

Guidance on Noise Surveys Required for Planning Applications

When is a noise survey usually required?

Noise surveys are normally required where:

- The application is for proposed noise sensitive development, such as residential, next to existing sources such as major transport routes, industry or commercial uses
- The application is for a development that has the potential to cause noise disturbance to existing residential properties. For example, industry, or other development with fixed machinery/plant.

Should the noise survey be submitted as part of the planning application?

Yes, preferably as this allows the Environmental Protection Team to assess if the proposed development is suitable, and that any noise can be controlled adequately. If a noise survey is submitted at a later date it may delay the application process. It is often not possible to grant planning consent with a condition requiring a survey at a later date, as until a survey is completed the Environmental Protection Team cannot assess what the noise impact may be.

How do I get a noise survey done?

A noise survey needs to be carried out by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant. The Council is unable to recommend a consultant. A list of consultants can be obtained from the Institute of Acoustics website by following the Members Register link – www.ioa.org.uk. The price of a survey will vary depending on the work required.

What noise survey methods are accepted?

A noise consultant, and an officer in the Environmental Protection Team, will be able to advise on the methods used for a noise survey. However as a general rule the following methods will be accepted provided they are suitable for the development site, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- PPG24 for the assessment of noise affecting noise sensitive developments near to existing sources of noise, mainly relating to traffic sources. A full 24-hour survey is normally required although the shortened measurement procedure in the Calculation of Road Noise (CRTN) can be used if appropriate.
- BS4142:1997 for the assessment of industrial noise that may affect existing residential property, mainly used for fixed industrial plant such as fans.

What information needs to be included in the noise survey report?

- Reason for/scope of report
- Proposed development to which survey relates
- Location plan of proposed development
- Methodology used including location of noise monitoring locations, equipment used, weather conditions
- Deviations from methodology/standard
- Full table of results
- Assessment of results according to standards used
- Recommendations for noise control measures
- Full calculations of the noise reductions expected to support any suggested noise control measures



Does the Council have any set noise levels for developments?

a) Noise affecting noise sensitive developments near to existing sources of noise, mainly relating to traffic sources under PPG24

Where the noise levels are shown as NEC category B and above, we will look for noise reduction measures to be put in place that will achieve the "good" internal noise level criteria in bedrooms and living rooms set out in BS8233:1999. For outdoor garden areas, noise levels should be less than or equal to 55 dB(A) as recommended in the World Health Organisation Guidelines on Community Noise. Where the noise levels are shown as NEC category D, we would recommend that planning consent be refused although this decision ultimately rests with the Planning Control team of the Council.

b) Industrial noise that may affect existing residential property under BS4142:1997

Where possible the noise from the industrial source should not exceed the existing background level of noise. Where this is not possible, the Environmental Protection Team may accept that it could exceed above the background level of noise of 3 dB(A), although full justification will be needed of why the lower noise level can not be achieved. Noise sources that have a tonal or low frequency element should be assessed carefully to ensure they are not prominent above the existing background level of noise.

c) Noise between residential properties

This is determined through the Building Control Regulations process rather than by Environmental Protection. Residential accommodation should be designed and constructed/converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.

d) Noise between residential and commercial properties

We will look for noise reduction measures to be put in place that will achieve the "good" internal noise levels in bedrooms and living rooms set out in BS8233:1999. In addition, particular attention should be given to noise sources that have a tonal or low frequency element such as loud music that can travel readily through building structures and cause significant disturbance.

Are there any noise reduction measures that the Council prefers?

Where possible the noise should be controlled at source. For example, a noise barrier next to a busy road, or an enclosure around a piece of industrial plant. The developer should also look at the design and layout of the proposed development to establish if changes will reduce the level of noise. For example, residential accommodation designed with no windows facing a busy road. As a last resort, noise reduction measures such as acoustic glazing to habitable rooms may be acceptable. Any proposal to reduce noise either at source, by design and layout or by building treatments such as glazing should be supported by full information/calculations to indicate the likely level of noise prediction achievable.

Where acoustic glazing is proposed, and it can be opened this should be taken into account in the noise survey/prediction report. Where it is necessary to keep windows closed to achieve the required internal noise levels, the Environmental Protection Team would require additional ventilation to be installed to ensure that residents have the choice in opening their windows. This ventilation will need to meet the requirements of part F of the Building Regulations, which will be assessed by Building Control. Where ventilation is required it should be capable of achieving the same noise reduction as the closed glazing or building structure.