to the airport. This means that the contours should not be relied on as the only way to measure the impacts of aircraft noise. It can be difficult to communicate messages to the local community relating to these contours.

It is also a significant challenge for the airport operator to be the competent authority for aircraft noise. The airport doesn't operate any aircraft and has limited control over flight paths and restrictions.

Currently the noise contours used in the mapping are for aircraft noise only; the next round of mapping will require ground noise from the aircraft and operations of the airport to be included. There may be some challenges relating to how this noise is measured and represented on the maps.

## **9. A record of the public consultations organised in accordance with Article 8(7).**

A web based public consultation was held from 12th May to the 11th July 2008 on the draft version of this action plan. Responses from the consultation were collected by an independent consultant and their report can be found as an annex in the Noise Action Plan.

BAA always welcome's comments and queries relating to noise and encourages interested parties to contact the airport with their comments and queries.

The Scottish Government also carried out a Strategic Environment Assessment of the Noise Action Plans. This was publicly consulted on from 22<sup>nd</sup> October until the

19<sup>th</sup> December 2008 via their web site. The results of this consultation can be obtained from the Scottish Government.

**10. Any noise-reduction measures already in force and any projects in preparation.**

The airport has been proactively managing noise impacts for a number of years. Some of the measures already in place in Aberdeen include;

1. Differential landing charges for noisier aircraft.
2. Fining of aircraft in breach of our set noise limits.
3. Offering a relocation assistance scheme for those households within the airports 69db Leq noise contour.
4. Phone number for the local community to log queries and complaints.
5. Publishing noise contours and predicted noise contours.
6. Raising noise as an issue with the airlines and helicopter operators.

**11. Actions which the competent authorities intend to take in the next five years, including any measures to preserve quiet areas.**

In order to structure the actions we intend to take over the next 5 years we have set five key themes for our noise work programme. These are detailed below;

- a.) Demonstrating our continuing commitment to managing aircraft noise impacts associated with Aberdeen airport's operations:
  - (i) Quietest fleet practicable.
  - (ii) Quietest practicable aircraft operations, balanced against NOx and CO2 emissions.
  - (iii) Effective and credible noise mitigation schemes.
- b.) Allowing us to engage with our communities affected by aircraft noise and better understand their concerns and priorities.
- c.) Influencing planning policy to minimise the number of noise sensitive properties around our airports.
- d.) Organising ourselves to continue to efficiently and effectively manage aircraft noise.
- e.) Building on our extensive understanding of aircraft noise to further inform our priorities, strategies and targets.

We have set out actions under each of these themes which are set out in Section 10 of our noise action plan. One action is of particular note and this is to consult separately on the introduction of a new noise mitigation scheme like that in operation at London Heathrow and Gatwick, by the end of 2009.

**12. Long-term strategy.**

The airport's long term strategy is centred around the following objective for the management of aircraft noise:

***To gain the trust of our stakeholders that we are using best practicable means to minimise existing aircraft noise impacts, and this approach will continue into the future, within the framework established by Government.***

This objective is supported by a long-term goal to be in the top fifth of companies for best practice in international airport noise management on comparable sites. Aberdeen Airport will publish progress against actions set out in the Noise Action Plan in the airport’s Corporate Responsibility Report, together with performance information against key noise indicators.

**13. Financial information (if available): budgets, cost-effectiveness assessment, cost-benefit assessment.**

Current costs for noise management are set out in the table below. For any actions set out in the plan which could incur a cost a cost benefit analysis will be carried out.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Staff Costs	Flight Evaluation Team, Communications Team, Environment Team, Airside Team	£35000
Equipment Costs	Noise Monitor maintenance, Radar maintenance	£10000
Publications	Community News Letters	£5000

**14. Estimates in terms of the reduction of the number of people affected (annoyed, sleep, disturbed, or other).**

It is very difficult to estimate how the actions in the plan will affect people’s annoyance. Different actions will have different results for a differing number of people. However there are an estimated 16,300 people identified by the mapping exercise who experience Lden dB 55 or greater due to aircraft noise. These are the people for who we aim to reduce noise impact.

**15. Provisions envisaged for evaluating the implementation and the results of the action plan.**

We will monitor a set of performance indicators to assess our effectiveness in each area of focus, to ensure that the work we are undertaking is resulting in the maximum benefit in terms of reducing noise impacts.

The full range of indicators is set out in the noise action plan in Section 10. Our performance against these indicators will be regularly reviewed internally through our environmental governance structure. We will also report on progress against these in our annual Corporate Responsibility Reports.

During the five-year period of this action plan, we may add to or amend the range of performance indicators to respond to improvements which enable us to better manage the airport noise impacts.