

a new airport for Dublin?

Proposals to sell off most of the Baldonnel military air base in order to provide a second Dublin airport has created considerable local controversy. On the plus side is the prospect of the sale raising a substantial sum to help refinance the Irish Air Corps, but on the down side is the additional noise which will impact the expensive southern suburbs of Dublin, which are at present essentially free of disturbance from aircraft noise. An alternative to the new airport is to build a second terminal at the existing airport, which is located to the north of the City. However, transport facilities to and from this airport are already under strain so that a second airport will be welcomed, although upgrading of roads will still be required. Another potential complication is the plans for the Football Association of Ireland to build a new IR£65 million stadium at City West, close to Baldonnel.

However, the biggest problem is the noise which will be introduced to the expensive southern suburbs, to which people have gravitated in order to escape the noise from the existing airport.

The potential noise problem was highlighted in 1995 when the proposal was first aired. Comdt. Kevin Byrne of the Air Corps Air Traffic Control wrote that residents of “the most expensive properties in Ireland” will be exposed

to repetitive jet aircraft noise and “it is inconceivable that these people would accept this situation lightly”.

Predictions are that approaching aircraft will cross the coast at about 4000ft or less height, reducing to about 1500ft in the final approach, although there are some claims that the height will be as low as 500ft over built-up areas.

This is a saga which will run for some time and may well turn out to be a classic confrontation where the Government, wishing to release some of its assets, is teamed with commercial developers on one side, facing opposition from determined local residents on the other side.

