

Community Noise Report

Wheathampstead
April – July 2026



London Luton Airport

Introduction

As part of the ongoing noise monitoring programme, London Luton Airport deployed a portable noise monitoring terminal in Wheathampstead.

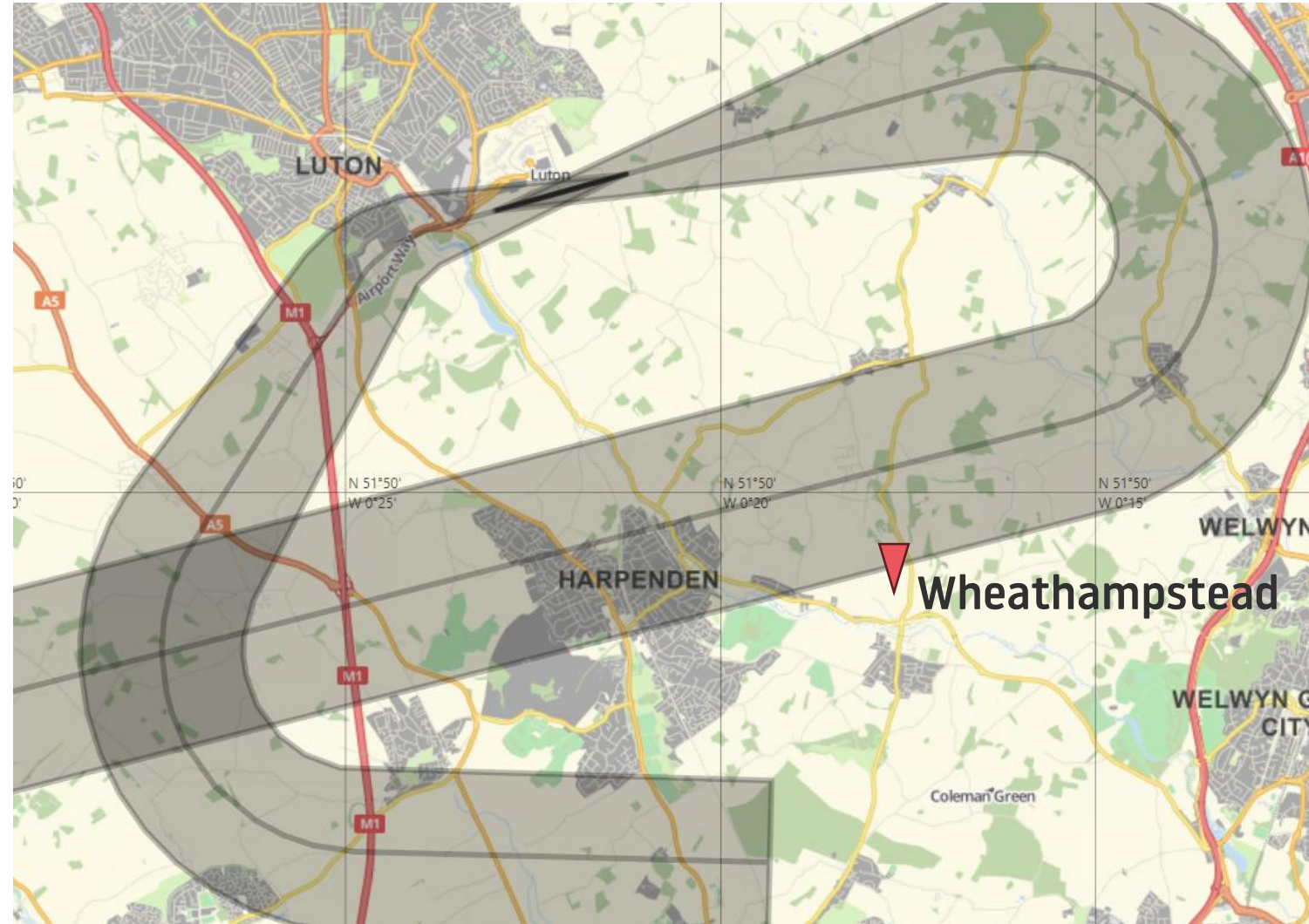
The purpose of the monitoring programme is to understand the typical noise levels created in the local community. **For Wheathampstead it specifically related to easterly and westerly departures. The flightpath nearest is shown on the map.**

The noise monitor was located at a residential property on Rose Lane, at an altitude of 330 feet above sea level. The red pinpoint on the map shows the noise monitor location.

The noise monitor in Wheathampstead was in place between the 8th April and 10th July 2026.

Aircraft noise and tracks recorded were extracted from LLA's noise and track-keeping system.

This document evaluates the lateral and vertical positioning of aircraft near the monitor as well as the noise recorded at ground level.

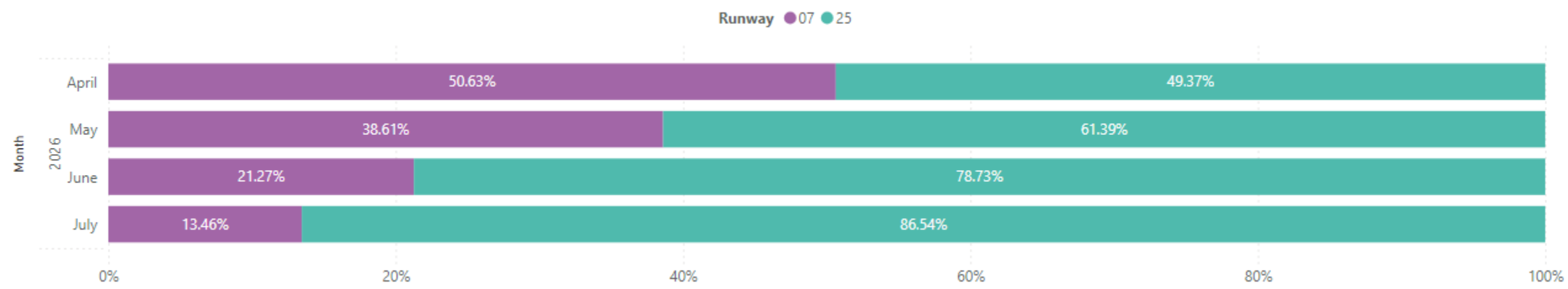


LLA operations during the monitoring period

There are two operating directions at LLA. The operating direction depends on the wind direction as aircraft are required to take off and land into the wind for aircraft performance and safety reasons. These are known as easterly operations and westerly operations and can change the aircraft tracks nearby specific areas. The split in operating direction varies from year to year and month to month. The amount of time that the runway operates in one direction depends on the wind direction.

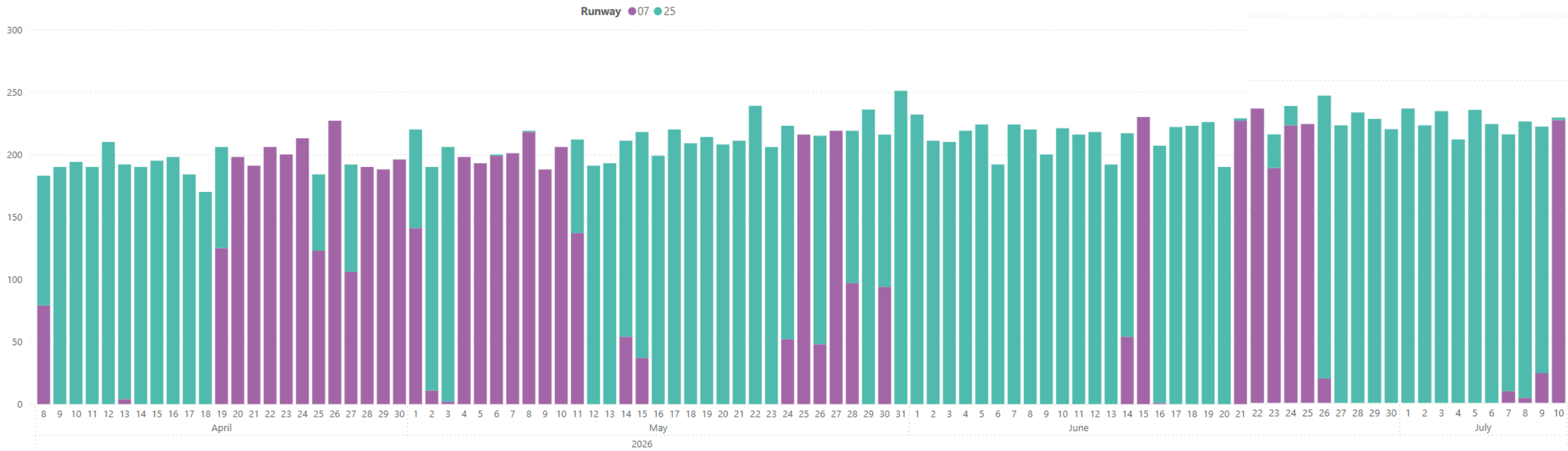
During the period of monitoring, the direction of operation was 13% easterly and 87% westerly. The 5-year average for this time of year is 45% easterly vs 55% westerly.

There were 8,870 aircraft departing on the two routes during the monitoring period.



Daily Movements during monitoring period

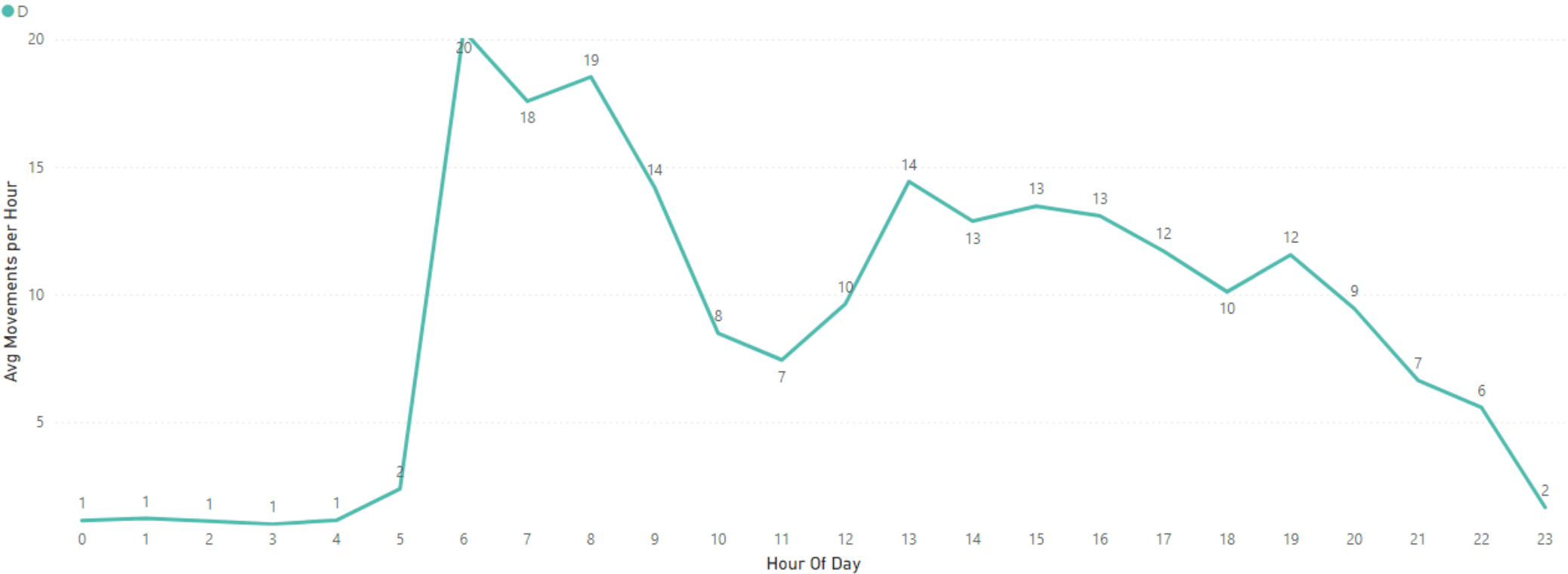
The chart below shows the number of daily easterly and westerly operations. Due to the location, all flights that departed from our westerly runway would have flown above the noise monitor terminal. The graph shows the easterly operations (purple) as well as westerly operations (green).



Operations during monitoring period

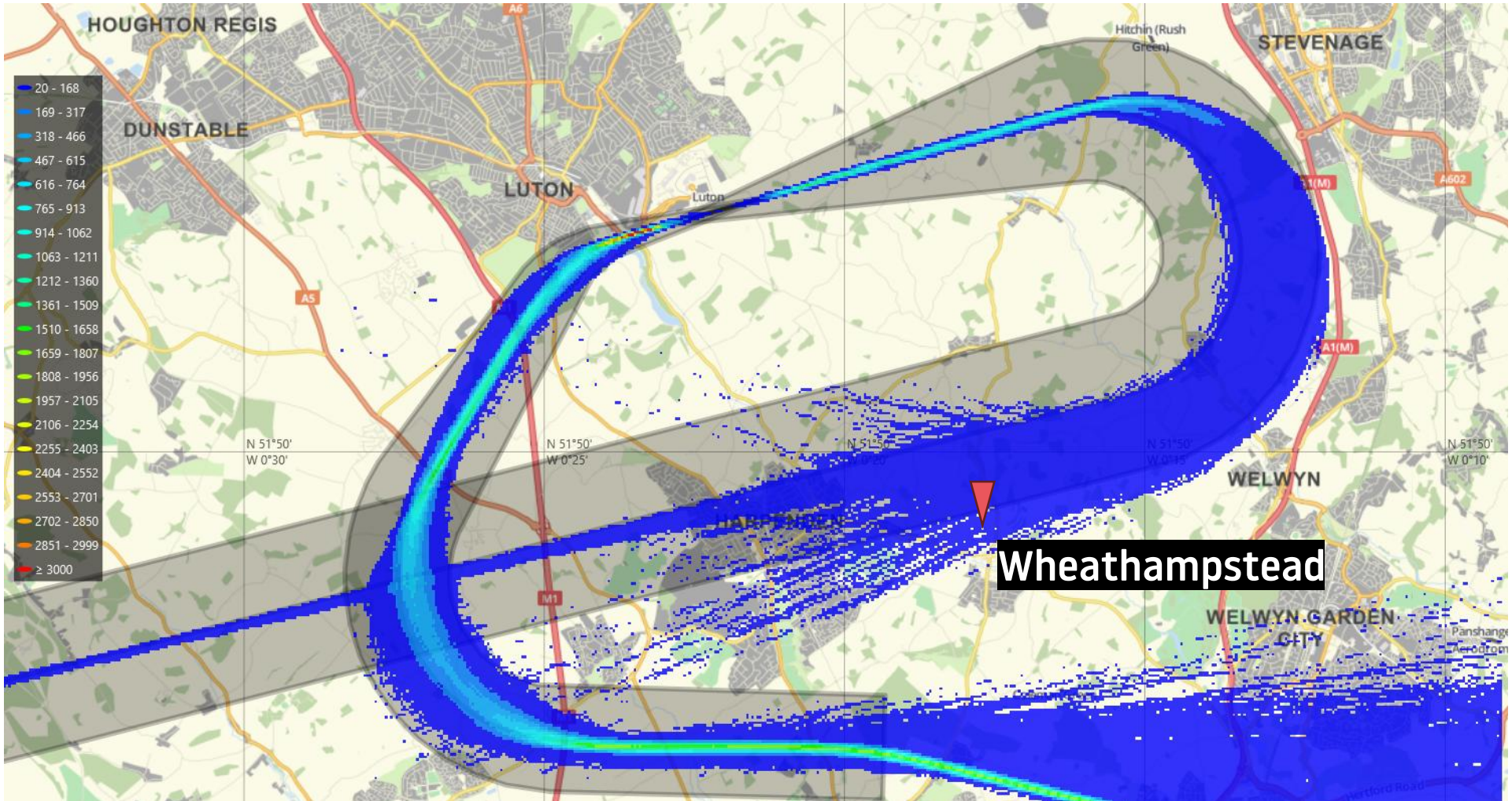
The graph below represents the average aircraft movement by hours during the monitoring period. Depending on the operating direction on the day, residents in Wheathampstead may experience different flight patterns. During the peak periods, residents of Wheathampstead may notice more frequent aircraft movements. In general, the morning peak starts at 6am on the days of departure operations and these aircraft more noticeable as the dwellings at this location are just next to the westerly departure flightpath. During the night period of 23:00 – 06:00 in the monitoring period, there were an average of 9 departures.

Average by hour



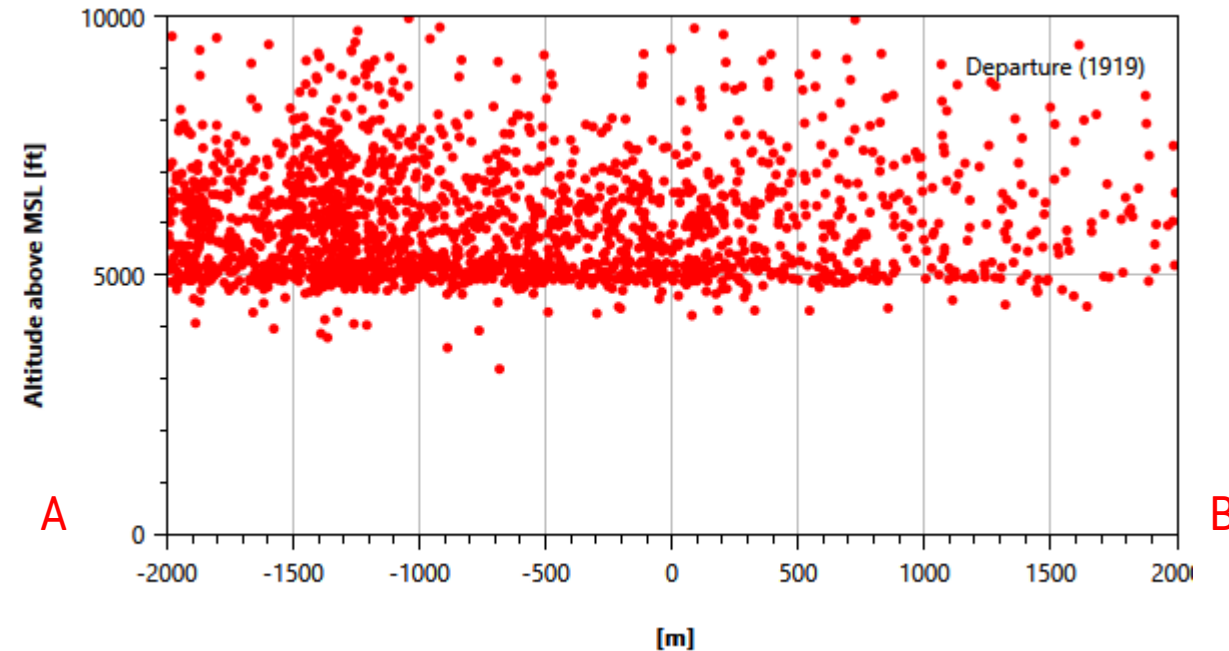
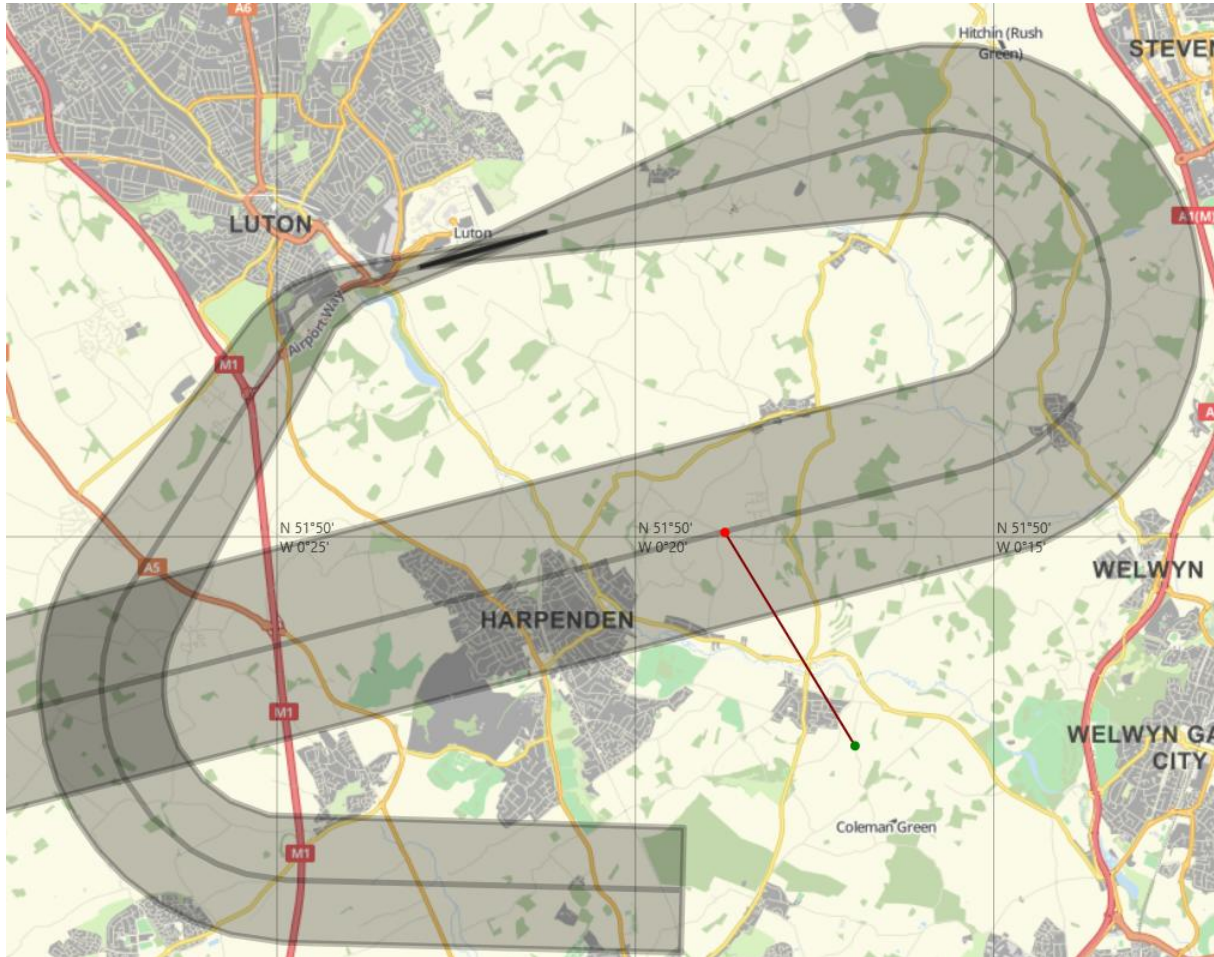
Aircraft Tracks- Westerly Departures

The heat map below shows the representative flight tracks that passed near the noise monitor terminal during the monitoring period. The red pinpoint indicates the location of the noise monitor in Wheathampstead. This map shows the path of easterly and westerly departures.



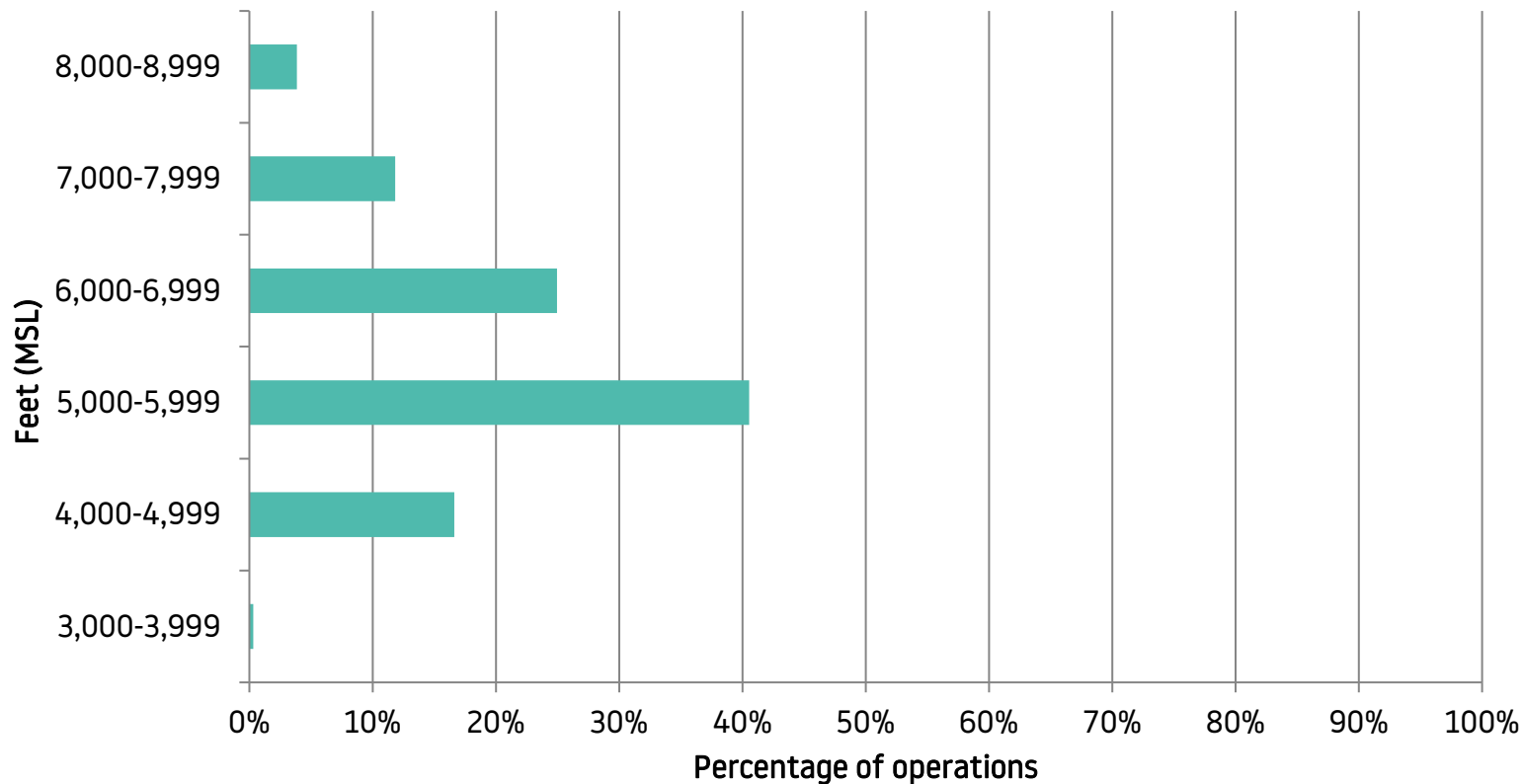
Altitude Gate- Westerly Departures

The altitude analysis for Wheathampstead, shows the vertical and lateral dispersion of aircraft 2km either side of the noise monitor. The map below shows the 4km gate (A to B) which is drawn perpendicular to the NPR from Northwest to Southeast and it gathered information of every aircraft passing through the gate area. The scatter graph below shows the distance and altitude of aircraft from the noise monitor during the monitoring period. Residents in Wheathampstead will see departing aircraft on westerly and easterly operations.



Altitude Gate Analysis – Westerly Departures

The average altitude of aircraft was 5,755 feet AMSL (5,425 feet AGL) when they reached the departure gate. The bar chart below shows the percentage rate and altitude of aircraft arriving.



Aircraft Type	Number of movements detected	Average Altitude (AMSL in ft)
A306	1	5,090
A319	366	6,090
A320 CEO	247	6,023
A320 NEO (A20N)	293	6,382
A321 CEO	6	5,097
A321 NEO (A21N)	277	6,107
B737-800 NG (B738)	190	5,702
B737 Max 8 (B38M)	139	5,490
Global Express (GLEX)	39	5,619
Cessna 560X (C56X)	28	5,946
All	1,586	5,755

How we analyse the noise data

Following the noise monitoring period, we collate the data taken from our Noise and Track Keeping system and analyse the noise reading samples.

During the monitoring period in Wheathampstead, the noise monitoring terminal collected 1,164 readings. During the period, there were 8,870 on the two westerly departures routes near the location.

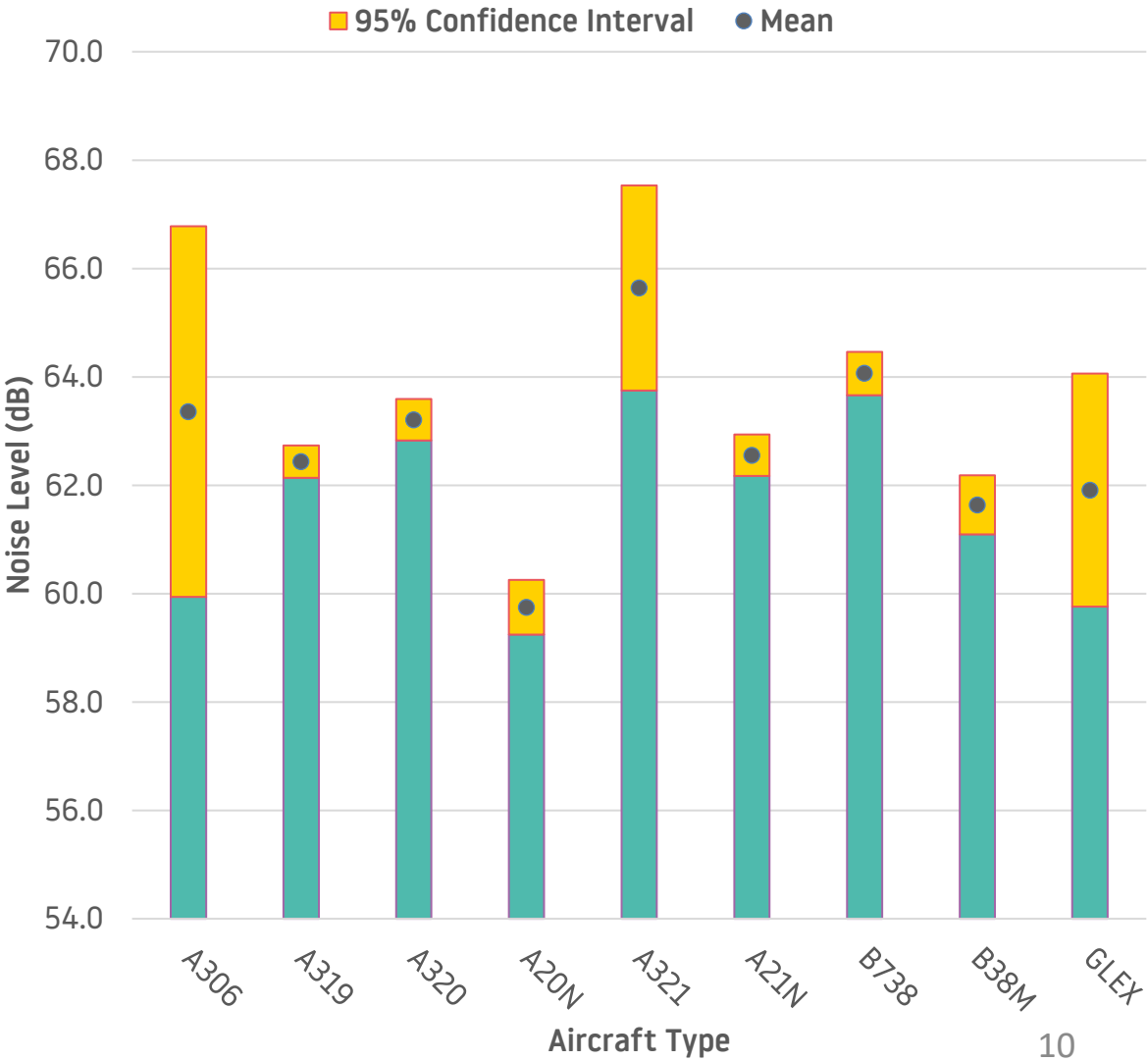
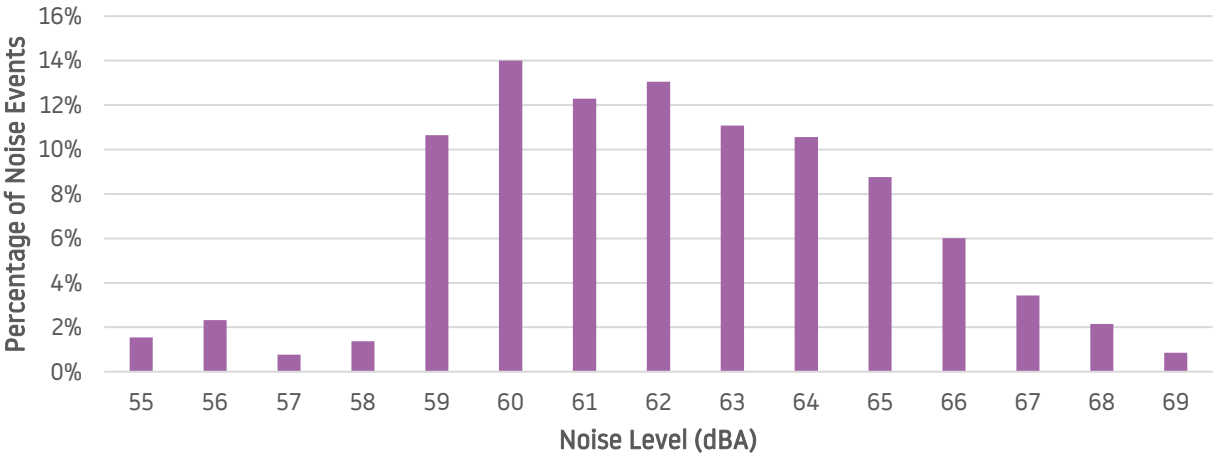
It is noteworthy that the noise monitor may not be able to record every aircraft noise event if the aircraft noise level is below ambient background noise or aircraft following a different route and not through the gate selected. Therefore, there may be a difference between the number of actual air transport movements and number of aircraft noise events collected during the monitoring period.

The weather also plays a big part in the data recorded and in periods of extreme weather i.e (very strong winds) the equipment can record noise incorrectly, so we exclude samples from the analysis during these weather conditions. When analysing the samples, the first thing we do is to ensure that there is no unusual noise event present which might not be caused by aircraft (i.e. vehicles or wildlife). A total of 42 recordings were excluded from the analysis for the above reasons.

Noise Results – Westerly Departures

During the monitoring period, the noise recording samples were gathered from the most popular aircraft types at London Luton Airport*. The summary of the noise results is shown in this section. The tables show the average noise by aircraft type and the bar chart shows the uncertainty caused by the spread in readings and the sample size (95% confidence interval).

Aircraft Type	Number of movements	Average Noise (dB)
A306	5	63.4
A319	250	62.4
A320 CEO	190	63.2
A320 NEO (A20N)	114	59.8
A321 CEO	12	65.6
A321 NEO (A21N)	239	62.6
B737-800 NG (B738)	183	64.1
B737 Max 8 (B38M)	80	61.6
GLEX	9	61.9
All	1,082	62.8



*The noise results shown in the analysis are only for those aircraft types that recorded more than 15 events per aircraft. A306 included for comparison.

Noise Results - Summary

- The average departure noise in Wheathampstead was 62.5dB, based on a sample size of 1,164.
- From the results, Wheathampstead's most popular aircraft type by operators include Airbus and Boeing. Airbus operate the A320 CEO, A321 CEO and Boeing the B738-800NG.
- Both Airbus and Boeing also operate the newer generation aircraft. Airbus- A320 NEO (A20N) and A321 NEO (A21N). Boeing- operate the B737 Max 8. These newer generation aircraft are quieter and more fuel efficient which also impacts the reduction in emissions.
- The table below shows the 6 types of aircraft operated by Airbus and Boeing, with three of the aircraft A20N, A21N and B38M being the newer and more efficient aircraft. It breaks down these results by showing both their arrival and departure decibel (dB) levels. In red/ green it shows the difference between the older and newer generation aircraft in their arrivals and departures.
- Around 46% of movements during the monitoring period were newer generation aircraft which are more fuel efficient and quieter.

Aircraft type	Departure dB	New aircraft type	Departure dB
A320	63.2	A320N (A20N)	59.8 (-3.4dB)
A321	65.6	A321N (A21N)	62.6 (-3.0.dB)
B738	64.1	B737 MAX 8 (B38M)	61.6 (-2.5dB)

Conclusion

- A mobile noise monitor was installed at a residential property on Rose Lane from the 8th April to 10th July 2026.
- For Wheathampstead, it specifically related to easterly and westerly departures. During the monitoring period, the airport operated in the direction of easterly and westerly for 13% and 87% of the time, respectively. Generally, over the year, LLA operate in the westerly direction for 70% of the time due to the prevailing wind.
- The main aircraft type operating at London Luton Airport is the Airbus A321 NEO which produced an average noise of 62.6dB for departures.
- 40% of the noise events recorded in Wheathampstead were created by the newer generation aircraft, A320 NEO, A321 NEO and B737 Max 8. During the monitoring period, 50 aircraft were investigated as part of the Noise and Track violation scheme. Of these, 24 aircraft were fined. All fines generated by this scheme go directly into the community trust fund, more information on the community trust fund can be found on <https://www.london-luton.co.uk/corporate/community/community-trust-fund>.
- LLA publish other monitoring reports on a regular basis. These reports can be viewed and downloaded from the Noise webpage on the LLA website - <https://www.london-luton.co.uk/corporate/community/noise>.

Glossary of Terms

Westerly Operations: As aircraft take off and land into the wind, westerly operations refers to the time when the wind is blowing from the west and aircraft follow the departure route in the direction of South Luton.

Easterly Operations: Easterly operations refers to the time when the wind is blowing from the east and aircraft land on the easterly runway and would fly above South Luton.

Standard Instrument Departure (SID): Published route that an aircraft must follow on departure.

Noise Preferential Route (NPR): All aircraft except propeller aircraft leaving London Luton Airport should follow flight paths known as Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) up to an altitude of 3,000 feet or 4,000 feet depending on the route. They lead from the runway to the main UK air traffic routes and form the first part of the Standard Instrument Departure routes (SIDs).

Aircraft Movement: A single aircraft departing or arriving at the airport.

Altitude Gate Analysis: A gate which is drawn across an area and will gather flight data about every aircraft passing through the gate area.

Noise Event: A single event is the period from when an aircraft approaches the monitor until when the aircraft is leaving the area.

Decibel (dB): The unit used to measure noise (typically 50-60dB is equivalent to a normal conversation level).

LasMax: A unit of measure and is the maximum noise level from a single aircraft passing over the noise monitor.

95% Confidence Interval: A range of values that you can be 95% certain contains the population mean.

