

APPENDIX C: NOISE CRITERIA

C.1.1 The first stage is to determine the noise criteria of the site, i.e., what level of increase, if any, may be accepted in the area of the application site. In order to do this it is necessary to obtain the following basic information.

- the pattern of existing noise levels of the area, i.e. the noise climate
- the general character of the area
- the proximity and type of noise sensitive premises around the development site.
- the acoustical characteristics of the area.

C.1.2 This information may be required from an applicant as support for his submission, but may be established by on-site investigation and noise measurement by the Local Authority noise specialists. Measurement of the existing noise climate should normally be carried out on the boundary of the development site in the direction of the surrounding noise sensitive premises. The existing noise climate should be measured in dB(A), particularly indicating that level which is exceeded for 90% of the time but also including levels of Leq or other additional parameters where these are appropriate. Measurements should be over such a length of time as is necessary for them to be representative of the whole period being considered. Where the proposed noise will occur during more than one of the specified periods of the day, each period should be considered separately.

C.1.3 Appreciating the acoustic implications of the above information, the Council will consider the development site as falling within one of the following categories of noise criteria:-

CATEGORY I: Within an area where no increase of noise may be accepted

C.1.4 These would include, for example, wholly residential areas with no industrial or commercial uses; areas of mixed use where the existing noise climate already borders on an unacceptable or nuisance level; and mixed areas where the proposed development is integral with existing residential uses. The noise generated by the new noise source must be significantly less than the existing background noise level.

CATEGORY II: Within an area where increases of noise of marginal significance may be accepted

C.1.5 These could include, for example, rural areas with scattered housing and low existing noise climate; partially residential areas where the acoustical characteristics provide a natural barrier between the proposed development and existing residential uses; urban areas of mixed usage. The noise generated by the new noise source must be of the same order of magnitude as the existing background noise level.

CATEGORY III: Within an area where significant increases of noise may be accepted

C.1.6 These could generally be wholly industrial sites or other locations with a complete absence of noise sensitive premises. The noise generated by the new noise source may be up to twice as loud as the existing background noise levels.

C.1.7 In order to achieve the objective of Category I (no increase) the new noise levels must be 10 dB(A) less than the existing background; to contain increases to a marginal level (Category II), the new noise level must not be more than 5 dB(A) above that background. Within Category III areas, even though significant increases may be permitted, developments should never be permitted to exceed 75 dB(A) Leq 1 hour during the day time and 65 dB(A) Leq 1 hour during the night time. Thus, if the existing background level is known, it is possible to calculate the noise level permissible from a new noise source, subject to the noise criteria of the particular site.

C.1.8 In some circumstances a clear-cut decision to approve unconditionally, or refuse an application, can be made. In other situations it will be necessary to control the development by means of conditions. These will normally lay down equivalent continuous noise levels (Leq) at the site boundaries (normally at specified points) for daytime/evening/night-time working hours. It may sometimes be preferable to direct conditions to the physical characteristics of the development, the type and intensity of activity to be carried on there, and the hours of operation. Sites will normally be categorised as above, but there will often be individual circumstances which could warrant alternative judgements.

- C.1.9 Where the predicted noise level of the proposed development is not above that permissible for the site, the application may be considered acceptable in terms of noise impact.
- C.1.10 Where the predicted noise level of the proposed development is above that permissible for the site, the application as submitted will be considered unacceptable in terms of noise impact. In these circumstances, the application will be refused, or referred back for modification and/or suitable conditions will be attached.
- C.1.11 In situations where noise having a significant tonal, impulsive or irregular character is likely to be a problem, e.g.; sawmills, sheet metal shops, permitted noise levels are corrected by minus 5 dB(A).
- C.1.12 In situations where impact noise is likely to be a problem, e.g.; scrap-metal dealers, scaffolding depots, a maximum dB(A) level in addition to the Leq limit will be set.
- C.1.13 Certain developments are likely to produce obtrusive noise within particular frequency ranges, e.g.; plant including any reciprocating machinery, pumps, diesel compressors, fans. In such cases the Leq limit may be complemented by a requirement that the new noise does not project above a specified I.S.O. noise rating curve.

SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

- C.1.11 In situations where noise having a significant tonal, impulsive or irregular character is likely to be a problem, e.g.; sawmills, sheet metal shops, permitted noise levels are corrected by minus 5 dB(A).