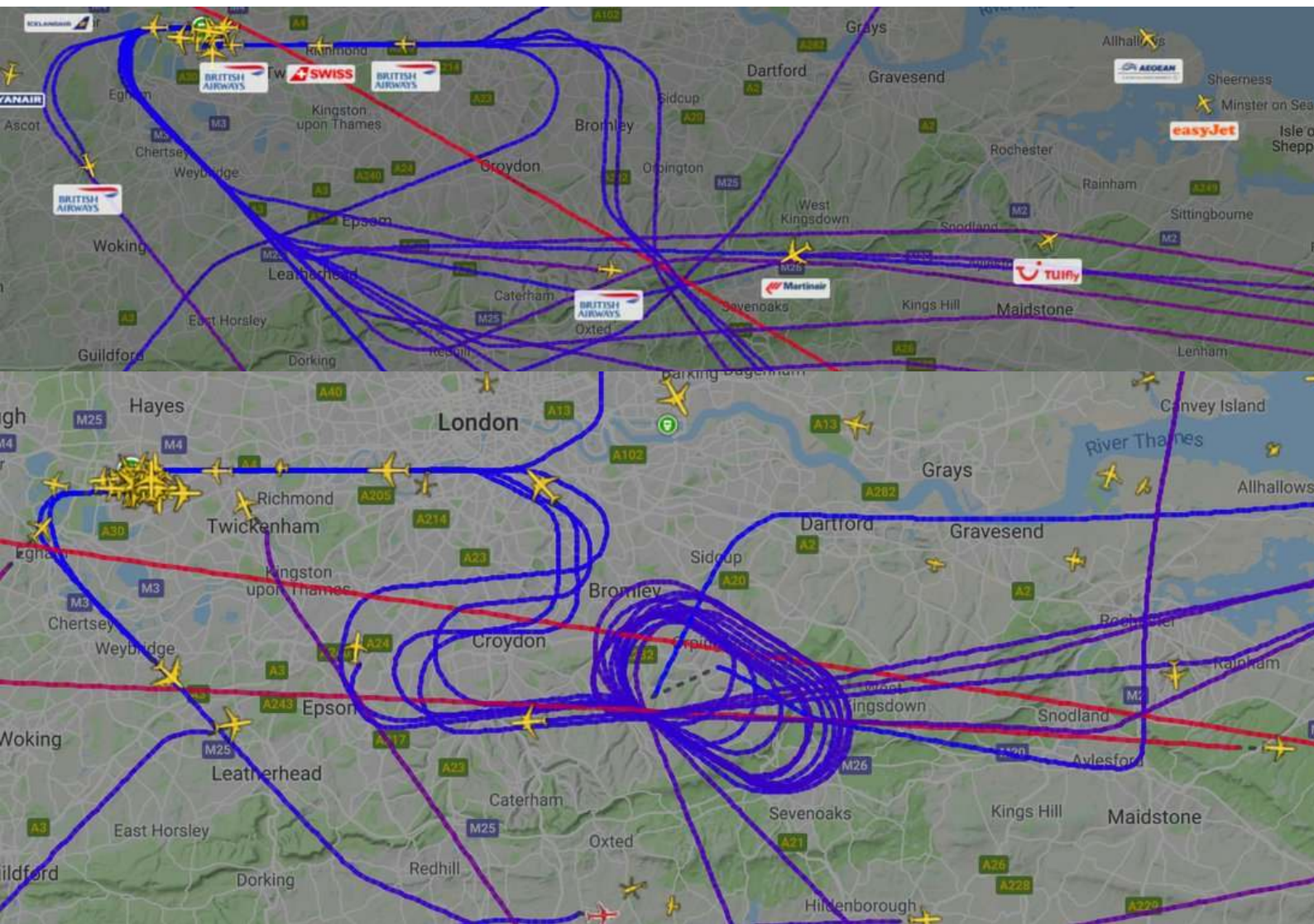




SEVENOAKS SNAPSHOT

A BRIEF SURVEY BY HACAN



AIRCRAFT NOISE

a problem in Sevenoaks?



Sevenoaks has an aircraft noise problem? It is 31 miles from Heathrow; 18 miles from Gatwick. Only the smaller Biggin Hill Airport is relatively close to the Kent town, 8 miles away.

When HACAN received these comments we decided to investigate the situation:

“Couldn't possibly happen in Sevenoaks could it? Oh, it already is!”

“Just another lovely day under all the Heathrow and Gatwick flight paths in Kent - what an absolute shame”

“Never felt like this before - actually thought I was going to have a heart attack with all of the planes today and yesterday.... not good”

Summary of the findings

- The Sevenoaks area is overflown by Heathrow and Gatwick aircraft
- Biggin Hill aircraft fly to the west and north of the area but can be audible
- On westerlies there can be a total of over 200 planes a day from Heathrow and Gatwick
- Of these around 30 are Gatwick aircraft
- On easterlies the total is in the range of 126 – 164 planes a day
- Of these just over 30 are Gatwick aircraft
- All the Gatwick aircraft are departures
- The area is impacted by both landings and departures from Heathrow
- The majority of Heathrow aircraft are at heights of between 8,000 and 12,000ft
- There are some Heathrow aircraft below 7,000ft and a small number above 15,000ft
- The heights of the Gatwick aircraft range from about 4,800ft to around 7,800ft

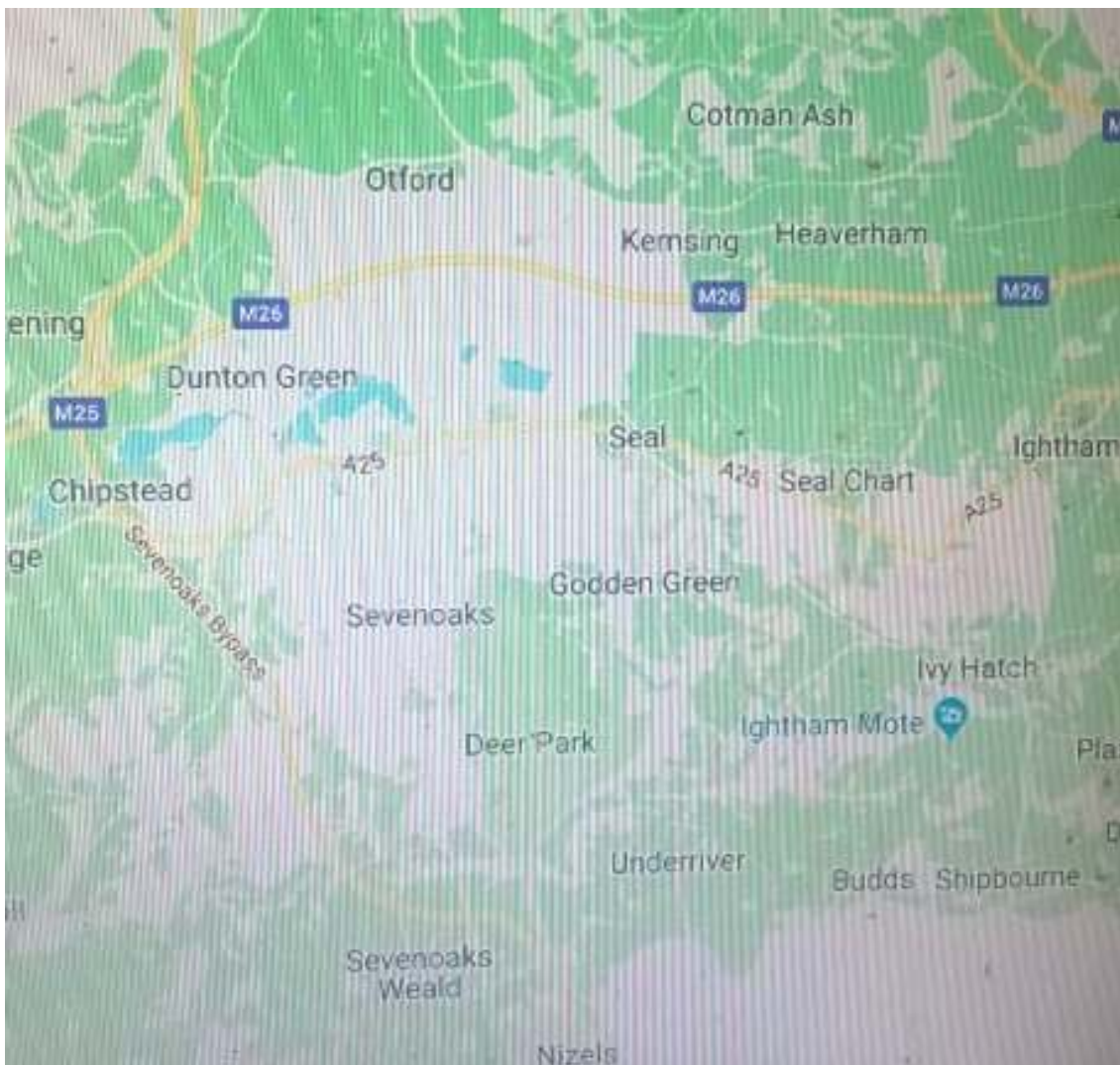
How we carried out the survey

We used Heathrow's Webtrak and Gatwick's Flight Tracker online systems to count the flights.

We looked at two days when the west wind was blowing and two days when there was an east wind. On each day we counted the number of flights going over the Sevenoaks area each hour from 6am until 10pm.

We identified which were landings and which departures.

We defined the area overflown as the area from Cotham Ash in the north to Sevenoaks Weald in the south and from Ightham in the east to about 1½ miles west of the Sevenoaks bypass in the west.



The area covered stretches several miles north/south and east/west so every resident within the area would not hear every plane. However, the main purpose of the survey was to describe the extent to which the area was overflown rather than calculate the percentage of people annoyed by the noise.

We paid a visit to the area and spoke to some local residents before doing the survey to get an idea of the geographical area we should cover.

The detailed findings

10th September 2018: west wind blowing – 226 aircraft

| Time | Heathrow Arrivals | Heathrow Departures | Gatwick: all departures |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 6-7am | 13 | 1 | 2 |
| 7-8 | 8 | 2 | 3 |
| 8-9 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9-10 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| 10-11 | 14 | 2 | 1 |
| 11-12 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| 12-1pm | 12 | 3 | 3 |
| 1-2 | 8 | 2 | 5 |
| 2-3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| 3-4 | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| 4-5 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 5-6 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 6-7 | 13 | 2 | 1 |
| 7-8 | 20 | 5 | 0 |
| 8-9 | 9 | 2 | 2 |
| 9-10 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 142 | 49 | 35 |

11th September 2018: west wind blowing – 193 aircraft

| Time | Heathrow Arrivals | Heathrow Departures | Gatwick: all departures |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 6-7am | 24 | 0 | 0 |
| 7-8 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 8-9 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 9-10 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| 10-11 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 11-12 | 7 | 0 | 3 |
| 12-1pm | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| 1-2 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| 2-3 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| 3-4 | 7 | 0 | 4 |
| 4-5 | 10 | 0 | 2 |
| 5-6 | 0 | 7 | 1 |
| 6-7 | 13 | 2 | 2 |
| 7-8 | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| 8-9 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| 9-10 | 10 | 8 | 2 |
| Total | 118 | 45 | 30 |

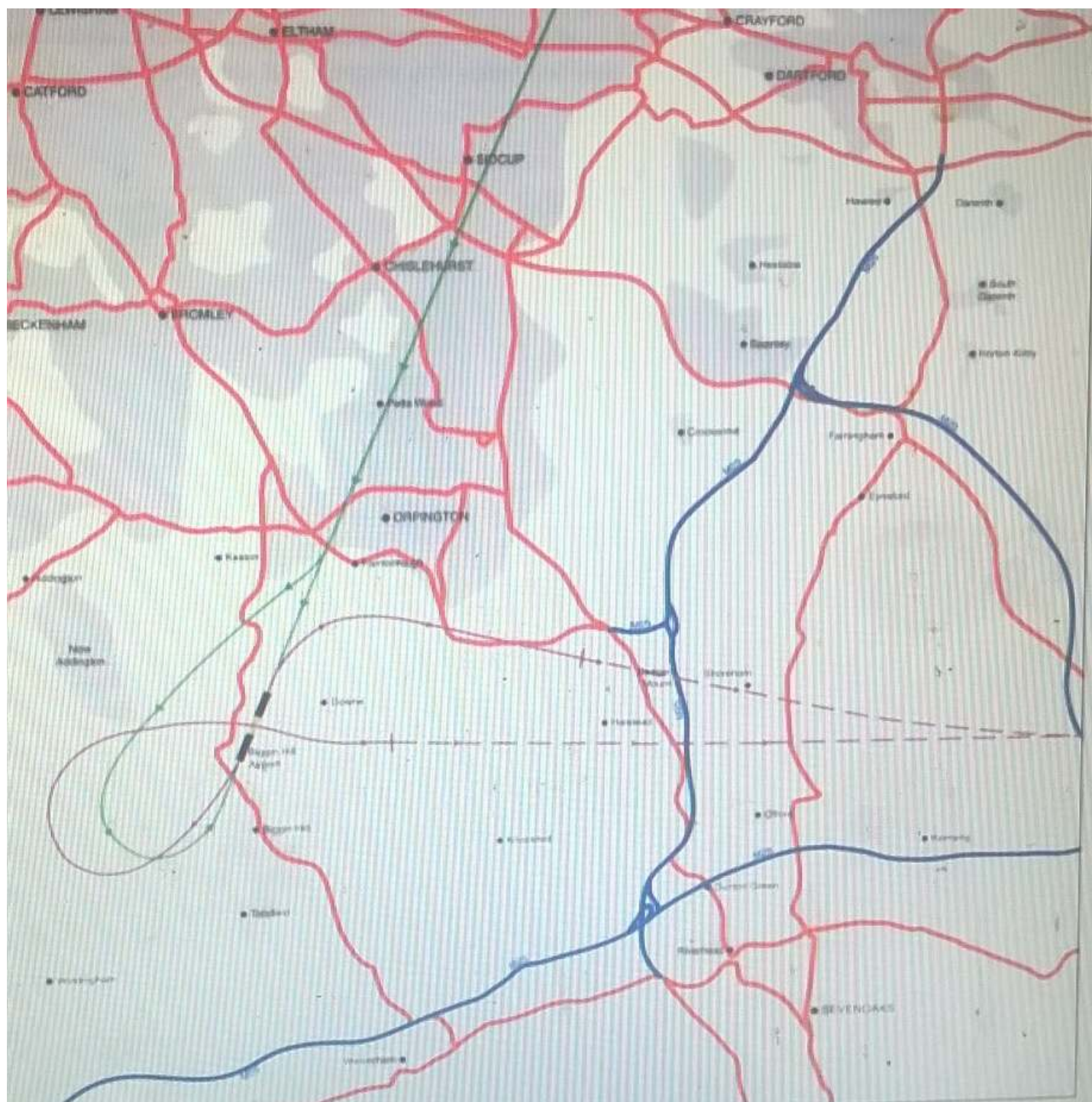
4th September 2018: east wind blowing – 164 aircraft

| Time | Heathrow Arrivals | Heathrow Departures | Gatwick: all departures |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6-7am | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| 7-8 | 13 | 0 | 2 |
| 8-9 | 5 | 0 | 4 |
| 9-10 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 10-11 | 12 | 0 | 1 |
| 11-12 | 11 | 0 | 4 |
| 12-1pm | 12 | 0 | 3 |
| 1-2 | 8 | 0 | 1 |
| 2-3 | 8 | 0 | 4 |
| 3-4 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| 4-5 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| 5-6 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| 6-7 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| 7-8 | 7 | 0 | 3 |
| 8-9 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| 9-10 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 129 | 2 | 33 |

5th September 2018: east wind blowing – 126 aircraft

| Time | Heathrow Arrivals | Heathrow Departures | Gatwick: all departures |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6-7am | 10 | 0 | 2 |
| 7-8 | 8 | 0 | 3 |
| 8-9 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| 9-10 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 10-11 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| 11-12 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| 12-1pm | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| 1-2 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| 2-3 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| 3-4 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| 4-5 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| 5-6 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| 6-7 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 7-8 | 6 | 0 | 4 |
| 8-9 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 9-10 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 94 | 0 | 32 |

Biggin Hill



The map shows the Biggin Hill flight paths: the green line and the purple line. The dotted purple line indicates when the planes are above 3,000 ft. The airport is west of the Sevenoaks area (bottom right corner of the photo) and the flight path is to the north of it. When we visited, the Biggin Hill planes could be heard but the residents we spoke to felt that, because they are smaller and were further away, they were not annoyed by them. One resident, though, did point out that they added to the overall noise of the aircraft criss-crossing the area.

Reflections on the findings

Two words of caution first. This survey is only intended to be a snapshot. It is not an in-depth study either of the flight paths or of public opinion. And, because we used Webtrak and Flight Tracker (both basically reliable systems) rather than go into the field and count the planes as we normally do, we had to make judgments on whether or not to include some of the aircraft which borderline touched our area. Somebody else may have included more or perhaps less of these planes. However, we feel the overall figures they would have arrived at would not have been significantly different from the ones in our report.

Allowing for those caveats, we can draw some conclusions:

1. The findings confirmed our observations when we visited that there are a lot of planes criss-crossing the sky over the area. Indeed, it is the exception rather than the rule for the sky to be free of planes. On the whole it is the cumulative impact that can be disturbing rather than the noise of an individual aircraft as most planes are above 8,000ft.
2. Most residents seem to believe that it was Gatwick aircraft they were seeing and hearing whereas it is clear that the big majority are Heathrow planes.
3. Sevenoaks is just south of Heathrow's Biggin Hill stack. The planes coming off the stack are typically at 8,500ft passing over the area; most of the other Heathrow planes are higher than that. The planes from the stack tend to fly over the area on a regular basis between 6am and 7am but do not fly over all day long: when they do, they often come in bursts.
4. We were able to draw out some patterns.
 - typically, there are about 2 or 3 Gatwick planes each hour;
 - there are virtually no Heathrow departures on easterlies
 - there tends to be more Heathrow arrivals early morning and late evening
 - the routes are a bit variable with two exceptions: a lot of Heathrow arrivals overfly the area about 1½ miles west of the Sevenoakes bypass; the planes leaving the stack tend to come over the centre of the area.

Our recommendations:

Although Sevenoaks is outside Heathrow's normal 'catchment area' for consultation, the airport should include it in its 2019 third runway and airspace change consultations

In the shorter term Heathrow should liaise with NATS to see if there are ways of fewer planes overflying the area, particularly in the early morning and the second half of the evening.

This survey has been carried out by HACAN, the organisation which gives a voice to residents under the Heathrow flight paths. We can be contacted at 13 Stockwell Road, London SW9 9AU, email info@hacan.org.uk, tel 020 7737 6641.