

**From:** [REDACTED]  
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My wife and I have lived in Ramsgate for nearly 20 years and have been resident in this part of Kent for all but a few years of our lives. In the last few years (and since the airport has been closed), we have seen Ramsgate flourish. New businesses have been established, tourism increased, old properties renovated and an increasingly vibrant and varied community develop. We have a fantastic Royal harbour which is within the Heritage Action Zone and the High Street has also just receive a Regeneration Grant.

I have taught in a beautiful, light, top floor classroom in Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School since 2002, situated in Chatham Street, central Ramsgate.

In November 2004, I flew from Barcelona to Manston and was amazed to be able to see, through the windows, the mess of papers I'd left on my desk. That is how close the plane flew over the school!

When teaching, the classroom would suddenly become dark as the shadows of the planes passed overhead with the accompanying ear-splitting, high-pitched screech and the crushing low –pitched roar of the engines, followed a short time later, by a second huge noise as the aircraft put its engines into reverse thrust to land. Teaching was interrupted and it created an overwhelming distraction which meant that students and teachers had to refocus their train of thought. As anyone who has taught teenagers knows, maintaining concentration is essential if good learning is to take place.

Increasingly teachers are dealing with students who suffer from stress, anxiety and special educational needs. These adverse classroom conditions only exacerbate these problems and the loss of concentration can be impossible for them to re-establish once it has been interrupted, leading to poorer learning for the rest of the lesson.

The sound of aircraft is particularly unhelpful when it breaks the studious hush of the exam hall where students are trying to achieve grades which will affect the rest of their lives, not to mention the impact of noise of extra-curricular and enrichment activities such as concerts and sports events.

There is considerable evidence that students whose sleep is interrupted, and so arrive at school tired, are clearly disadvantaged. What is perhaps less obvious is that tired and distracted students have a knock-on negative effect on the others in the room, taking up more of the teacher's time and creating a less focussed and productive learning environment.

A recent report has demonstrated that air pollution (increased by fuel dumping, burnt jet fuel and increased road traffic), not only has a serious, in some cases fatal, effect on peoples' health, but also inhibits their cognitive capabilities, putting them back by more than a year. (The Guardian 27<sup>th</sup> Aug 2018)

There are often occasions when it is important that I am able to open the classroom windows (to get fresh air; to reduce room temperature or when using materials such as latex or white spirit). Therefore, any amount of sound-proofing would be irrelevant. Since the Pandemic began, good ventilation and fresh air has been recognised as paramount in our efforts to keep the spread of covid to a minimum and to allow children to be able to continue to be educated within a school setting.

As teachers, we are also encouraged to use outdoor space as a valuable learning resource. To manage students safely and effectively, it is very important that they can hear instructions at all times. A plane flying overhead would seriously impede the value and safety of these activities.

My school has made great efforts in recent years to deliver a great educational experience to a diverse community. It not only educates students, who have the potential to make huge contributions to society in the future, but also greatly enriches the character of the town and helps to draw people in from outside. What parents from further afield are going to want to send their children to a school that is blighted in such a way and indeed for those children whose homes and local area is so badly affected by air traffic, might their parents be tempted to send their children to a school elsewhere to give them a break from the relentless and exhausting noise. This would be disastrous for the school intake numbers.

My wife and I were shocked that despite Chatham and Clarendon Grammar school being identified by RSP, in their second consultation documents, as being significantly adversely affected by the potential airport, the school appeared to have had received no correspondence from RSP and had not been invited to the consultation at all. We believe this was also the case, at the time, with Christ Church School and Priory Infants. We noticed that in their list of non residential dwellings likely to be significantly affected, RSP appeared not to have listed or nor apparently to have been in contact with Ramsgate Library which would also clearly be badly affected since it is also located under the flight path. It was especially surprising since the documents were being made available to the public at the library itself! We would like the SOS to investigate all non-residential buildings as we believe that there are other schools, nurseries, old people's homes, registry office and places of worship which may not yet have been properly identified and consulted.

Other teachers at various schools have also reported having to stop lessons and wait for planes to pass before continuing. My wife recalls collecting our children from Priory Infants School after planes had been practising all day. The staff were exhausted and frustrated by the constant noise and interruption and the children were tired and stressed. Can you really allow this to become 'the norm'?

Our parks, allotments, the beach, nurseries and schools provide great places for learning and leisure, however each of these places, including many of our own homes, lie on or very close to the flight path and would be subjected to intolerably loud and relentless noise should this DCO be awarded. *DCO 5.1/4.1.46* "....significant adverse effects have been identified as being likely as a result of an increase in noise.." and *4.1.47* "aircraft noise would increase to the point where there would be a perceived change in the quality of life for occupants....".

Whilst acknowledging in their 2018 Consultation Doc12.9.68 that "..... a large number of dwellings ....are subject to moderate or major adverse impacts," in the *DCO 5.1/4.1.44*, RSP have contradicted or underestimated this, citing a maximum of 225 homes as potentially being "exposed to significant annoyance, disturbance and sleep disturbance." These few homes may well be offered noise insulation but whether this would be effective given the age of buildings, or adequate for many hundreds if not thousands of homes actually exposed to such levels, is another matter. Even with insulation, are people really just expected to keep their windows shut and stay indoors?

We know from experience just how intrusive and oppressive the noise really is. RSP's predicted high number and frequency of flights will make living and working here, nothing

less than a nightmare. There appears to be an acoustic anomaly in the town itself, which we urge you to investigate. The noise level appears to be significantly worse than that on the higher, flatter areas closer to Manston. The shape of the land, coupled with the density of tall, tightly packed buildings seems to funnel and intensify sound to unbearable levels. Continuing a telephone conversation or speaking to someone face to face as a plane passes was often impossible.

RSP's Noise Mitigation document (11.1) states that they will monitor noise at 6.5km from start of take off. Do they realise that this point is approximately 2.5km out at sea where planes will be at a much higher altitude above only open space?

When the airport was last open and occasional night flights were permitted, many households found that the noise would wake every member of the family (and leave dogs barking!), not just with the horrific and intolerable screech of the plane passing overhead, but also for the minute or so as it approached and 'reverse thrust' of the engines as it landed. Often sleeping in top floor rooms, children would wake, completely disorientated and terrified by the overwhelmingly intense noise that saturated their rooms. Interrupted and poor quality sleep is known to have a hugely negative effect on health, ability to learn and well being. The Independent (4/2/16) "Recent research shows that road traffic and aircraft noise increase the risk of high blood pressure, especially noise exposure at night."

Paul Luxmoore, (Executive Headteacher of Coastal Academies Trust) told a recent public meeting that he was heartbroken at the prospect of Ramsgate's children having their sleep disturbed. He stated that he was certain that it will effect their education. And if it effects their education it will effect their life choices. He is said "I shudder to think what will happen to this school (Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School) in the flight path with a listed building and single pane windows."

It is well documented that air pollution is also highly detrimental to health and recent studies show that it also causes a significant reduction in IQ. CNN (28<sup>th</sup> Aug 2018), "prolonged exposure to dirty air has a significant impact on our cognitive abilities." Of equal concern is that scientists have found that "particles of air pollution travel through pregnant women's lungs and lodge in their placentas". (16/9/18 - The Guardian)

Those of us who have lived near to Manston for much of our lives have seen aviation companies come and go. Not one has ever found it to be a sustainable venture. How can RSP be any different when the central location and road access that such a freight 'hub' requires cannot be provided by the site at Manston? Perhaps it's time to realise this land's potential, as something other than an airport which provides real jobs and opportunities in a forward looking, imaginative, sustainable and environmentally positive way – an initiative that doesn't add to the already existing Climate Emergency but instead is a beacon of hope that the future can be truly 'built back better'.

Isn't the health of the planet and quality of life of so many people worth more than the business interests of this one private company?

John Laven