

Response ID ANON-44GR-6T33-H

Submitted to Proposed amendment to the Environmental Noise (Scotland) Regulations 2006
Submitted on 2026-02-11 20:57:20

Consultation options

Question 1 Do you agree with the proposal for the Scottish Government to produce maps identifying noise sources and quiet areas, on a ten-yearly basis?

No

Strategic noise maps and noise action plans for noise sources other than airports

Question 2 Do you agree with the proposal for the Scottish Government to produce strategic noise maps and noise action plans (for noise sources other than airports) every ten years?

No

Question 3 What are your views on the proposal for the Scottish Government to produce maps identifying noise sources and quiet areas, strategic noise maps and noise action plans (for noise sources other than airports) every ten years?

What are your views?:

The IOA consider that the production of strategic noise maps and noise action plans on a ten year cycle would be insufficient to meet their intended purposes.

Noise maps serve two principal functions:

Strategic planning and land-use decisions.

Strategic noise maps in Scotland provide essential evidence for Local Planning Authorities, supporting informed land-use planning and zoning decisions within Local Development Plans. These plans are typically reviewed and updated on cycles shorter than ten years. If noise maps are updated less frequently than development plans, there is a significant risk that planning decisions will be based on outdated information, potentially leading to inappropriate siting of noise-sensitive developments or insufficient protection of existing communities.

Identification and management of noise impacts.

Noise maps are also critical in identifying areas significantly affected by transportation and other strategic noise sources, enabling targeted mitigation and action planning. Traffic flows, vehicle types, infrastructure changes and development patterns can change considerably over a decade. A ten year update cycle risks misrepresenting current noise exposures, with areas potentially being wrongly classified in terms of severity, thereby undermining the effectiveness and prioritisation of noise mitigation measures. Not updating the maps regularly could result in the noise impact of a particular strategic road transport noise source on the surrounding area being out of date.

Although we accept that an extended cycle would provide greater time for interventions to bed in and be evaluated, moving to a ten-year cycle appears to diverge from the current direction of travel in relation to noise impacts and public health protection, and would risk making Scotland an outlier compared with approaches adopted elsewhere in Europe and the rest of UK.

Question 4 Do you agree with the proposal to remove regulation 7(3) that requires the Scottish Government every five years, and whenever a major development occurs affecting the existing noise situation, to review and if necessary, revise any strategic map showing agglomerations and major roads and railways?

No

Question 5 What are your views on the proposal to remove regulation 7(3) that requires the Scottish Government every five years, and whenever a major development occurs affecting the existing noise situation, to review and if necessary, revise any strategic map showing agglomerations and major roads and railways?

What are your views?:

The strategic noise maps play a critical role in identifying areas significantly affected by transportation and other strategic noise sources, enabling targeted mitigation and effective action planning. Removing the requirement to review and revise these maps following major developments risks undermining their relevance.

Major developments such as new transport infrastructure can materially alter local noise environments. If such changes are not reflected in the noise maps in a timely manner, decisions informed by these maps risk being based on outdated or incorrect information.

Strategic noise maps and noise action plans for airports

Question 6 Do you agree with the proposal for airport operators to be required to produce strategic noise maps and noise action plans (for airports) every ten years?

No

Question 7 What are your views on the proposal for airport operators to be required to produce strategic noise maps and noise action plans (for airports) every ten years?

What are your views?:

We do not consider there to be a clear justification for extending the current five year cycle for airport operators to produce strategic noise maps and noise action plans to ten years.

Over a ten year period, there can be significant changes in modelling standards and methodologies, software tools, aircraft types, fleet composition, flight frequencies etc. In addition, population distribution and land use in areas affected by aircraft noise can change. These factors can materially alter both the scale and distribution of noise impacts.

If noise mapping and action planning are not updated regularly to reflect these changes, there is a risk that assessments will become outdated and no longer provide a reliable basis for use by stakeholders.

Question 8 Do you agree with the proposal to remove regulations 10(3) and 11(4) that require airport operators every five years, and whenever a major development occurs affecting the existing noise situation, to review and if necessary, revise any strategic map showing the airport?

No

Question 9 What are your views on the proposal to remove regulations 10(3) and 11(4) that require airport operators every five years, and whenever a major development occurs affecting the existing noise situation, to review and if necessary revise any strategic map showing the airport?

What are your views?:

We believe where a major development occurs which could significantly impact the noise environment the strategic mapping should be reviewed and revised if necessary.

The EU Environmental Noise Directive

Question 10 Do you agree with the proposal requiring the time between the publication of the maps and action plans to be increased from one to two years?

Yes

Question 11 What are your views on the proposal requiring the time between the publication of the maps and action plans to be increased from one to two years?

What are your views?:

We consider that the justifications for increasing the period between publication of the strategic noise maps and the associated action plans from one year to two years are reasonable. The slightly extended timescale would allow greater opportunity for scrutiny of the noise maps, meaningful stakeholder engagement and development of effective action plans.

This extended period may also provide valuable time to plan how the outcomes, impacts and benefits of improvement and mitigation schemes identified through the action planning process can be communicated clearly to stakeholders, ensuring transparency and maximising the value of this work.

Summary

Question 12 Do you have any other comments on the proposal not covered in response to previous questions?

Yes

If yes, what are your views?:

The Institute of Acoustics welcomes this consultation and are delighted to provide comments on the proposed changes where it is covered by the expertise and experience of our membership.

The Institute of Acoustics (IOA) is the UK's professional body for those working in acoustics, sound, noise and vibration. The IOA has some 3000 members from diverse backgrounds, with engineers, scientists, educators, lawyers, occupational hygienists, architects and environmental health practitioners among their number. This multidisciplinary culture provides a productive environment for cross-fertilisation of ideas and initiatives. The range of interests of members within the world of acoustics is equally wide, embracing such aspects as aerodynamics, architectural acoustics, building acoustics, electroacoustics, engineering dynamics, noise and vibration, hearing, speech, underwater acoustics, together with a variety of environmental aspects.

Many members of the IOA work in local authorities and other regulatory bodies, transportation and research in Scotland. Therefore, the changes to noise mapping and action planning may affect the work of our membership. We look forward to continuing to contribute on these matters.

About you

What is your name?

Name:
ANNE BUDD

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:
INSTITUTE OF ACOUSTICS

Further information about your organisation's response

Please add any additional context:

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

Do you consent to Scottish Government contacting you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

What is your email address?

Email:
anne@newacoustics.co.uk

Where did you hear about this consultation?

Consultation newsletter, Scottish Government website

If other, please say where::

Evaluation

How satisfied were you with this consultation?

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.:

How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.: