

SECTION 131 FORM

File With \_\_\_\_\_

S. 37

Appeal NO: ABP 314485

TO: SEO

Defer Re O/H ☐

Having considered the contents of the submission dated/ received 23/12/24  
from

Maureen + Gerry  
Fitzsimons I recommend that section 131 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000  
be/not be invoked at this stage for the following reason(s): no new issues

E.O.: [Signature] Date: 21/1/25

To EO: \_\_\_\_\_

Section 131 not to be invoked at this stage. ☐

Section 131 to be invoked – allow 2/4 weeks for reply. ☐

S.E.O.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

S.A.O.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

M \_\_\_\_\_

Please prepare BP \_\_\_\_\_ - Section 131 notice enclosing a copy of the attached  
submission

to: \_\_\_\_\_

Allow 2/3/4 weeks – BP \_\_\_\_\_

EO: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

AA: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

File With \_\_\_\_\_

**CORRESPONDENCE FORM**Appeal No: ABP 314485Please treat correspondence received on 23/12/24 as follows:

. Update database with new agent for Applicant/Appellant \_\_\_\_\_

. Acknowledge with BP 23. Keep copy of Board's Letter ☐

1. RETURN TO SENDER with BP \_\_\_\_\_

2. Keep Envelope: ☐3. Keep Copy of Board's letter ☐

Amendments/Comments

Resp Recd

## 4. Attach to file

(a) R/S ☐(b) GIS Processing ☒(c) Processing ☒(d) Screening ☐(e) Inspectorate ☐RETURN TO EO ☐Plans Date Stamped ☐Date Stamped Filled in ☐EO: [Signature]AA: F. RhodesDate: 21/1/25Date: 21/1/25

## Dillon Corcoran

---

**From:** Mairead Fitzsimons <mairead.fitzsimons@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday 23 December 2024 12:30  
**To:** Appeals2  
**Subject:** Relevant Action Draft Decision, Case Ref: 314485  
**Attachments:** ABP Relevant Action Draft Decision, Case Ref 314485 December 2024.docx

**Caution:** This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached our observations on the Relevant Action Draft Decision, Case Ref: 314485.

We are on the list of participants due to our previous submissions, so no payment is required. I checked this with your office this morning.

Regards and thank you.

Have a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Mairead and Gerry Fitzsimons  
88 The Dunes ,  
Portmarnock,  
Co Dublin.

## **Relevant Action Draft Decision, Case Ref: 314485**

**An Bord Pleanála must act as a leader and refuse permission on this Relevant Action on every level, individual, community, national, and global.**

As a resident of Portmarnock for 46 years we are used to aircraft flying near our home, however, we will never get used to night-time flying of noisy aircraft. Just this morning, I was woken up at 6.10am by one noisy aircraft after another (6.14am). Noise has a major impact on sleep. Not being able to get back to sleep I felt tired all day, having to resort to taking a nap in the afternoon. Just as a barking dog, or house alarm, causes huge disturbance at night, so equally does a noisy aircraft in the silence of the night.

ABP must adopt robust noise management policies as operated at Heathrow, Stansted and Luton airports. Science has recognised that a good night of uninterrupted sleep is the fundamental basis of our physical and mental health. Disruption of sleep of any kind is damaging to people of all ages. Fingal is the fastest growing region in Ireland, with new homes being built right under the flight paths. Young families are moving into these homes, including our own grandchildren, and their health is of upmost importance to the future of Ireland. In Portmarnock, huge developments have, and are, being built directly under the flight paths to the southern runway. Using <https://webtrak.emsbk.com/dub1> it is possible to see that the noise levels of flights over these houses at 70db and over. This level of noise is unacceptable by any standard, especially at night.

Whole communities (30,000 people) in Fingal and Meath living near, and surrounding, the South and North runways are being affected detrimentally by aircraft using illegal divergent flight paths. DAA didn't tell the local authorities or local communities of the changes to the flight paths, and they breach their 2007 planning permission every day.

Airlines need constant growth to satisfy their shareholders. However, a national economic disaster is coming down the line in 2030 when the EU will fine Ireland 20 billion euro for not meeting its climate change goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50%. Airlines want to increase their emissions while other industries are working at reducing their emissions by half. The situation is now so grave that we must do whatever we can to reduce emissions. An Bord Pleanála must use this opportunity to show leadership in demonstrating that they understand the situation and are prepared to act in the interests of the State and the lives of its citizens. Ireland has shown world leadership before to the world with legislation on smoking, and the use of plastic bags. Let's do it again in relation to aviation.

Globally, climate change is a 'hot topic' on everyone's lips, as we see climate disasters all over the world, and in Ireland too. More flights mean more greenhouse gases mean more climate change. Emissions from aviation are a significant contributor to climate

change. Aircraft burn fossil fuel which not only releases CO2 emissions but also has strong warming non-CO2 effects due to nitrogen oxides (NOx), vapour trails and cloud formation triggered by the altitude at which aircraft operate.

[https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jul/27/airline-emissions-climate-crisis-holiday-advertising?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jul/27/airline-emissions-climate-crisis-holiday-advertising?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Globally, COP28 has shown us that fossil fuels are at the heart of the climate crisis. ClimateTrace.org at COP28 shows us that Dublin Airport is no1 GHG emitter in Ireland in 2022. DAA and the airlines have shown themselves to be climate hypocrites. It's essential that ABP stands by the goals of COP29 by refusing any increase in flights beyond the original permissions.

A recent documentary on BBC1 showed that plans for offsetting, and use of other fuels are a pipedream. The only immediate solution is regulation, and soon, people will have to change their habits and fly less with prices of flights compensating for the damage to the environment – the polluter pays the cost.

## **Introduction**

The Inspector's Report has rightly concluded that the adverse impact of the Relevant Action on the surrounding communities would be too severe to justify granting permission. The proposal's projected increase in night-time activity would result in significant additional awakenings, which are well-documented to cause substantial health and well-being consequences, including increased risks of cardiovascular disease, mental health disorders, and sleep-related cognitive impairments. These impacts underscore the urgent need for stringent controls to protect affected communities.

Given these findings, it is essential that any current or future expansion of airport activity during night-time hours be strictly limited by a movement cap of 13,000 annual night-time flights, as proposed. However, the severity of the projected health and environmental impacts suggests that a complete ban on night-time flights may ultimately be necessary to ensure the well-being of affected communities. Night-time operations present unacceptable risks to health and quality of life, and the evidence strongly supports minimising or eliminating such activity to meet public health and sustainability goals.

Without such measures, the application should have been refused outright by the planning authorities, as the adverse impacts clearly outweigh any potential benefits. Therefore, the application must now be rejected to protect the integrity of the planning process, uphold public health standards, and ensure that the needs of the local community are prioritised over operational convenience.

The following expanded summary highlights the inadequacies of the DAA application, the breaches of planning conditions, and the need for a comprehensive approach to managing night-time flights, which includes the retention of the movement cap as an immediate measure and consideration of a full ban on night-time operations to safeguard public health and community welfare.

### **1.0 Inadequacy of DAA Application and Necessity of Movement Limit**

- **Failure to Address Noise Impacts:**

- The Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) application fails to assess or mitigate the adverse effects of nighttime noise adequately.
- Average metrics like % Highly Sleep Disturbed (HSD) and  $L_{night}$  fail to capture acute impacts such as awakenings, which have immediate and long-term health consequences.

- **Health Implications of Nighttime Noise:**

- Chronic sleep disruption contributes to cardiovascular disease, mental health disorders, and reduced cognitive performance.
- The WHO highlights that even one additional awakening per night represents a significant adverse health impact, ignored in the DAA's proposals.

- **Projected Impacts:**

- The inspector has defined that more than 1 additional awakening per night as a result of aircraft noise is a significant adverse impact.
- The inspector has concluded “in conjunction with the board's independent acoustic expert that the information contained in the RD and the RA does not adequately demonstrate consideration of all measures necessary to ensure the increase in flights during the nighttime hours would prevent a significant negative impact on the existing population.”

- **Insulation Limitations:**

- Insulation measures cannot fully mitigate nighttime noise due to factors like open windows, low-frequency noise, and peak noise events.
- The WHO average insulation value of 21 dB assumes windows are open 20% of the year, making insulation less effective.
- The introduction of a new insulation criteria of 80dB  $L_{ASMax}$  is welcomed, however, without a detailed set of maps indicating who qualifies for this the decision is incomplete.

- Furthermore, the grant value of €20,000 is considered inadequate to fully insulate those homes that qualify. Comparisons to other EU countries are incomplete and do not acknowledge the fact that construction costs in Ireland and particularly Dublin are close to the highest in the EU.
- It is fundamentally wrong that anybody who is so significantly affected by the negative impacts of noise from the proposed development should have to carry the cost of any mitigation works needed.
- The scheme should be redesigned to cover the full cost of insulation.
- **Necessity of the Movement Limit:**
  - The movement cap of 13,000 nighttime flights is critical to reducing noise impacts and protecting public health.
  - Without this cap, noise exposure levels will rise significantly, endangering the well-being of nearby residents.
- **Conclusion on Permission:**
  - The permission should be denied due to the DAA's insufficient noise mitigation measures and failure to address core public health risks.

## 2.0 Unauthorised Flight Paths and Breach of Planning Conditions

- **Deviation from Approved Flight Paths:**
  - The DAA has implemented flight paths that deviate significantly from those approved in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
  - These unauthorised deviations expose previously unaffected areas to significant noise impacts, creating unassessed risks.
- **Failure to Seek Updated Permissions:**
  - The deviations breach Condition 1 of the planning permission, which requires adherence to the originally assessed flight paths.
  - No updated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or planning application has been submitted for these changes.
- **Community Impacts:**
  - Affected communities have experienced noise levels without proper consultation or mitigation measures.
  - Local schools have been impacted.

- The impact has been devastating for communities with families now feeling like they have no option but to sell their homes.
- Trust in the DAA has been severely eroded due to a lack of transparency and accountability.
- **Legal and Procedural Concerns:**
  - The unauthorised flight paths undermine the planning system's integrity, setting a dangerous precedent for future projects.
  - Granting permission under these conditions violates planning laws and obligations under the EIA Directive.
- **Conclusion on Permission:**
  - Permission should be unequivocally denied until unauthorised flight paths cease and comprehensive reassessments are completed.

### 3.0 Right of Appeal in the Aircraft Noise Act 2019

- **Legal Framework:**
  - Section 10 of the Aircraft Noise Act permits appeals of Regulatory Decisions (RDs) by relevant persons who participated in the consultation process.
  - SMTW (St. Margaret's The Ward Residents Group) qualifies as a relevant person under this framework.
- **Inappropriate Refusal of Appeal:**
  - SMTW's appeal against noise-related RDs was inappropriately denied by An Bord Pleanála, despite clear legislative provisions supporting it.
  - Denial of appeal prevents critical scrutiny of noise mitigation measures and exacerbates community disenfranchisement.
- **Importance of Appeals:**
  - Appeals are vital for maintaining transparency, ensuring accountability, and balancing airport operations with community welfare.
- **Conclusion:**
  - Denying appeals undermines public trust and violates the Aircraft Noise Act's intent to provide affected parties a voice.

#### 4.0 Noise Quota System in the Fingal Development Plan

- **Policy Objectives:**
  - Objective DAO16 supports a Noise Quota System (NQS) to reduce aircraft noise impacts, particularly during nighttime operations.
  - The policy prioritizes community health, sustainability, and the use of quieter aircraft.
- **Challenges in Implementation:**
  - Without a cap on nighttime flights, cumulative noise impacts will persist despite efforts to incentivize quieter aircraft.
  - Current plans increase noise exposure above 2019 levels, violating noise abatement objectives.
- **Recommendations:**
  - Enforce a movement limit alongside the NQS to ensure it effectively reduces noise disturbances.
  - Align the system with best practices observed at major European airports.

#### 5.0 Night Flight Restrictions in Europe and Implications for Dublin

- **European Comparisons:**
  - Major airports like Schiphol, Heathrow, and Frankfurt enforce strict caps or curfews on nighttime flights.
  - Dublin's proposed 31,755 annual nighttime flights far exceed these airports' limits relative to passenger numbers.
- **Health and Environmental Alignment:**
  - European airports prioritize reducing noise exposure to mitigate sleep disruption, cardiovascular risks, and stress.
  - Adopting the 13,000-flight cap aligns Dublin with international best practices, ensuring proportional and sustainable operations.
- **Conclusion:**
  - The proposed number of flights is disproportionate and poses unacceptable health and environmental risks.

- Without the movement limit the Noise Abatement Objective (NAO) set by ANCA for Dublin Airport cannot be fully achieved.

## **6.0 Inadequacy of Insulation in Mitigating Aircraft Noise-Induced Awakenings**

- **Technical Limitations of Insulation:**
  - Insulation does not address critical noise issues, such as low-frequency noise penetration and sharp peaks triggering awakenings.
  - Dormer-style housing near the airport is particularly susceptible to noise, rendering insulation largely ineffective.
- **Existing Schemes Are Insufficient:**
  - Residential Noise Insulation Scheme (RNIS) and Home Sound Insulation Program (HSIP) do not meet modern health protection standards.
  - Insulation is unsuitable for nighttime impacts and cannot substitute for operational restrictions like movement caps.
- **Alternative Mitigation Measures:**
  - Voluntary purchase schemes for residents in high-noise zones should be expanded to address the most severe impacts effectively.
- **Conclusion:**
  - Insulation alone cannot mitigate nighttime noise impacts; operational restrictions must remain central to mitigation strategies.

## **7.0 Health and Environmental Impacts**

- **Noise-Induced Health Risks:**
  - Chronic exposure to nighttime aircraft noise increases the risks of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and mental health issues.
  - Children's cognitive development is adversely affected, impairing memory, learning, and overall performance.
- **Economic Costs:**
  - Health-related costs, including healthcare expenses and reduced productivity, are substantial and long-term.

- For example, Brussels Airport's health cost analysis suggests similar impacts at Dublin could reach €750m annually.
- **Population Exposed:**
  - The DAA analysis has not used the correct population datasets in determining the impacts. This underestimates the impact on the communities around the airport.
- **Public Health Submissions:**
  - Evidence from health agencies emphasizes that noise-induced sleep disturbance is a significant environmental health risk.
  - Ignoring these risks contravenes principles of sustainable development and public health protection.

## 8.0 Other Environmental Impacts

- **Use of Outdated Surveys:**
  - The Appropriate Assessment (AA) relied on outdated ecological surveys that do not accurately reflect current environmental conditions.
  - Failure to update surveys undermines the validity of the assessment and risks overlooking critical impacts on local habitats and species.
- **No AA on Full North Runway Development:**
  - The AA did not assess the full scope of the North Runway development, focusing only on limited aspects of the proposal.
  - Significant components of the development were excluded, leaving major potential impacts unexamined.
- **No Cumulative or In-Combination Assessment:**
  - The AA failed to consider cumulative impacts arising from the interaction of the North Runway with other existing and planned projects in the vicinity.
  - The absence of an in-combination assessment violates key legal requirements and risks underestimating the overall environmental impact of the development.
- **Non-Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Standards:**

- The failure to provide an accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date AA breaches obligations under the EU Habitats Directive.
- The planning process has been compromised by this omission, exposing the development to potential legal challenges.
- **Potential Environmental Risks:**
  - The lack of thorough assessment could lead to significant unmitigated impacts on protected habitats and species, including cumulative degradation of local ecosystems.

## 9.0 Recommendations and Final Position

- **Cease Unauthorised Flight Paths:**
  - Immediately halt unauthorised deviations and revert to the flight paths approved under the original EIS.
  - Conduct a new EIA to assess the impacts of any proposed deviations.
- **Retain Movement Limit:**
  - Maintain the cap of 13,000 nighttime flights to prevent further degradation of community health and well-being.
  - Implement the Noise Quota System to incentivize quieter aircraft and ensure proportional operations.
- **Refuse Permission:**
  - Granting permission under these circumstances undermines planning integrity and public trust.
  - Upholding planning law and ensuring transparent, evidence-based assessments are essential for future airport operations.

Signed: Mairead and Gerry Fitzsimons,

88 The Dunes

Portmarnock

Co Dublin