



Sandyhurst Lane Residents Association



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Cllr Paul Carter CBE
Leader, Kent County Council
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County Hall
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Dear Paul

Re: Operation Stack

Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association represents the interests of the 340 houses and upwards of an 800 population living along Sandhurst Lane and its adjoining roads in Ashford. The area is semi-rural in nature, though bisected by both the M20 and a railway line.

We have only two routes to access the rest of the Kent road network. One is via the A20 Maidstone Road, the other via the A251 Faversham Road.

As usual, during Operation Stack, both these roads become diversion routes for non-cross channel commercial and private vehicles. With the severity of the last two periods of Stack's implementation and particularly the use of the A20 as a diversion route, not only for eastbound traffic but also all London-bound M20 traffic, the situation became intolerable. Normal ten minute journeys in any direction were taking up to five times as long.

Our second access route, Faversham Road, as well as being the only remaining access route to and from Sandyhurst Lane and its environs, was also being used by local and through traffic trying to find other routes out of Ashford and by HGVs to and from the M2 attempting to avoid Operation Stack.

Sandyhurst Lane itself, though only 5m wide in places, and with very little pedestrian footpath, became a "rat-run" for local and through traffic, including HGVs seeking alternative routes in and out of Ashford or to avoid the consequences of Operation Stack by using the M2.

The consequence to our residents, many of whom are more mature than the Ashford average, was concern about going out, by car or by foot, real fears that emergency services would be delayed in accessing them if needed, and a sense of frustration at the inconvenience they were forced to suffer, the costs to them as tax payers and the apparent inability of anyone on this side of the English Channel to improve or change the on-going situation.

It is these frustrations that drove them to instruct me to write to you.

My personal frustration goes back eight years when, on revisiting the attached document, I realise that you and I, as Board members of the Channel Corridor Partnership (I represented Business Link Kent), highlighted the threats and cost to the Kent economy of inaction over Operation Stack. Eight years on it's worse! Still no "**long term off road solution**"

In the opinion of our Committee, which includes local businessmen and a former chair of the Road Hauliers Association and KEB Board member, the suggestions in the Channel Corridor Partnership evidence are still relevant but do not go far enough.

Over the last eight years the Government has continued to ignore the problem of HGV parking NATIONWIDE. Operation Stack is a consequence of this and might allow you to raise this subject as part of a cure for Kent and as part of strategic thinking for the whole of the UK.

On the Continent, where some countries ban heavy vehicles movement over the weekend, drivers regularly use local and plentiful facilities along both motorways and trunk roads. In the main these are free or low cost and provide facilities such as security, toilets, showers and waste disposal.

In short, most Continental countries see heavy goods vehicles as a vital part of their economy and provide facilities which support the haulage industry and at the same time minimise its inconvenience to the general public.

We in the UK seem to have an aversion to motorway/dual carriageway parking facilities and instead look upon existing commercially run motorway service stations as a source of revenue rather than an essential facility.

If the cost of truck parking facilities throughout the UK is too expensive, why not revert to your earlier idea of charging all cross channel vehicles a toll? The "Brit Toll".

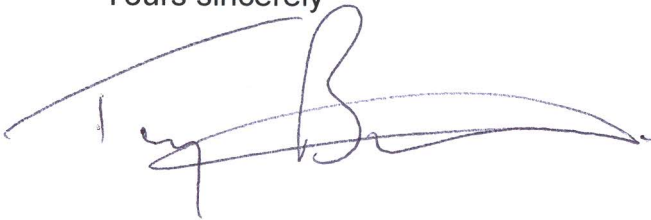
During 2014 Dover Harbour handled 2,456,817 and Eurotunnel 1,440,214, i.e. some 4 million movements. At a modest £1 per movement the combined toll would generate some £4 million – and you can park a lot of trucks for that sum. With 80% of these vehicles being continental the additional cost to UK operators would be more than offset by the benefit of more secure parking across the country.

By solving the HGV parking problem nationally you create the facility to manage and hold vehicles nationwide rather than "stacking" them into Kent and you cure the problem of anti-social parking by vehicles populating, and polluting, lay-bys, industrial estates etc.

You now have an opportunity to press again for a national solution to the problem we in Kent suffer solely as a consequence of our geography.

On behalf of our residents, and the rest of Kent, I urge you, together with our Kent MP's, to demand no less than immediate action to provide permanent short-term mitigation and a deliverable long-term strategic plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Bartlett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tony Bartlett
Chair SLRA

Enc.

cc: Damian Green MP
Cllr Gerry Clarkson
Cllr Jim Wedgbury
Cllr Charlie Simkins
Cllr Larry Krause
Cllr Luke Powell
Cllr Winston Michael
Cllr Christine Drury
Cllr Jason Matthews



Memorandum from the Channel Corridor Partnership (CCP) (FT 20)

INTRODUCTION

1. The importance of the freight industry for the economic competitiveness of UK plc cannot be under-estimated. Freight logistics has resulted in a greater flow and accessibility of goods and services, both nationally and globally and is fundamental in modern business techniques. But the evolution of, and demand for, on-time freight and distribution infrastructure is a double-edged sword; freight activities are responsible for causing environmental problems such as pollution; social distress during congestions and even fatalities in accidents

2. Here in Kent this "freight evolution" can be witnessed daily. Kent's proximity to mainland Europe provides the shortest and most cost effective means for the movement of freight. Ever increasing demands on local infrastructure and its current inadequacy to cope with peak traffic flows and disruptions to Port and Tunnel operations has provided the public sector with a unique number of issues to address.

3. This submission on behalf of the Channel Corridor Partnership highlights the scale of the complex problems faced by authorities in Kent, leading us to advocate that Kent should be on the National/European transport agenda as a strategic priority.

UK ECONOMIC AND FREIGHT TRENDS

4. 60% of goods imported into the UK enter via the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel, equivalent to 4,000,000 HGVs travelling through Kent in 2006.

5. In general terms, and for basic reasons of geography and cost, Ro-Ro traffic growth is likely to continue to be strongly concentrated in the South of England. This view is supported by the Department of Transport's discussion document on the *Ports Policy Review* (May 06) which in its own Central Forecast provided a growth figure for unitised traffic (which includes the Channel Tunnel) of Average Annual Growth of 3.09%.

6. The Ports Policy document also states that "demand for Ro-Ro is expected to grow strongly. The impact in absolute terms is likely—for obvious geographical reasons—to continue to be strongly concentrated in the south of England: the main concentration is through Dover; but also at Portsmouth and elsewhere. There are obviously potential implications for road congestion and pollution in the hinterlands of the Ro-Ro ports, which need to be carefully considered."

7. This analysis adds weight to the argument that the Greater South East of

England will continue to partake more in absolute terms than any other area from the likely increase in ports traffic, although unitised traffic is projected to grow proportionately strongly in all regions. However, industry specialists such as MDS Transmodal Ltd recognise that increasing road and rail congestion may dampen down some of this growth.

8. Crucially the Port of Dover Masterplan, a proposed expansion of the port to provide more berths for larger and faster craft, is predicated on growth figures as outlined in the table provided below. This suggests that all forms of cross-channel traffic will grow but that Freight HGV traffic will double at Dover between 2006 and 2034.

		2006	2014	2024	2034
<i>Trade Sector</i>					
	Million units	2.3	2.75	3.52-3.92	3.72-4.52
Freight Vehicles					
Tourist Vehicles (cars and coaches)	Million units	2.7	2.75	2.9	3.1
Passengers	Million	13.7	14.2-14.6	14.7-15.5	15.5-16.4
Cruise	Calls	136	140	180-190	200-250
	000 tonnes	200	Rising to 350-400		
Fresh Produce					
Aggregates	000 tonnes	190	Within the 200-250 range		

Source Dover Port News February 2007.

THE CHANNEL CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP

9. The objective of the Channel Corridor Partnership is very simple—we aim to "Keep the Gateway Open", and maintain its status as the "Gateway" rather than "The Bottleneck to Europe". We summarise this into a simple slogan—'maximise flow, minimise impact'. We believe that this will require solutions and funding at a National/ European level. EU policy is that no one member state should fund infrastructure requirements to eradicate bottlenecks where many member states benefit. We believe that this policy should apply here in East and South Kent, so that no one local authority is expected to finance solutions to an issue that benefits all of the UK economy.

10. "Maximising flow, minimising impact," falls broadly into 3 themes requiring UK Government policy recognition;

- Access and Egress to the Port of Dover
- Safe and Secure off road parking

— An off-road area for the implementation of Operation Stack

ACCESS AND EGRESS TO THE PORT OF DOVER

11. Part of the second headline recommendation of The Eddington Transport Study (December 2006) is:

"Maintaining or improving the performance of the UK's key international gateways. Specifically: roll on roll off ports that support a high level of freight usage and are showing signs of congestion and unreliability. This focus should incorporate surface access routes to these gateways, again where such links are showing signs of congestion and unreliability".

12. The M20 is the National Strategic Route for Freight and identified as a Transnational European Route by the EU. Highways Agency policy is to direct port traffic via the M20 because A2/M2 infrastructure is already considered inadequate for the combined impact of Thames Gateway and the European "Gateway" traffic.

13. But it is recognised locally that the two main roads that lead to the Port of Dover, the M20/A20 route and M2/A2 route just about manage to cope on a day-to-day basis with current vehicle volumes, which peak at around 11,000 HGVs a day.

14. The daily rush hour in the evening sees commuter traffic mixing with port traffic to exit the town of Dover creating a tail-back of road freight, tourist vehicles and local commuter vehicles that block roundabouts accessing the town and the roundabout that directly accesses the Port. This leads to vehicles trying to leave the Port being blocked back into unloading areas which means that there can be occasions when the Ro-Ro ferry operators cannot unload effectively and efficiently which compounds the delay in loading vehicles bound for mainland Europe.

15. There is a proposal to improve the exit road from the Port of Dover to the A20 and install "rush hour" traffic signals on the roundabouts of the A20. Further road improvements will also be required to support the Port of Dover in delivering their £300 million Development Plan to increase port capacity.

16. When the port of Dover's terminal 2 opens for business in 2013 external infrastructure improvements must be in place to maximise on this investment. The new Western Docks development proposed in the DHB Masterplan can be served by the M20/A20 route while traffic for the Eastern Docks could be directed via the A2/M2/A2. But at the moment the A2/M2 route is inadequate to take the HGV traffic for the Port. We would strongly recommend upgrading the A2 from Brenley Corner to the Port of Dover so that East Kent is not disadvantaged by the Highway's Agency policy on only using the M20, and that the M2/A2 can complement the Port of Dover's Masterplan.

17. To raise awareness of the issues surrounding Kent, the Channel Corridor Partnership and Calais Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 25 June 2007 made a submission to the European Commissions as part of DGTren's Freight Transport Logistics Bottlenecks Exercise (EU Transport White paper 2005) highlighting the operational and infrastructure bottleneck affecting the Port of Dover and its knock

on effect for the rest of the sub region, the UK and Europe.

18. It is our view that implementing the Eddington Transport Study recommendations are fundamental to achieving our freight vision of "Maximising Flow, Minimising Impact".

SAFE AND SECURE OFF-ROAD HGV PARKING

19. Delays and lack of suitable facilities can cause uncertainty for truck drivers who need to plan where they can stop to comply with European legislation for mandatory rest periods. Ideally they would like to park in a safe and secure place but may be forced to park in an unsafe place where they could become a victim of vehicle and driver crime. Faber Maunsell (July 05) report that up to 2,000 vehicles park in illegal/non-secure parking areas each night in East Kent.

20. The HA response to receiving expressions of concern about lorries parking in inappropriate locations was to publish the Truck Stop Guide 2006 (as part of a European wide initiative) to provide information on the location of truck stops. This guide states that the total provision for the South of England is approximately 2,250 serving the ports of Felixstowe, Harwich, Southampton, Sheerness, Tilbury, as well as the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. Kent alone could fill the whole of the South of England provision to cope with the current number of lorries parked up in inappropriate places in Kent every night.

21. The HA policy of leaving the private sector to provide new facilities for HGV's and PSV's on the all-purpose truck road network is clearly a commercial failure and, in our view, requires a rethink. We believe that a public/private sector partnership approach is required to tackle the twin requirements of allocating and owning land and providing appropriate commercial services such as toilets, showers, refreshments and other services. Public Authorities are responsible for expenditure to mitigate the damage caused to the physical environment, the cost of policing "anti-social activities", daily congestion, environmental pollution and the cost to local communities facing the nightly invasion of inappropriately parked HGV's. Providing safe and secure lorry-parking can be seen as cost-effective for the public sector.

22. Finding and funding sites is fundamental to delivering the European, UK and Local Government transport agenda, as well as improving the quality of life of communities, sitting along significant freight routes, who are badly affected by this aspect of the road freight industry. Employment land allocations in Local Plans and Local Development frameworks are required for community needs, providing local employment opportunities and for the business sector inward investment and expansion opportunities. HGV parks are land hungry and create few permanent jobs; Ashford Truckstop has 300 HGV spaces and employs 40 people either directly or indirectly. To not set aside land to meet this real need encourages illegal parking and passes on the problem to neighbouring authorities.

23. A sea change in planning policy is therefore required with HGV parks being given a planning use designation that does not disadvantage employment land

allocation targets.

24. The HA in partnership with other Government Departments who have a vested interest in freight transport, must develop a strategic approach to the provision of off road HGV/PSV facilities to reflect the travel patterns of the road freight industry pan Europe.

25. Two current EU investigations highlight the fact that this lack of safe and secure provision is not unique to East Kent or to the UK;

(a) SETPOS is a pilot project launched in June 2007 involving 5 member states including Ashford Truckstop. It is investigating the provision of lorry-parking on the TENs Network and developing an accreditation system to identify freight industry recognised "safe off road parking locations".

(b) A European Parliamentary investigation entitled "*Organised theft of commercial vehicles and their loads in the European Union*" was published in July 2007. It highlighted the A20/M20 as a freight crime "hotspot". Similar "hot spots" in Germany, Netherlands and to a lesser extent in the Czech Republic and Slovenia were also identified.

OPERATION STACK

26. Operation Stack is implemented when freight operations across the Channel are disrupted, and subsequently lorries are parked in queues on various sections of the M20 Motorway on a phased basis, whilst local traffic is diverted onto "A" roads. Between 1996 and 2004 Operation Stack was implemented 92 times. 85% of Operation Stack implementations are caused by inclement weather not French industrial action as is often believed by the Media and/or local residents.

27. As part of a study by the Channel Corridor Partnership into the impact of Operation Stack (February 2007) it was shown that drivers find it quicker to sit and wait (on average up to 6 hours) in the queue rather than divert to another port. Hauliers are also unlikely to change their Port of choice as the Calais/Dover route will always be the shortest, most economic crossing between the UK and mainland Europe and many hauliers have accounts with more than one ferry company as well as Eurotunnel.

28. Further wide spread disruption in 2007 combined with a campaign to "take stack off the road" spearheaded by the Channel Corridor Partnership, Local Authorities, Kent County Council and the media, culminated in June 2007 with the then Secretary of State for Transport, Dr Stephen Ladyman announcing the funding of the Quick-change Movable Barrier (QMB). This is a traffic management system for "Operation Stack" Phase 1 between Junctions 11 and 12 of the M20 at an estimated cost of £12m. He also stated that the Government remains committed to a long-term off-road solution.

29. The Channel Corridor Partnership would expect the Transport Select Committee to recommend that this be embedded in UK Government policy irrespective of the findings of the current Highways Agency investigation into the

business case for such a solution.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION

30. Alternatives to road freight, air rail and short sea will realistically make little impact on the numbers of lorries passing through Kent.

31. Freight Quality Partnerships require the ability to deliver solutions otherwise they become a lobbying and consultative group. The solutions needed to resolve the above problems require input at a much higher level to be successful.

32. The European Commission has accepted that the above problems exist in a number of member states. The Channel Corridor Partnership is unaware of any Departmental initiative at a European level to secure solutions.

33. Improving the road safety record of haulage vehicles can in part be achieved through the provision of adequate off road safe and secure rest areas for day as well as overnight. This will enable drivers a proper rest without having to worry about personal safety and load security. It would also provide VOSA with sufficient space to conduct safety checks, raise awareness of safety issues with drivers and promote safe practises etc. Ashford Truck Stop currently provides this for VOSA.

34. The upgrading of the A2 has been proposed for the last 15 to 20 years. Improvements to the A20 in Dover have been the subject of numerous inter-agency discussions. There are currently no plans for off road HGV parking despite the 2,000-space shortfall, no plans to upgrade the A2 and no funded solution for an off road Emergency Marshalling Area for "Operation Stack". This is despite many Government Agency consultations, investigations and reports.

35. Solutions cannot be delivered at a local level using local resources. Locally everybody is aware of what the problems are and what is required to resolve them. They are not new. But the solutions—land, infrastructure and planning are resource and investment intensive.

36. Clearly there is an urgent need for an Integrated Freight Management Strategy for Kent and in our view if this strategy is to include delivering realistic solutions it will need buying into at the highest level in the UK and Europe. This can only be achieved through the Department taking responsibility for developing and delivering a realistic Integrated Freight Transport Strategy.

37. To date there is little evidence of the Department facilitating the "free movement of goods and services" that underpins the Maastricht Treaty. This lack of "free movement" is most apparent during the peak freight movements between Tuesdays and Thursdays for vehicles exiting the UK via Eurotunnel and the Port of Dover when tail-backs and queues are expected, and circumnavigated by locals.

38. The UK financial burden for delivering solutions to the issues raised above can be minimised in two ways. Major projects to improve traffic flows have consequences that are far wider than the limits of national frontiers. It is hardly credible to expect that individual countries alone finance these projects where a

large part of the benefits falls to other countries. The European Commission recognises that in order to minimise financial burdens, member states who are not directly concerned by infrastructure works but which receive benefits, should be encouraged to provide financing for projects. This principle is already applied in the case of the agreement of 5 May 2004, between France and Italy, to construct the base tunnel on the Lyon-Turin route which will be financed 63% by Italy against 37% by France in order to rebalance the investment in the project overall taking account of the fact that the access routes to be built are largely in France.

39. Charging for the use of infrastructure, to finance infrastructure, is increasingly common in the EU. The CCP believe that the provision of off-road facilities could be fully funded by charging commercial vehicles at the point of entry to the UK. For example, London has introduced a congestion charge and the Port of Felixstowe has put a levy of £5.50 on each container to fund external infrastructure as part of a planning condition. Germany followed the example of other Member States by introducing the Maut motorway charge for commercial vehicles. There is no need to introduce a new system, the current 'Eurovignette' scheme could be adapted not only to provide facilities but also to ensure that their use would be affordable for drivers irrespective of country of origin or load value.

40. We recommend that the Select Committee instruct the Department to pursue these options to part fund the infrastructure and off-road solutions required to meet current and projected freight needs.

October 2007