



Stourhead Solar PV

Noise Impact Assessment for Planning Application

24th November 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

inacoustic has been commissioned to assess the potential impact of sound arising from the proposed installation and operation of a solar development (the 'Proposed Development') on land at Stourhead, Wiltshire, BA12 6QD (the 'Site').

This report details the existing acoustic environment at the nearest noise-sensitive receptors (the 'NSRs'), as well as the potential sound emissions associated with the Proposed Development.

The report considers the potential sound generation from the plant associated with the Proposed Development, with respect to existing background sound levels in the area. The assessment methodology contained in British Standard 4142:2014+A1:2019 '*Method for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound*' (BS 4142:2014+A1:2019)¹ has been used.

Accordingly, this technical report has been produced to accompany the Planning Application to Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and is based upon environmental sound measurements undertaken at the Site and a subsequent 3-dimensional sound modelling exercise.

This report is necessarily technical in nature; therefore, a glossary of terms is included in Appendix A to assist the reader.

1.2. Scope and Objectives

The scope of the report can be summarised as follows:

- A sound monitoring survey was undertaken at locations representative of the closest NSRs to the Site;
- A 3-dimensional sound modelling exercise, in order to quantify the potential sound generation of the Proposed Development;
- An assessment of potential sound impacts with respect to the prevailing acoustic conditions at the nearest NSRs; and
- Recommendation of mitigation measures, where necessary, to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Practice Guidance in England: *Noise* (PPG:N)².

¹ British Standards Institute, British Standard 4142:2014+A1:2019. *Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound*, 2019.

² Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), National Planning Practice Guidance for England: *Noise*, 2019.

2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The development proposals for the Site are guided by the following policy directives and guidance.

2.1. National Policy

2.1.1. National Planning Policy Framework, 2024

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF)³ sets out the UK Government's planning policies for England. Planning policy requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF is also a material consideration in planning decisions. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system and how these are expected to be addressed.

Under Section 15; *Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment*, in Paragraph 187, the following is stated:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability."*

Paragraph 198 of the document goes on to state:

"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*
- b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason"*

Paragraph 198 refers to the Noise Policy Statement for England, which is considered overleaf.

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), December 2024. National Planning Policy Framework. HMSO. London.

2.1.2. Noise Policy Statement for England, 2010

The underlying principles and aims of existing noise policy documents, legislation and guidance are clarified in *DEFRA: 2010: Noise Policy Statement for England* (NPSE)⁴. The NPSE sets out the “Long Term Vision” of Government noise policy as follows:

“Promote good health and good quality of life through the effective management of noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development”.

The NPSE outlines three aims for the effective management and control of environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise:

- *“Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;*
- *Mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and*
- *Where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life”.*

The guidance states that it is not possible to have a single objective noise-based measure that defines “Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL)” that is applicable to all sources of noise in all situations and that not having specific SOAEL values in the NPSE provides the necessary policy flexibility until further evidence and suitable guidance is available.

2.1.3. National Planning Practice Guidance in England: Noise, 2019

Further guidance in relation to the NPPF and the NPSE has been published in the PPG:N, which summarises the noise exposure hierarchy, based on the likely average response. The following three observed effect levels are identified below:

- **Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level:** This is the level of noise exposure above which significant adverse effects on health and quality of life occur;
- **Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level:** This is the level of noise exposure above which adverse effects on health and quality of life can be detected; and
- **No Observed Adverse Effect Level:** This is the level of noise exposure below which no effect at all on health or quality of life can be detected.

Criteria related to each of these levels are reproduced in Table 1.

⁴ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), *Noise Policy Statement for England*, 2010.

TABLE 1: SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA FROM PPG:N

Perception	Examples of Outcomes	Increasing Effect Level	Action
No Observed Effect Level			
Not Noticeable	No Effect	No Observed Effect	No specific measures required
No Observed Adverse Effect Level			
Noticeable and Not Intrusive	Noise can be heard, but does not cause any change in behaviour, attitude or other physiological response. Can slightly affect the acoustic character of the area but not such that there is a change in the quality of life.	No Observed Adverse Effect	No specific measures required
Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level			
Noticeable and Intrusive	Noise can be heard and causes small changes in behaviour, attitude or other physiological response, e.g. turning up volume of television; speaking more loudly; where there is no alternative ventilation, having to close windows for some of the time because of the noise. Potential for some reported sleep disturbance. Affects the acoustic character of the area such that there is a small actual or perceived change in the quality of life.	Observed Adverse Effect	Mitigate and reduce to a minimum
Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level			
Present and Disruptive	The noise causes a material change in behaviour, attitude or other physiological response, e.g. avoiding certain activities during periods of intrusion; where there is no alternative ventilation, having to keep windows closed most of the time because of the noise. Potential for sleep disturbance resulting in difficulty in getting to sleep, premature awakening and difficulty in getting back to sleep. Quality of life diminished due to change in acoustic character of the area.	Significant Observed Adverse Effect	Avoid
Present and Very Disruptive	Extensive and regular changes in behaviour, attitude or other physiological response and/or an inability to mitigate effect of noise leading to psychological stress, e.g. regular sleep deprivation/awakening; loss of appetite, significant, medically definable harm, e.g. auditory and non-auditory.	Unacceptable Adverse Effect	Prevent

2.2. Assessment Criteria

2.2.1. BS 4142:2014+A1:2019

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 *Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound* sets out a method to assess the likely effect of sound from factories, industrial premises or fixed installations and sources of an industrial nature in commercial premises, on people who might be inside or outside a dwelling or premises used for residential purposes in the vicinity.

The procedure contained in BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 for assessing the effect of sound on residential receptors is to compare the measured or predicted sound level from the source in question, the $L_{Aeq,T}$ *specific sound level*, immediately outside the dwelling with the $L_{A90,T}$ background sound level.

Where the sound contains a tonality, impulsivity, intermittency and other sound characteristics, then a correction depending on the grade of the aforementioned characteristics of the sound is added to the specific sound level to obtain the $L_{A,r,Tr}$ *rating level*. The effect of uncertainty in sound measurements, data and calculations should also be considered when necessary.

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 states: *“The significance of sound of an industrial and/or commercial nature depends upon both the margin by which the rating level of the specific sound source exceeds the background sound level and the context in which the sound occurs”*. An estimation of the impact of the specific sound can be obtained by the difference of the rating level and the background sound level and considering the following:

- *“Typically, the greater this difference, the greater the magnitude of the impact.”*
- *“A difference of around +10dB or more is likely to be an indication of a significant adverse impact, depending on the context.”*
- *“A difference of around +5dB is likely to be an indication of an adverse impact, depending on the context.”*
- *“The lower the rating level is relative to the measured background sound level, the less likely it is that the specific sound source will have an adverse impact or a significant adverse impact. Where the rating level does not exceed the background sound level, this is an indication of the specific sound source having a low impact, depending on the context.”*

During the daytime, the assessment is typically carried out over a reference time period of 1-hour, with a reference period of 15-minutes used for the Early Morning assessment. The periods associated with daytime or Early Morning, for the purposes of the assessment, are considered to be daytime 07:00 to 23:00 and Early Morning 04:30 to 07:00.

2.2.2. Relative Change in Ambient Noise Level

The IEMA Guidelines⁵ define 'Noise Impact' as the difference in the acoustic environment before and after the implementation of the proposals, also known as the magnitude of change. In circumstances where a noise environment may be altered by addition or removal of a noise source, considered to be largely anonymous or within the prevailing acoustic character of an area, for example, changes to traffic quantum or patterns, it is normal to consider this relative change in ambient noise level. The assessment, therefore, considers this phenomenon to add context.

The impact scale adopted in this assessment is shown in Table 2 below, which relates to established human responses to noise, in line with 'Table 7-12 Effect Descriptors' of the IEMA Guidelines and set in the context of PPG:N.

TABLE 2: IMPACT SCALE FOR COMPARISON OF FUTURE NOISE AGAINST EXISTING NOISE

Noise Level Change dB(A)	Subjective Response	Significance	PPG:N Context
Less than 1.0	Not perceptible	Negligible	NOEL
1.0 – 2.9	Barely perceptible	Minor impact	NOAEL
3.0 – 4.9	Noticeable	Moderate impact	LOAEL
5.0 – 9.9	Up to a doubling or halving of loudness	Substantial impact	SOAEL
10.0 or more	More than a doubling or halving of loudness	Major impact	UAEL

The criteria above reflect the key benchmarks that relate to human perception of sound. A change of 3 dB(A) is generally considered to be the smallest change in environmental noise that is perceptible to the human ear. A 10 dB(A) change in noise represents a doubling or halving of the perception of loudness. The difference between the minimum perceptible change and the doubling or halving of the perceived noise level is split to provide greater definition to the assessment of changes in noise level.

It is considered that the criteria specified in Table 2 provide a good indication as to the likely significance of changes in noise levels in this case and can be used to inform the context in which the sound occurs in order to assess the impact of noise from the Proposed Development.

⁵ Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA), Version 1.2. *Guidelines for Environmental Noise Impact Assessment*, November 2014.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1. Site and Surrounding Area

The Site is located at Stourhead, Wiltshire, BA12 6QD.

The Site lies within National Trust land that includes the house and gardens and is positioned south of the main car park and directly surrounded by open fields.

The sound environment at the Site is primarily influenced by on-site patron activity, as well as road traffic noise from the distant A303 road located to the southeast. Vehicles entering and leaving Stourhead car park were also audible.

The Site and the surrounding area can be seen below in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA



3.2. Noise Sensitive Receptors

The closest identified NSRs to the Site are set out in Table 3 below, with an aerial image of their locations relative to the Site shown in Figure 1.

TABLE 3: NSR OVERVIEW

ID	NSR Type	Approximate Direction from Site
NSR1	Residential	Southwest
NSR2	Residential	West
NSR3	Residential	North
NSR4	Residential	North
NSR5	Residential	Northeast
NSR6	Residential	Northeast

FIGURE 2: THE SITE AND NSRs



3.3. Proposed Development Overview

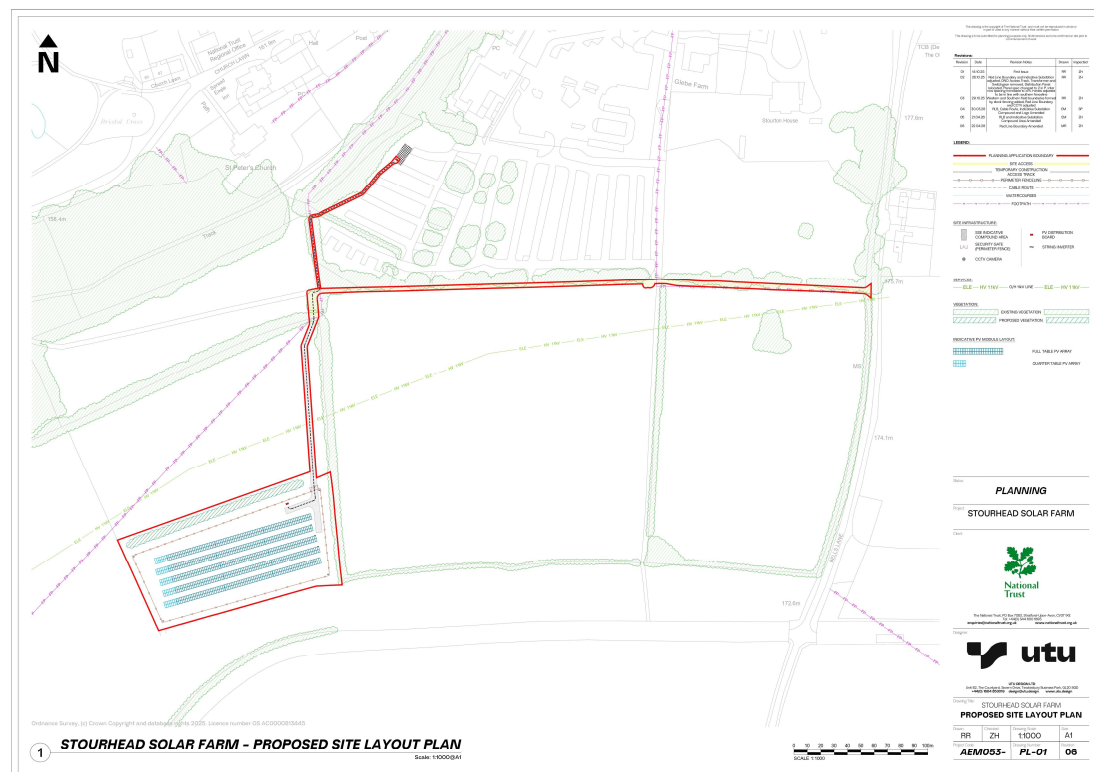
The sound generating items across the Proposed Development are likely to run up to approximately 1-hour after sunset and the earliest that they will begin working is from 04:30. This assumption is a worst-case scenario, as the times of operation are seasonally dependent. Typically, however, the sound associated with running the inverter/transformer stations starts after sunrise and ends at sunset, because the cooling requirements of the inverter/transformers is no longer required.

The sound generating items across the Proposed Development are shown below in Table 4, with the Proposed Development layout shown in Figure 3.

TABLE 4: SOUND GENERATING ITEMS

Sound Generating Items	Quantity
String Inverter	3
Substation	1

FIGURE 3: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT



4. BASELINE SOUND SURVEY

4.1. Overview

The prevailing acoustic conditions in the area have been determined by an environmental sound survey conducted during both daytime and night-time periods between Thursday 18th September 2025 and Tuesday 24th September 2025.

4.2. Measurement Details

All sound measurements were undertaken by a consultant certified as competent in environmental sound monitoring, and, in accordance with the principles of British Standard 7445:2003 '*Description and measurement of environmental noise*'⁶.

All sound measurement equipment used during the survey conformed to Type 1 specification of British Standard 61672:2013 '*Electroacoustics. Sound level meters. Part 1 Specifications*'⁷. A full inventory of this equipment is shown in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5: INVENTORY OF SOUND MEASUREMENT EQUIPMENT

Position	Make, Model & Description	Serial Number	Calibration Certificate Number	Calibration Due Date
MP1	Rion NL-53 Sound Level Meter	01141572	CONF012507	21/01/2027
	Rion NH-25 Preamplifier	44514		
	Rion UC-59 Microphone	26705		
MP2	Rion NL-52 Sound Level Meter	00965097	TCRT25/1214	06/03/2027
	Rion NH-25 Preamplifier	65324		
	Rion UC-59 Microphone	10223		
MP3	Rion NL-52 Sound Level Meter	00764926	1163903	17/06/2026
	Rion NH-25 Preamplifier	76427		
	Rion UC-59 Microphone	12922		
MP4	Rion NL-53 Sound Level Meter	01041454	CONF012505	20/01/2027
	Rion NH-25 Preamplifier	44409		
	Rion UC-59 Microphone	26331		
All	Cirrus CR:515 Acoustic Calibrator	80029	1161557	29/04/2026

⁶ British Standards Institute, British Standard 7445: 2003: *Description and measurement of environmental noise*, 2003.

⁷ British Standards Institute, British Standard 61672: 2013: *Electroacoustics. Sound level meters. Part 1 Specifications*, 2013.

The sound measurement equipment used during the survey was field calibrated at the start and end of the measurement period. A calibration laboratory has calibrated the field calibrator used within the twelve months preceding the measurements. A drift of less than 0.2 dB in the field calibration was found to have occurred on the sound level meter. The microphones were fitted with protective windshields for the measurements.

The measurement positions (MPs) are described in Table 6, with an aerial photograph indicating their location shown in Figure 4.

TABLE 6: MEASUREMENT POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Measurement Position	Description
MP1	Largely unattended daytime and night-time measurement of sound under free-field conditions, at a height of 1.5 metres above local ground level, located at the southwest boundary of the Site. The sound environment at this location was a mixture of road traffic noise from the distant main road A303 and vehicle movement from the Stourhead car park. Surrounding lanes around the Site had intermittent traffic. There was also some pedestrian activity, though footfall was quieter than at the other locations.
MP2	Largely unattended daytime and night-time measurement of sound under free-field conditions, at a height of 1.5 metres above local ground level, located at the Northwest boundary of the Site. The sound environment at this location was dominated by intermittent road traffic noise from the neighbouring lane 'High St', with contributions from distant road traffic noise from the constant flow of traffic from the A303. The position was located near attractions such as the Church and Stourhead Lake, which resulted in high pedestrian activity and general noise from footfall and dog walkers.
MP3	Largely unattended daytime and night-time measurement of sound under free-field conditions, at a height of 1.5 metres above local ground level, located at the southeast boundary of the Site. The microphone was positioned approximately 5 metres from Bells Lane, which experienced an intermittent flow of traffic that occasionally contributed to the local sound environment. The dominant source of sound, however, was distant road traffic from the A303, where a constant flow of vehicles was present. Occasional traffic noise from the Stourhead overflow car park was noted, though it was less significant than that from the main car park.
MP4	Largely unattended daytime and night-time measurement of sound under free-field conditions, at a height of 1.5 metres above local ground level, located at the North boundary of the Site. Located in a wooded area the sound environment was largely made up from pedestrians on the Stourhead site, in proximity to the reception building. Sound from the car park was also a big factor at the position with the Site being busy. Being in a wooded area, sound from wildlife such as bird song and foliage sound was evident. Intermittent traffic noise from 'High St' lane could also be heard from the position.

FIGURE 4: MEASUREMENT POSITIONS



4.3. Sound Indices

The parameters reported are the statistical index (typical) Background Sound Level, $LA_{90,T}$, as well as the average Equivalent Continuous Sound Level, $LA_{eq,T}$ and the typical Maximum Sound Pressure Level, LA_{Fmax} . An explanation of the sound units presented is given in Appendix A.

For clarity, it is noted that the background sound level ($LA_{90,T}$) is an underlying level of sound over a period, T, and might in part be an indication of relative quietness at a given location. It does not reflect the occurrence of transient and/or higher sound level events and is generally governed by continuous or semi-continuous sounds.

The measured LA_{eq} , LA_{Fmax} , and LA_{F90} sound levels are presented as time histories in a graph in Appendix B. Furthermore, the statistical distribution of the measured background sound levels to derive the typical representative $LA_{90,T}$ values are presented in a graphical format in Appendix C.

4.4. Summary Results

The summarised results of the environmental sound measurements, during the daytime and early morning periods, can be seen in Table 7. Values have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

TABLE 7: SUMMARY OF SOUND MEASUREMENT RESULTS

Measurement Position	Period	L _{Aeq,T} (dB)	L _{AF90,T} (dB)	L _{AFmax} (dB)
MP1	Daytime (07:00-23:00)	44	31	71
	Early Morning (04:30-07:00)	44	30	64
MP2	Daytime (07:00-23:00)	48	33	74
	Early Morning (04:30-07:00)	44	24	68
MP3	Daytime (07:00-23:00)	54	35	77
	Early Morning (04:30-07:00)	50	33	77
MP4	Daytime (07:00-23:00)	48	35	73
	Early Morning (04:30-07:00)	47	26	65

5. OPERATIONAL SOUND ASSESSMENT

5.1. Sound Propagation Modelling

5.1.1. Source Data

It is common that technical infrastructure applications are determined well ahead of the procurement and purchase of the plant and equipment required. In these circumstances it is typical to specify maximum noise levels from a 'candidate plant' based on existing technology, to be achieved by scheme design.

An overview of the sound source data associated with the Proposed Development can be seen below in Table 8.

TABLE 8: SOUND SOURCE DATA

Plant	Quantity	Period	Maximum Sound Power Level per unit, L_{WA} (dB)*	Indictive Sound Pressure Level at 10m, L_{pA} (dB)*
String Inverter	3	Daytime & Early Morning	76	48
Substation	1	Daytime & Early Morning	71	43

** Sound power level (SWL/L_W) is the amount of sound energy emitted by a source, while sound pressure level (SPL) is the level of sound energy at a specific location. SWL is independent of distance and environment, while SPL depends on both. Some suppliers provide their data in terms of SPL at a given distance rather than SWL . SWL , however, is a more objective metric for noise assessment, as it can be used in the noise modelling to predict the SPL at any distance, under various environmental conditions. Thus, our noise specifications are provided primarily as derived SWL to enable a transparent and robust comparison between different suppliers. Indicative SPL at 10m distance from the plant are also provided for reference.*

Confirmation from the selected plant manufacturers that the above sound levels can be achieved should always be sought prior to plant procurement.

These input parameters are intended as acoustic specifications, to determine the likely sources of sound impact and whether attenuation is likely to be required, such that acoustic feasibility is demonstrated for the purposes of planning consideration.

5.1.2. Calculation Process

Calculations were carried out using Cadna/A, which undertakes its calculations in accordance with guidance given in ISO 9613⁸, which considers a worst-case downwind propagation to all NSRs.

5.1.3. Modelling Data Assumptions

Given that the land between proposed development and nearest NSRs is largely soft, the ground factor has been set to $G=1$, within the calculation software, with 2 orders of reflection. Full-octave frequency spectra have been used in the calculations.

It has been assumed that all plant will operate simultaneously, representing a worst-case scenario, although this is an unlikely occurrence as all of the units are independent of each other and usually operate as per demand and for a short period of time.

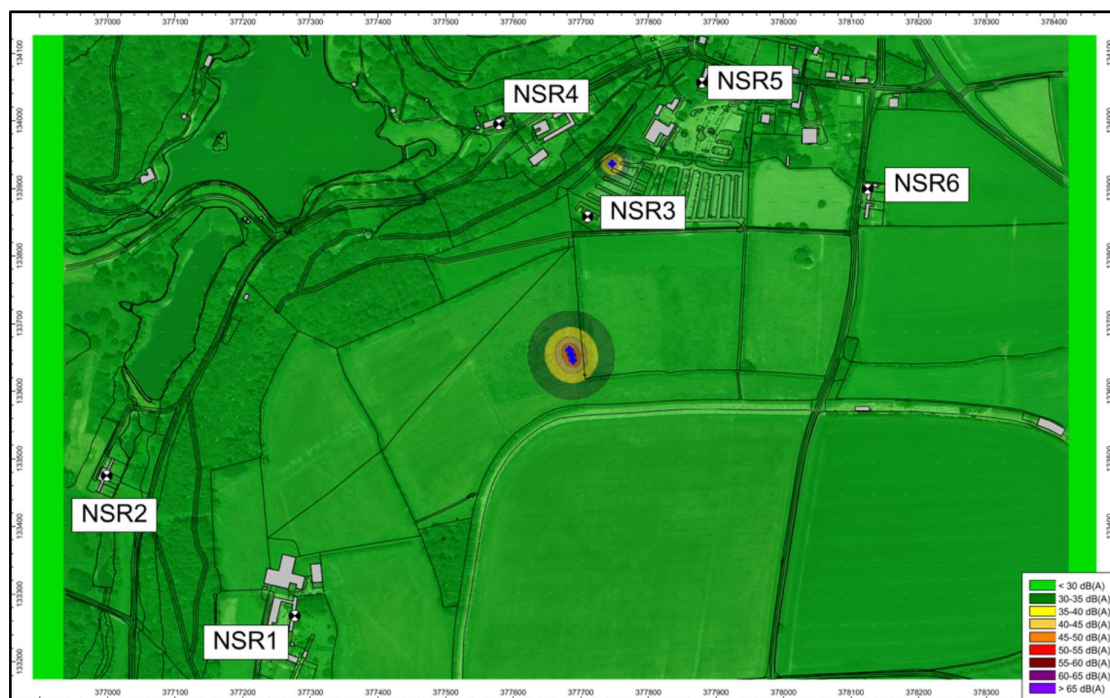
In order to accurately model the land surrounding the Proposed Development, an AutoCAD DXF drawing has been produced, which was based on data provided by the Ordnance Survey, along with associated LIDAR Composite DTM topographic contours sourced from the Defra Data Services Platform.

⁸ ISO 9613-1:1993 and ISO 9613-2:2024: *Acoustics - Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors. Part 1: Calculation of the absorption of sound by the atmosphere and Part 2: Engineering method for the prediction of sound pressure levels outdoors*

5.1.4. Specific Sound Level Map

The sound map at 4 metres above ground showing the predicted specific sound level emissions from the Proposed Development during the daytime and early morning can be seen below in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5: PREDICTED SPECIFIC SOUND LEVEL MAP



5.1.5. Predicted Specific Sound Level Summary

A summary of the predicted specific sound levels at the closest NSRs to the Site, based on the sound map shown in Figure 5 can be seen below in Table 9.

TABLE 9: PREDICTED SPECIFIC SOUND LEVEL SUMMARY

Receptor	Predicted Specific Sound Level, $L_{Aeq,T}$ (dB)
NSR1	8
NSR2	<0
NSR3	21
NSR4	11
NSR5	11
NSR6	10

5.2. Assessment

5.2.1. Rating Penalty Principle

Section 9 of BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 describes how the rating level should be derived from the specific sound level, by determining a rating penalty. BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 states:

“Certain acoustic features can increase the significance of impact over that expected from a basic comparison between the specific sound level and the background sound level. Where such features are present at the assessment location, add a character correction to the specific sound level to obtain the rating level. This can be approached in three ways:

- a) subjective method;*
- b) objective method for tonality;*
- c) reference method.”*

Given that the Proposed Development is not operational, the subjective method has been adopted to derive the rating sound level from the specific sound level. This is discussed in Section 9.2 of BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, which states:

“Where appropriate, establish a rating penalty for sound based on a subjective assessment of its characteristics. This would also be appropriate where a new source cannot be measured because it is only proposed at that time, but the characteristics of similar sources can subjectively be assessed.

Correct the specific sound level if a tone, impulse or other characteristics occurs, or is expected to be present, for new or modified sound sources.”

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 defines four characteristics that should be considered when deriving a rating penalty, namely; tonality; impulsivity; intermittency; and other sound characteristics, which are defined as:

Tonality

A rating penalty of +2 dB is applicable for a tone which is *“just perceptible”*, +4 dB where a tone is *“clearly perceptible”*, and +6 dB where a tone is *“highly perceptible”*.

Impulsivity

A rating penalty of +3 dB is applicable for impulsivity which is *“just perceptible”*, +6 dB where it is *“clearly perceptible”*, and +9 dB where it is *“highly perceptible”*.

Intermittency

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 states that when the *“specific sound has identifiable on/off conditions, the specific sound level ought to be representative of the time period of length equal to the reference time interval which contains the greatest total amount of on time ... if the intermittency is readily distinctive against the residual acoustic environment, a penalty of +3 dB can be applied.”*

Other Sound Characteristics

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 states that where *“the specific sound features characteristics that are neither tonal nor impulsive, though otherwise are readily distinctive against the residual acoustic environment, a penalty of +3 dB can be applied.”*

5.2.2. Rating Penalty Assessment

Considering the content of Section 5.2.1, an assessment of the various sound sources associated with the Proposed Development, in terms of whether any rating penalties are applicable, has been detailed in Table 10 below.

TABLE 10: RATING PENALTY ASSESSMENT

Sound Characteristic	Penalty	Discussion
Tonality	0 dB	The primary source of sound generation from Solar PV projects are fans serving the inverters cooling systems. These typically generate aerodynamic broadband sound, which should be achieved by design. As such no rating penalty correction should be applied for Tonality.
Impulsivity	0 dB	Inverters and other the other sound generating items operate continuously without the audibility or prominence of sudden sounds. As such, no rating penalty correction should be applied for Impulsivity.
Intermittency	0 dB	Inverters operate continuously for longer than 100% of the BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 reference time interval (1 hour during the daytime and 15 minutes during the early morning).
Other Sound Characteristics	0 dB	Solar PV systems do not have acoustic features present such as a whine, hiss, screech, non-tonal hum, rattle or rasp that can attract attention. For reference only, the value of the ‘ <i>Criterion curve for assessment of low frequency noise</i> ’ from NANR45 ⁹ is 38 dB (lineal) at 100Hz within a room. As such, since the predicted outdoor sound level from the HV Transformers is lower than this, low frequency noise is not expected to be a problem. As such, no rating penalty correction should be applied for ‘Other Sound Characteristics’.

In summary, no rating penalty has been included in the assessment.

⁹ ‘*Procedure for the assessment of low frequency noise complaints*’ Revision 1, December 2011, Contract no NANR45, University of Salford produced for Defra

5.2.3. Uncertainty

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 requires that the level of uncertainty in the measured data and associated calculations is considered in the assessment. The Standard recommends that steps should be taken to reduce the level of uncertainty.

Measurement Uncertainty

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 states that measurement uncertainty depends on a number of factors, including the following, which are applicable to the Proposed Development:

- “ ...
- b) *the complexity and level of variability of the residual acoustic environment;*
 - “ ...
 - d) *the location(s) selected for taking the measurements;*
 - “ ...
 - g) *the measurement time intervals;*
 - h) *the range of times when the measurements have been taken;*
 - i) *the range of suitable weather conditions during which measurements have been taken;*
 - “ ...
 - k) *the level of rounding of each measurement recorded; and*
 - l) *the instrumentation used.”*

Each of the measurement uncertainty factors outlined above have been considered, and the good practice employed for reducing uncertainty is discussed in Table 11 below.

TABLE 11: MEASUREMENT UNCERTAINTY FACTORS

Measurement Uncertainty Factor Reference	Discussion
b)	Residual acoustic environment is relatively constant, hence no correction for a complex residual acoustic environment.
d)	Measuring at positions representative of the closest NSRs to the Site has enabled the determination of robust background sound levels.
g)	Measurement time intervals were set in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, hence no further correction needs to be made.
h)	Measurements were undertaken over a continuous midweek and weekend period.
i)	No periods of significant wind or precipitation were noted.
k)	Measured values were rounded to 0.1 dB, therefore rounding would not have had a significant impact on the overall typical background sound levels.
l)	The sound measurement equipment conformed to Class 1 specifications of British Standard EN 61672-1:2013 ' <i>Electroacoustics – Sound level meters, Part 1: Specifications</i> ' (BS EN 61672-1:2013) ¹⁰ , and were deployed with appropriate wind shields. Sound calibrators conformed to Class 1 specifications of British Standard EN IEC 60942:2018 ' <i>Electroacoustics – Sound calibrators</i> ' (BS EN IEC 60942:2018) ¹¹

¹⁰ British Standards Institute, British Standard EN 61672-1:2013. '*Electroacoustics – Sound level meters, Part 1: Specifications*', 2013.

¹¹ British Standards Institute, British Standard EN IEC 60942:2018. '*Electroacoustics – Sound calibrators*', 2018.

In this instance the level of calculation uncertainty is not expected to affect the conclusions of the assessment. It is also noted that because the assessment considers a worst-case scenario, such as downwind sound propagation (which in reality cannot happen at all NSRs at the same time) the relevance of the uncertainty is further reduced.

Calculation Uncertainty

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 states that calculation uncertainty depends on a number of factors, including the following, which are applicable to the Proposed Development:

- “ ...
- b) uncertainty in the operation or sound emission characteristics of the specific sound source and any assumed sound power levels;*
 - c) uncertainty in the calculation method;*
 - d) simplifying the real situation to “fit” the model (user influence on modelling); and*
 - e) error in the calculation process.”*

Each of the calculation uncertainty factors outlined above have been considered, and the good practice employed for reducing uncertainty is discussed in Table 12 below.

TABLE 12: CALCULATION UNCERTAINTY FACTORS

Calculation Uncertainty Factor Reference	Discussion
b)	Sound source levels are based on robust candidate plant data, to be achieved by the design.
c)	Calculations were undertaken in accordance with ISO 9613-2, which is considered a “ <i>validated method</i> ” by BS 4142:2014+A1:2019. Restricting attention to moderate downwind conditions of propagation, limits the effect of variable meteorological conditions along the propagation path on sound attenuation to reasonable values.
d)	The real situation has not been simplified for the purposes of this assessment.
e)	ISO 9613-2 estimates the accuracy of use of the calculation method, which varies based on the separation distance between the source and receiver, up to a maximum of 1km.

In this instance the level of calculation uncertainty is not expected to affect the conclusions of the assessment. It is also noted that because the assessment considers a worst-case scenario, such as downwind sound propagation (which in reality cannot happen at all NSRs at the same time) the relevance of the uncertainty is further reduced.

5.2.4. BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 Assessment

The rating level, as calculated from the predicted specific sound level, has been assessed in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, at the closest NSRs, and can be seen in Table 13 and Table 14 for the daytime and early morning respectively.

TABLE 13: BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 ASSESSMENT – DAYTIME (07:00-23:00)

Receptor	Specific Sound Level, $L_{Aeq,T}$ (dB)	Rating Penalty (dB)	Rating Level, L_{ArTr} (dB)	Daytime Background Sound Level, $L_{A90,T}$ (dB)	Excess of Rating over Background Sound Level (dB)
NSR1	8	0	8	31	-23
NSR2	0	0	0	31	-31
NSR3	21	0	21	31	-10
NSR4	11	0	11	33	-22
NSR5	11	0	11	35	-24
NSR6	10	0	10	35	-25

TABLE 14: BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 ASSESSMENT – EARLY MORNING (04:30-07:00)

Receptor	Specific Sound Level, $L_{Aeq,T}$ (dB)	Rating Penalty (dB)	Rating Level, L_{ArTr} (dB)	Early Morning Background Sound Level, $L_{A90,T}$ (dB)	Excess of Rating over Background Sound Level (dB)
NSR1	8	0	8	33	-25
NSR2	0	0	0	33	-33
NSR3	21	0	21	33	-12
NSR4	11	0	11	25	-14
NSR5	11	0	11	26	-15
NSR6	10	0	10	33	-23

It can be seen that the Proposed Development is predicted to have rating levels that do not exceed the prevailing background sound level at the nearest NSRs, which in BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 terms represent a 'Low Impact', depending on the context, which is discussed below.

5.2.5. Discussion on Context

The results set out in Table 13 and Table 14 identify that the operation of the scheme, as proposed, can occur without affecting the amenity of the closest residential NSRs to the Site during the daytime and early morning, on the basis of a worst-case operational scenario.

BS 4142:2014+A1:2019, however, recognises the importance of the context in which a sound occurs when assessing impacts.

It is noted that the assessment considers a worst-case scenario, with all plant being activated at the same time and downwind sound propagation to all NSRs.

As part of the wider context and benefits of the proposed scheme, it is also important to note the role that these type of energy developments fulfil, in working towards achieving the 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener' from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, which sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet the net zero target by 2050.

6. CONCLUSION

inacoustic has been commissioned to assess the potential impact of sound arising from the proposed installation and operation of a solar development on land at Stourhead, Wiltshire, BA12 6QD.

This technical noise assessment report has been produced to accompany a Planning Application to Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and is based upon environmental sound measurements undertaken at the Site and a subsequent 3-dimensional sound modelling exercise.

The assessment identifies that based on the assumed source sound levels within this report, the Proposed Development is predicted to give rise to rating sound levels that do not exceed the prevailing background sound levels during the day and early morning period. thus, giving rise to a 'Low Impact'.

Consequently, the assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Development will give rise to sound impacts that would be within the range of NOAEL of the PPG:N.

For ease of reference, the definition of *No Observed Adverse Effect Level* in PPG:N is reproduced below:

"Noise can be heard, but does not cause any change in behaviour, attitude or other physiological response. Can slightly affect the acoustic character of the area but not such that there is a change in the quality of life."

Since the Proposed Development conforms to British Standard, National Planning Policy and Local Planning Policy requirements, it is recommended that noise should not be a considered constraint to the approval of this Planning Application, providing that the plant is constructed and operated in accordance with the acoustic assumptions and recommendations set out within this report.

7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix A – Definition of Terms

Sound Power	Sound Power is the total sound energy radiated by a sound source and measured in watts (W).
Sound Power Level	Sound Power Level (SWL or L_W) is the sound power relative to a standard reference power of 1pW, on a decibel scale. It is the amount of sound energy emitted by a source and it is independent of distance and environment.
Sound Pressure	Sound, or sound pressure, is a fluctuation in air pressure over the static ambient pressure.
Sound Pressure Level (Sound Level)	The Sound Pressure Level (SPL or L_p) is the sound pressure relative to a standard reference pressure of 20 μ Pa (20x10 ⁻⁶ Pascals) on a decibel scale. It is the level of sound energy at a specific location and it is dependent of distance and environment.
Decibel (dB)	A scale for comparing the ratios of two quantities, including sound pressure and sound power. The difference in level between two sounds s_1 and s_2 is given by $20 \log_{10} (s_1 / s_2)$. The decibel can also be used to measure absolute quantities by specifying a reference value that fixes one point on the scale. For sound pressure, the reference value is 20 μ Pa.
A-weighting, dB(A)	The unit of sound level, weighted according to the A-scale, which takes into account the increased sensitivity of the human ear at some frequencies.
Noise Level Indices	Noise levels usually fluctuate over time, so it is often necessary to consider an average or statistical noise level. This can be done in several ways, so a number of different noise indices have been defined, according to how the averaging or statistics are carried out.
$L_{eq,T}$	A noise level index called the equivalent continuous noise level over the time period T. This is the level of a notional steady sound that would contain the same amount of sound energy as the actual, possibly fluctuating, sound that was recorded.
$L_{max,T}$	A noise level index defined as the maximum noise level during the period T. L_{max} is sometimes used for the assessment of occasional loud noises, which may have little effect on the overall L_{eq} noise level but will still affect the noise environment. Unless described otherwise, it is measured using the 'fast' sound level meter response.
$L_{90,T}$	A noise level index. The sound level exceeded for 90% of the time over the period T. L_{90} can be considered to be the "average minimum" sound level and is often used to describe the background sound.
$L_{10,T}$	A noise level index. The noise level exceeded for 10% of the time over the period T. L_{10} can be considered to be the "average maximum" noise level. Generally used to describe road traffic noise.
Free-Field	Far from the presence of sound reflecting objects (except the ground), usually taken to mean at least 3.5m
Facade	At a distance of 1m in front of a large sound reflecting object such as a building façade.
Fast Time Weighting	An averaging time used in sound level meters. Defined in BS 5969.

In order to assist the understanding of acoustic terminology and the relative change in sound, the following background information is provided.

The human ear can detect a very wide range of pressure fluctuations, which are perceived as sound. In order to express these fluctuations in a manageable way, a logarithmic scale called the decibel, or dB scale is used. The decibel scale typically ranges from 0 dB (the threshold of hearing) to over 120 dB. An indication of the range of sound levels commonly found in the environment is given in the following table.

TABLE 15: TYPICAL SOUND LEVELS FOUND IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Sound Level	Location
0dB(A)	Threshold of hearing
20 to 30dB(A)	Quiet bedroom at night
30 to 40dB(A)	Living room during the day
40 to 50dB(A)	Typical office
50 to 60dB(A)	Inside a car
60 to 70dB(A)	Typical high street
70 to 90dB(A)	Inside factory
100 to 110dB(A)	Burglar alarm at 1m away
110 to 130dB(A)	Jet aircraft on take off
140dB(A)	Threshold of Pain

The ear is less sensitive to some frequencies than to others. The A-weighting scale is used to approximate the frequency response of the ear. Levels weighted using this scale are commonly identified by the notation dB(A).

In accordance with logarithmic addition, combining two sources with equal sound levels would result in an increase of 3 dB(A) in the sound level from a single source.

A change of 3 dB(A) is generally regarded as the smallest change in broadband continuous sound which the human ear can detect (although in certain controlled circumstances a change of 1 dB(A) is just perceptible). Therefore, a 2 dB(A) increase would not be normally be perceptible. A 10 dB(A) increase in sound represents a subjective doubling of loudness.

A sound impact on a community is deemed to occur when a new sound is introduced that is out of character with the area, or when a significant increase above the pre-existing ambient sound level occurs.

For levels of sound that vary with time, it is necessary to employ a statistical index that allows for this variation. These statistical indices are expressed as the sound level that is exceeded for a percentage of the time period of interest. In the UK, road traffic noise is measured as the L_{A10} , the noise level exceeded for 10% of the measurement period. The L_{A90} is the level exceeded for 90% of the time and has been adopted to represent the background sound level in the absence of discrete events. An alternative way of assessing the time varying sound levels is to use the equivalent continuous sound level, L_{Aeq} .

This is a notional steady level that would, over a given period of time, deliver the same sound energy as the actual fluctuating sound.

To put these quantities into context, where a receiver is predominantly affected by continuous flows of road traffic, a doubling or halving of the flows would result in a just perceptible change of 3 dB, while an increase of more than 25%, or a decrease of more than 20%, in traffic flows represent changes of 1 dB in traffic noise levels (assuming no alteration in the mix of traffic or flow speeds).

Note that the time constant and the period of the sound measurement should be specified. For example, BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 specifies background sound measurement periods of 1 hour during the daytime and 15 minutes during the Early Morning. The sound levels are commonly symbolised as $L_{A90,1\text{hour}}$ dB and $L_{A90,15\text{mins}}$ dB. The sound measurement should be recorded using a 'FAST' time response equivalent to 0.125 ms.

7.2. Appendix B – Sound Measurement Results

FIGURE 6: MEASURED TIME HISTORY – MP1

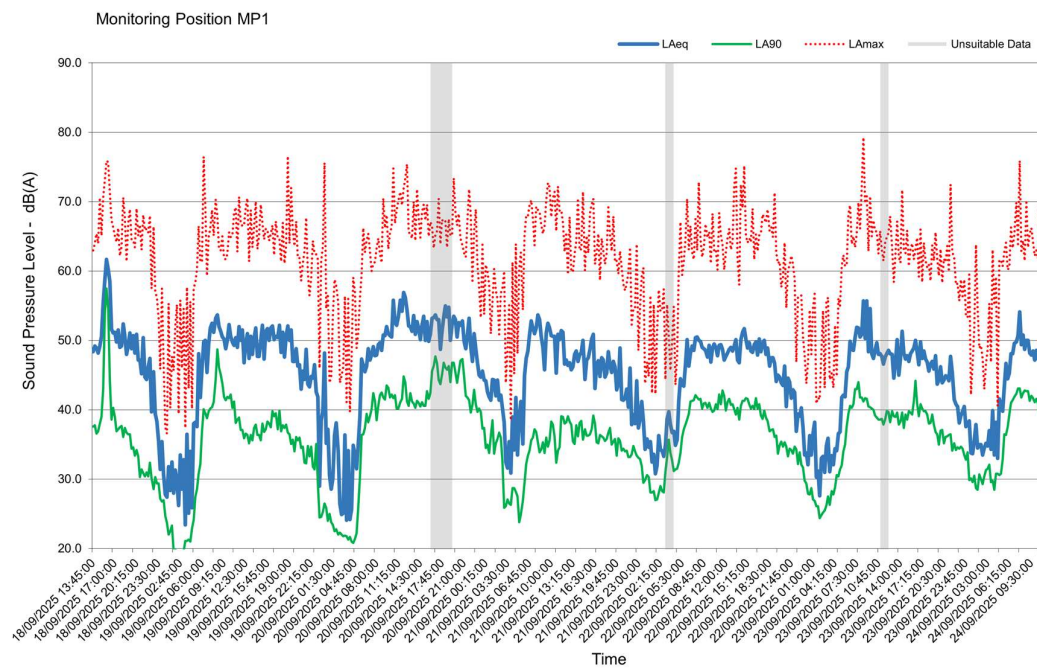


FIGURE 7: MEASURED TIME HISTORY – MP2

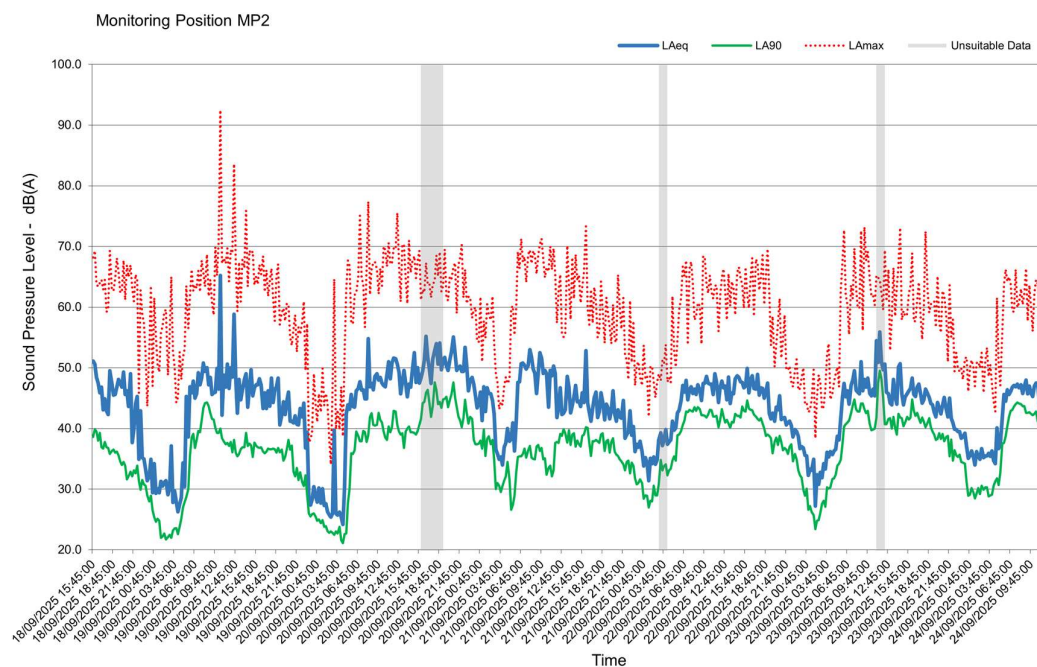


FIGURE 8: MEASURED TIME HISTORY – MP3

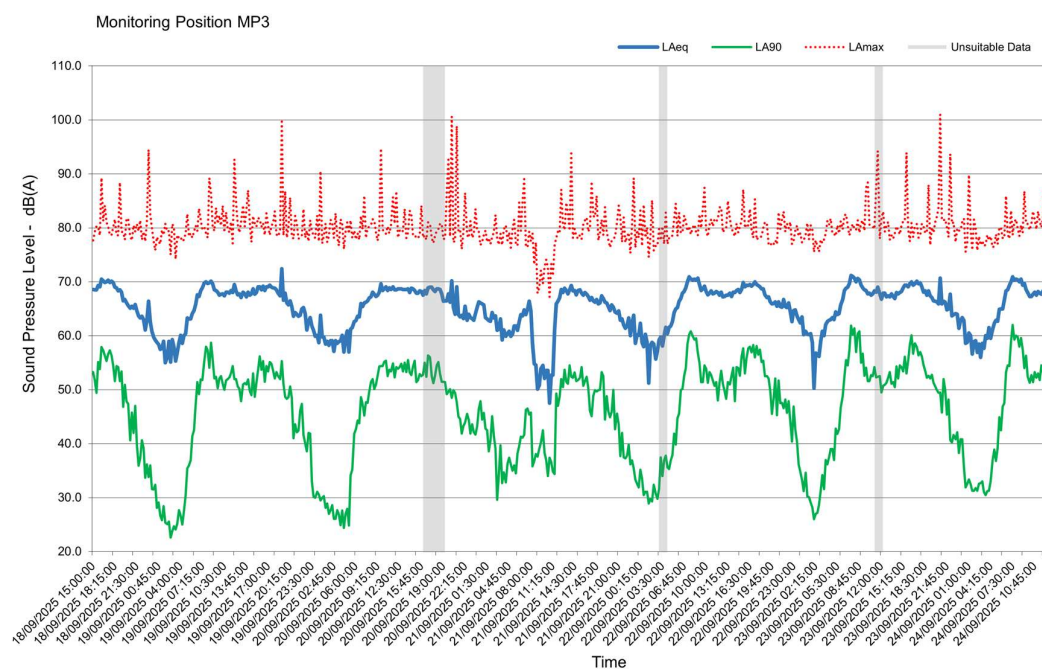
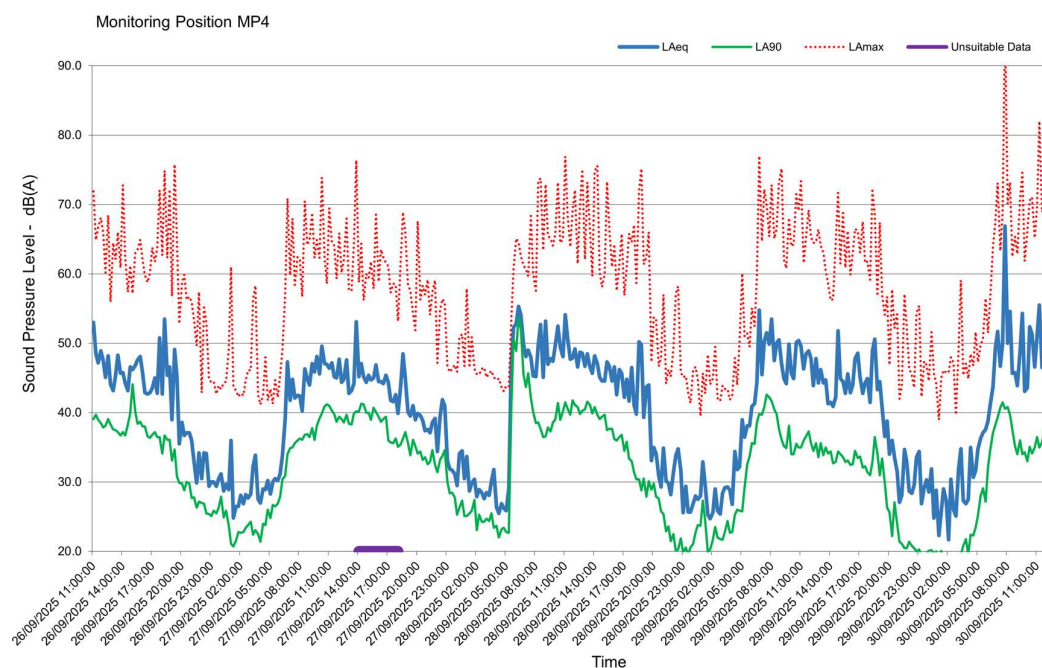


FIGURE 9: MEASURED TIME HISTORY – MP4



7.3. Appendix C – Statistical Analysis

FIGURE 10: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – DAYTIME – MP1

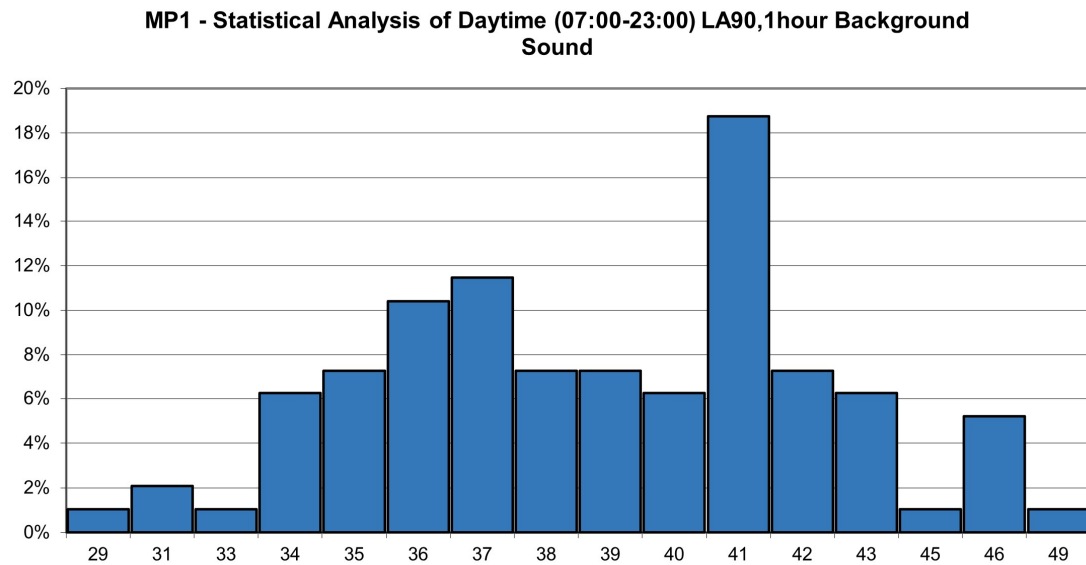


FIGURE 11: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – EARLY MORNING – MP1

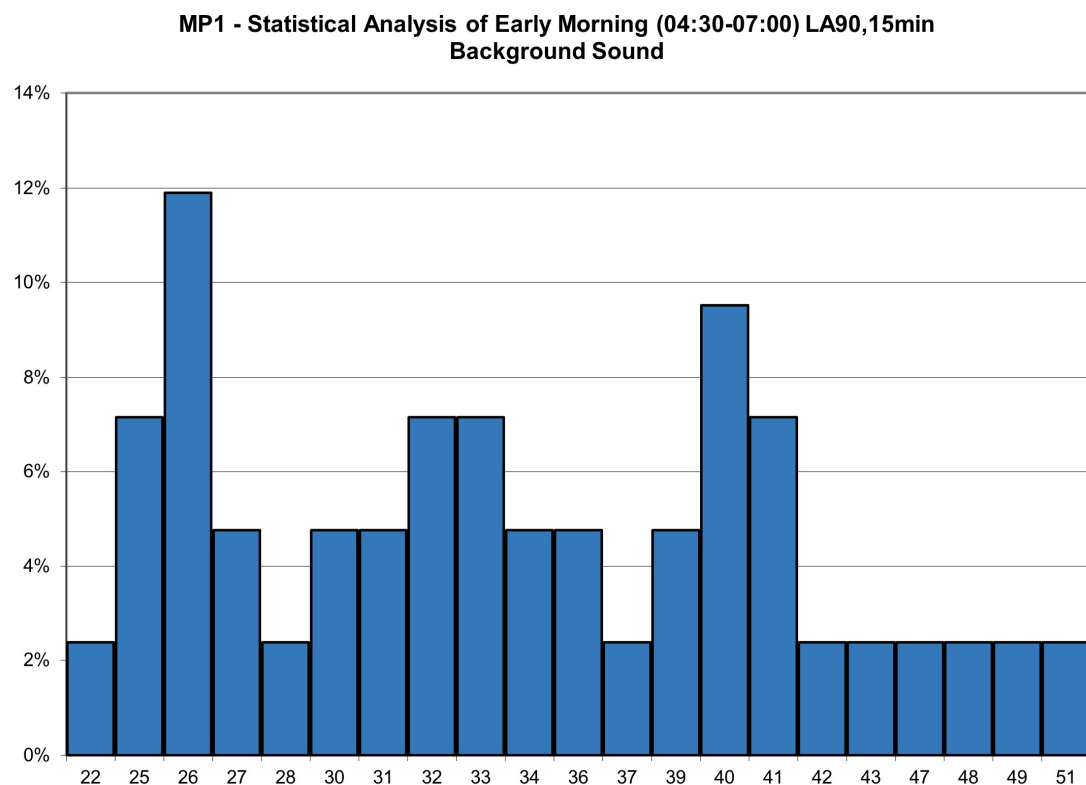


FIGURE 12: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – DAYTIME – MP2

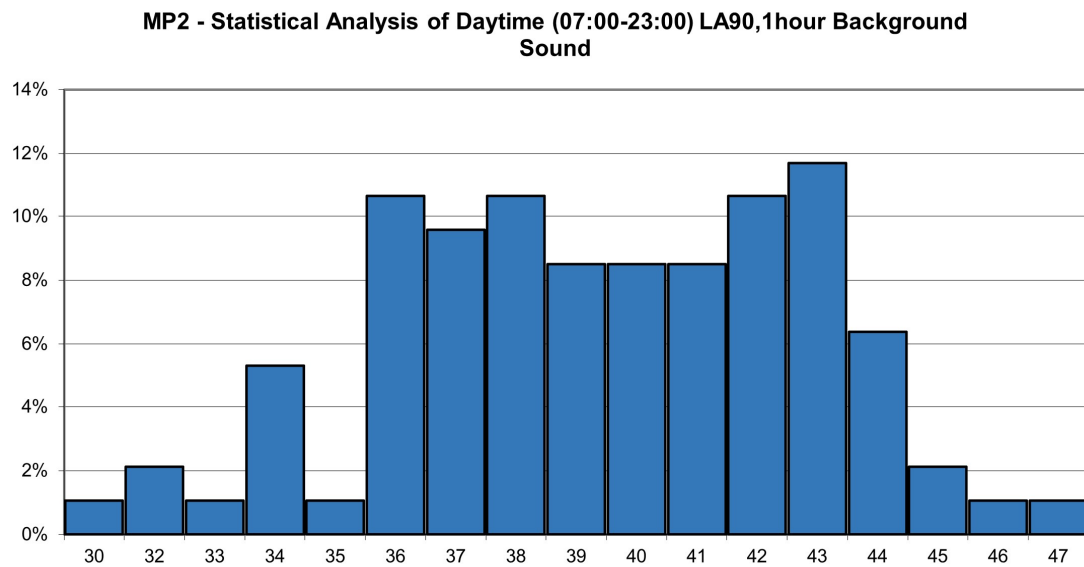


FIGURE 13: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – EARLY MORNING – MP2

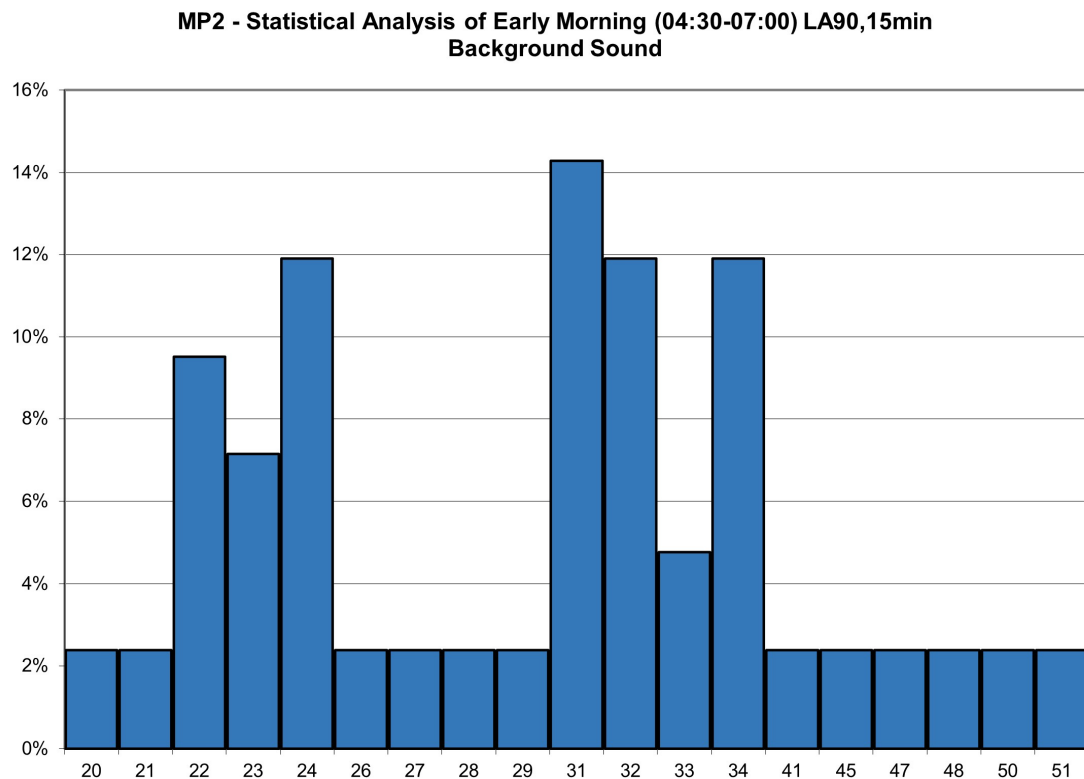


FIGURE 14: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – DAYTIME – MP3

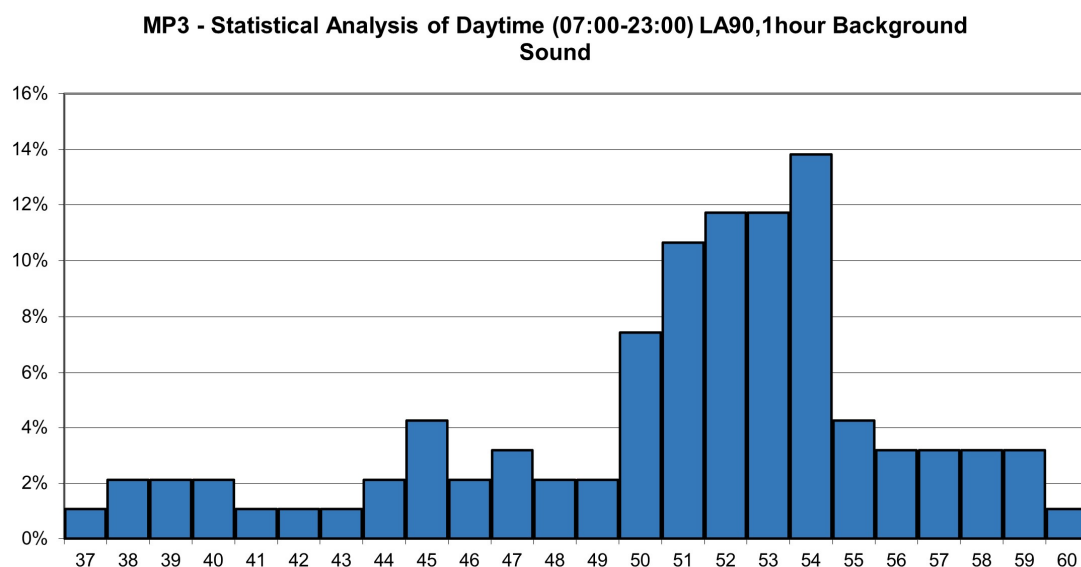


FIGURE 15: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – EARLY MORNING – MP3

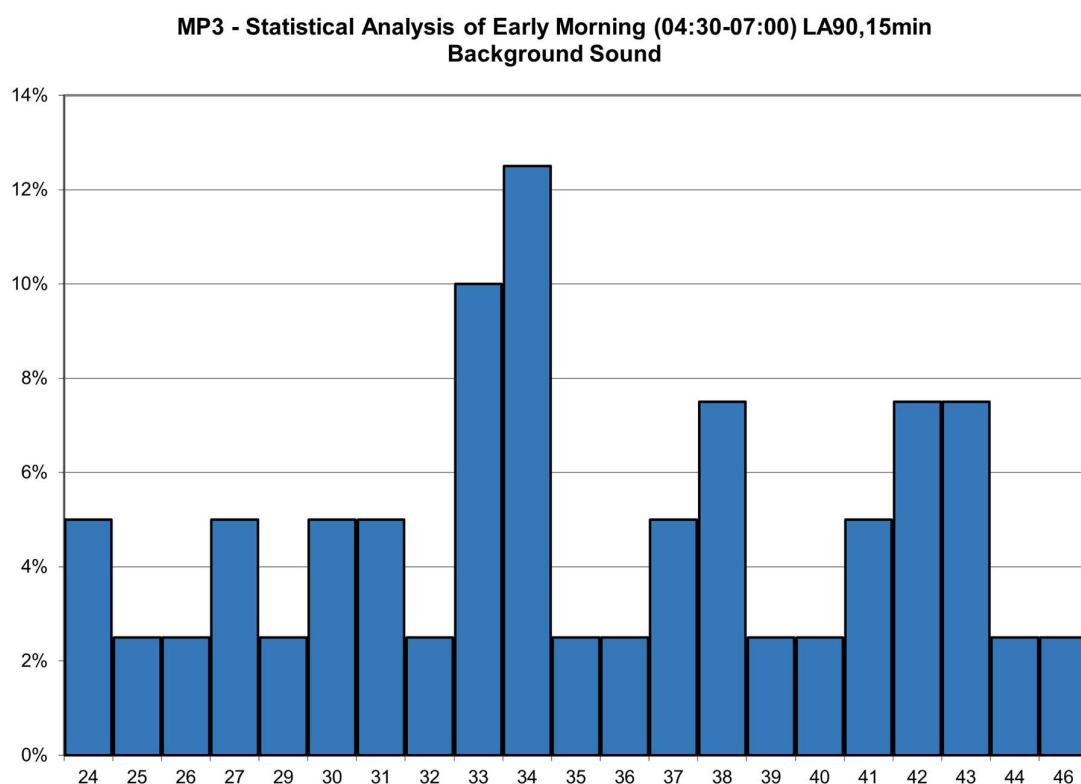


FIGURE 16: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – DAYTIME – MP4

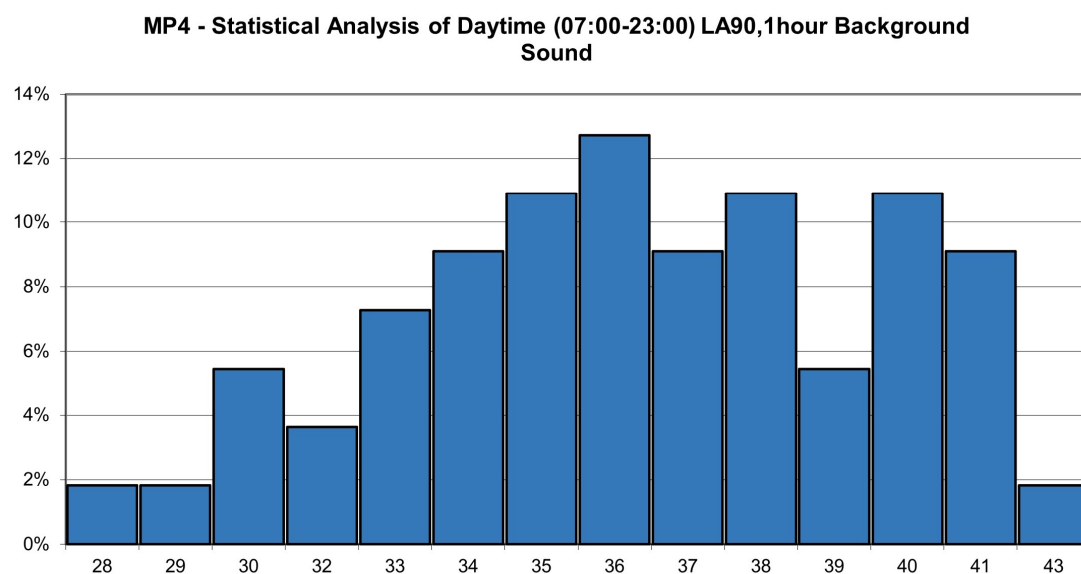
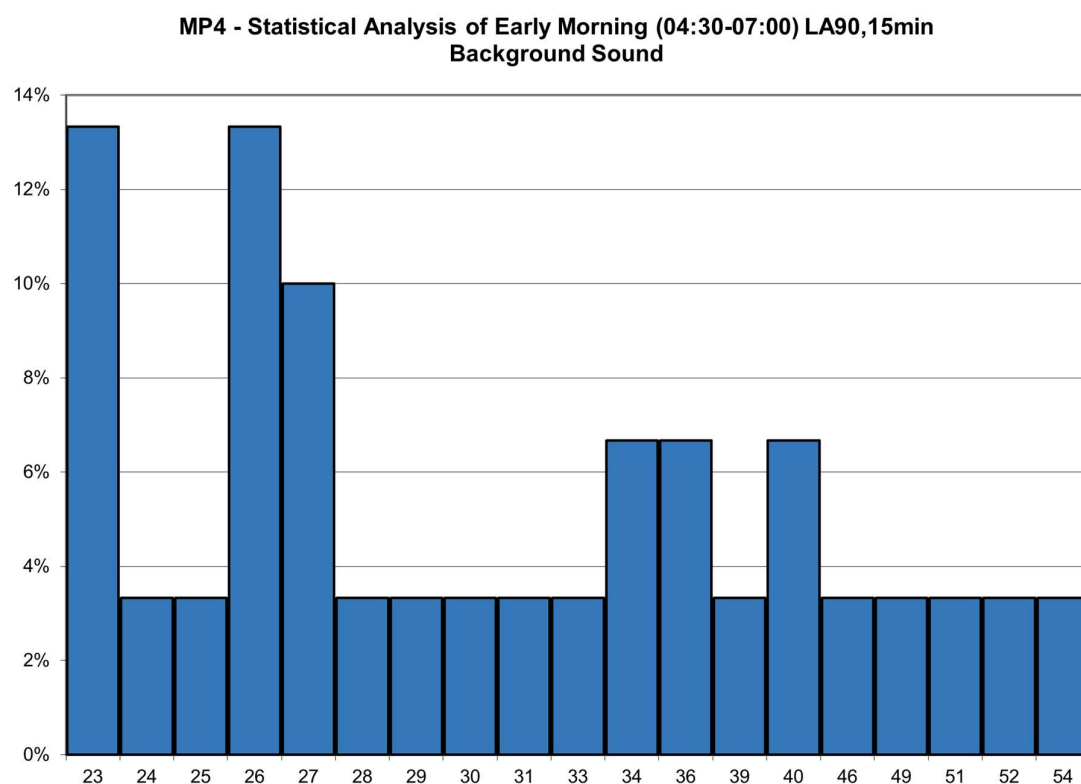


FIGURE 17: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF L_{A90} BACKGROUND – DAYTIME – MP4



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