

Solutions to Operation Stack: Managing freight traffic in Kent

Public information exercise



Investing in your roads

Every road user wants less congested roads that support swift, safe, comfortable and informed travel. Highways England is responsible for delivering the largest Government investment in a generation, across England's motorways and major A-roads.

In this brochure we explain our proposed approach to develop a lorry holding area solution, to improve how we deal with traffic congestion caused by periods of cross-Channel disruption. We also describe how additional lorry parking and facilities could be provided.

This brochure explains how you can provide feedback to our proposed approach.

How to respond

This is your opportunity to share your views about our proposed approach to develop one or more lorry holding areas to reduce congestion caused by cross-Channel disruption. We also want to understand your views about how the provision of everyday 24-hour lorry parking might be developed as part of a lorry holding area solution.

Please fill in and send us your completed questionnaire. You can do this online or download a copy from our website before returning it in your own envelope to **Freepost KENT LORRY AREA**. Questionnaires and freepost envelopes are also available at our public information exhibitions and public information points.

The public information exercise runs from **Monday 11 June 2018 until 11.59pm on Sunday 22 July 2018**. We encourage you to participate and respond by the closing date, as responses received after this date may not be considered.

This public information exercise is just the first step of a wider consultation process that will take place. Subject to the outcome of this public information exercise and Government decisions, we intend to consult with interested individuals and organisations on more detailed options and proposals as part of the formal planning process during winter 2018-2019.

If you have further questions or would like to find out more, please come to one of our public information events or:

- Visit www.highwaysengland.co.uk/kentlorryarea
- Email us at kentlorryarea@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Call us on **0300 123 5000**
- Write to us at **Freepost KENT LORRY AREA**

Public events

You can also attend a public event to discuss our proposed approach.

Location	Venue	Date	Hours
Maidstone	Sessions House County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ	Tuesday 12 June 2018	14.00 – 20.00
Dover	Dover Town Hall The Maison Dieu, Biggin Street, Dover, CT16 1DL	Thursday 14 June 2018	14.00 – 20.00
Ashford	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Ashford Business Point, Waterbrook Avenue, Sevington, Ashford, TN24 OLH	Tuesday 26 June 2018	14.00 – 20.00
Canterbury	Westgate Hall Westgate Hall Road, Canterbury, CT1 2BT	Wednesday 27 June 2018	14.00 – 20.00
Dover	St Mary's Parish Centre Church Street, Dover, Kent, CT16 1BY	Saturday 30 June 2018	12.00 – 18.00
Folkestone	Quarterhouse Mill Bay, Folkestone, CT20 1BN	Thursday 5 July 2018	14.00 – 20.00
Maidstone	Sessions House County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ	Saturday 7 July 2018	12.00 – 18.00

Please check our website for when we will be at truck stops and motorway services.

Public information points

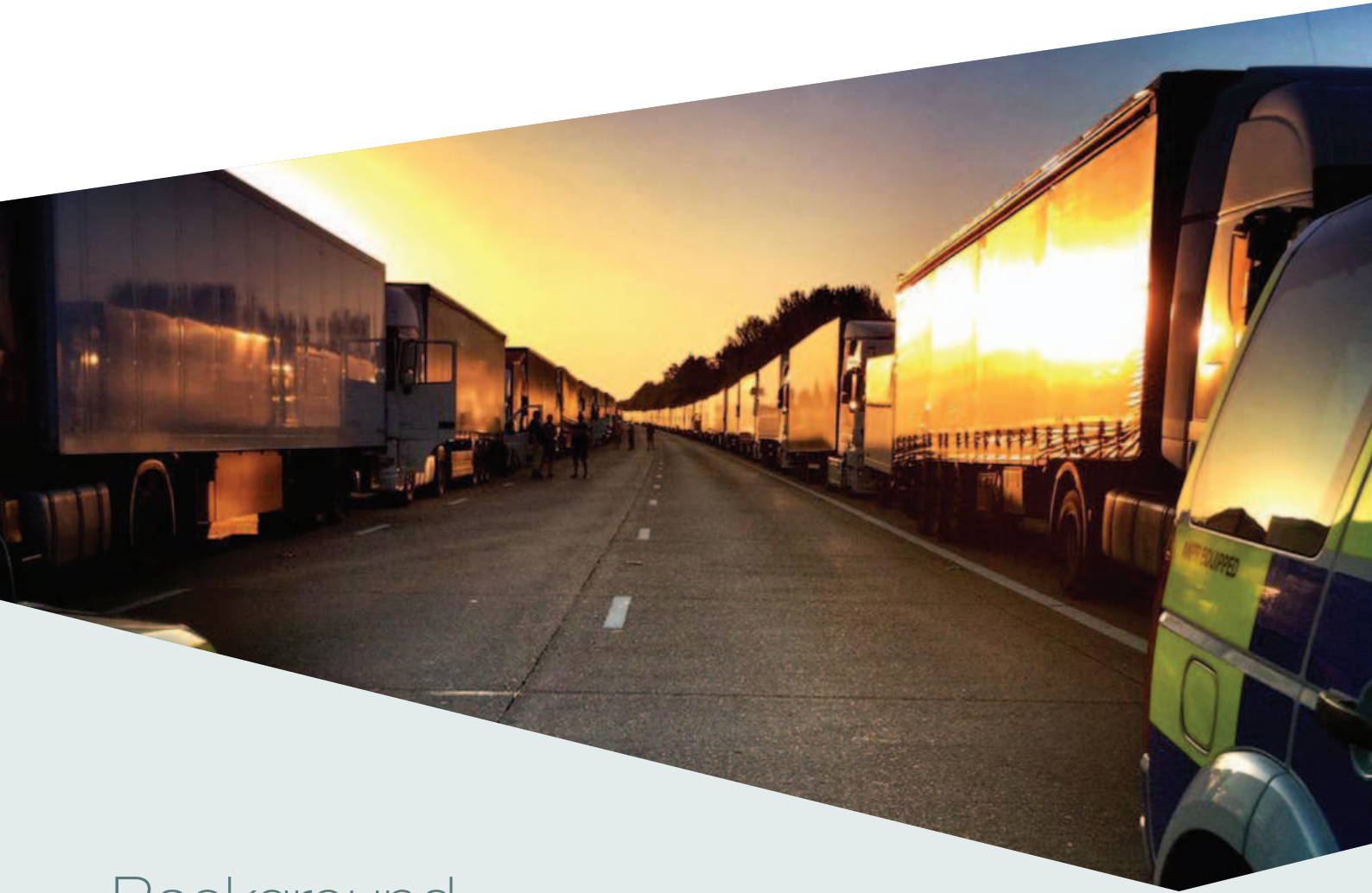
This brochure and questionnaire are available at the following public information points:

Location	Venue
Allington Library	Castle Road, Maidstone, ME16 0PR
Ashford Library	Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1AS
Aylesham Library	Aylesham Community Centre, Ackholt Road, Aylesham, Canterbury, CT3 3AJ
Bearsted Library	Station House, Ware Street, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME14 4PH
Bockhanger Library	Bybrook Road, Kennington, Ashford, TN24 9JE
Boughton-under-Blean Library	Village Hall, Bull Lane, Boughton-Under-Blean, Faversham, ME13 9AH
Canterbury Library	18 High Street, Canterbury, CT1 2RA
Charing Library	Market Place, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0LR
Chatham Library	Community Hub Chatham, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TX
Cheriton Library	64 Cheriton High Street, Folkestone, CT19 4HB
Gillingham Library	Gillingham Community Hub, High Street, Gillingham, ME7 1BG
Dover Library	Dover Discovery Centre, Market Square, Dover, CT16 1PH
Faversham Library	Newton Road, Faversham, ME13 8DY
Folkestone Library	2 Grace Hill, Folkestone, CT20 1HD
Hythe Library	1 Stade Street, Hythe, CT21 6BQ
Larkfield Library	Martin Square, Larkfield, Aylesford, ME20 6QW
Lenham Library	11 The Square, Lenham, Maidstone, ME17 2PQ
Lyminge Library	Station Road, Lyminge, Folkestone, CT18 8HS
Madginford Library	Egremont Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME15 8LH
Maidstone Library	Kent History and Library Centre, James Whatman Way, Maidstone, ME14 1LQ
Ramsgate Library	Guildford Lawn, Ramsgate, CT11 9AY
Rochester Library	Rochester Community Hub, Eastgate, Rochester, ME1 1EW
Sandgate Library	Sandgate High Street, Sandgate, Folkestone, CT20 3RR
Shepway Library	17, Northumberland Court, Northumberland Road, Maidstone, ME15 7LW
St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Library	Community Centre, 16, Kingsdown Road, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Dover, CT15 6BB
Tonbridge Library	1 Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge, TN9 1TG
Tunbridge Wells Library	Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1NS
West Malling Library	22-24 High Street, West Malling, ME19 6QR
Wood Avenue Library	Wood Avenue, Folkestone, CT19 6HS
Wye Library	6 Upper Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, TN25 5AF

Information about library opening hours can be found at

www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries or by calling **03000 413131**

www.medway.gov.uk/info/200181/libraries or by calling **01634 337 799**



Background

The M20/A20 and M2/A2 are the main routes that connect the London area with the channel ports in Kent and are among the south-east's most important and busiest roads. Thousands of vehicles travel on these roads daily, carrying local residents, commuters, freight hauliers, other business people and tourists.

On average around 11,500 (5,750 in each direction) lorries use these roads to access cross-Channel travel services every day on the shortest, quickest and cheapest route to mainland Europe. In 2016, the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel handled a record number of lorries and both predict a potential doubling of freight traffic over the next decade.

Extra parking has been provided within both facilities but capacity can still be exceeded on occasions when severe weather, industrial action or operational problems disrupt cross-Channel travel services. As a consequence, lorry queues that are too great to be accommodated within the Port of Dover or Eurotunnel can form on the motorways and local roads.

When extraordinary levels of disruption occur, Operation Stack is activated to queue lorries on the M20 until they can join their ferry or train. This is not ideal as it closes parts of the motorway to other traffic and adversely impacts the M20, surrounding roads, local communities and businesses in Kent.

The story so far

Due to significant and prolonged disruption in summer 2015, Operation Stack was in place for over 30 days. In response, the Government instructed Highways England to develop plans for a new lorry holding area to avoid the worst impacts of Operation Stack.

In July 2016 the Government announced a proposal for a lorry holding area located near Stanford in Kent. Highways England carried out a public consultation over the summer and in October 2016 the decision to select Stanford West became the subject of a judicial review.

In November 2017, following legal advice, the Government withdrew this initial proposal and at the same time instructed Highways England to explore the development of a lorry holding area solution through the normal planning process. This gives us the opportunity to completely reassess the scope of the requirement, including the scale of facilities and location of new lorry holding areas.

The Government has also asked us to consider the need for additional lorry parking in Kent. Inappropriate and illegal lorry parking currently creates unwelcome issues for communities and residents, which include personal safety, litter, noise and damage to the roads.

Finally, we have been asked to consider whether lorry holding areas could include additional border control facilities, should these be required after the UK leaves the European Union.

We are working with key partners including Kent County Council, haulage industry representatives, the ports and relevant environmental bodies to investigate the possible options.

The situation today

Depending upon the nature, location and scale of the congestion, traffic in Kent is managed in the following ways:

■ **Localised, small scale incidents**

Kent Police, Highways England, Kent County Council Highways and others manage each situation, as appropriate, separately or jointly, based upon agreed ways of working to clear accidents and reduce congestion.

■ **Queuing on to the M20 from the Eurotunnel terminal**

Occasionally the queue of lorries from the Eurotunnel toll booths extends on to the M20 at junction 11a. Lorries queue informally on the hard shoulder and the motorway signals are set to warn approaching drivers.

■ **Dover Traffic Access Protocol (TAP)**

Port-bound lorries are directed into the nearside lane of the A20 approaching Dover forming a 'rolling queue' that enters the town and port as capacity allows. Other traffic continues to flow freely in the outside lane. Dover TAP was introduced as a trial in April 2015 and adopted permanently in 2017. It has been used over 300 times to respond quickly to short term freight capacity shortage at the port. However, TAP cannot be adapted to deal with the extraordinary cross-Channel travel disruption that can sometimes result in Operation Stack.

■ **Operation Stack**

Operation Stack was introduced in the late 1980s and is the response currently used to manage extraordinary traffic congestion resulting from cross-Channel travel disruption. Historically it has typically been used for a few days a year and only for a day at a time; with, for example Stage 1 accommodating

up to about 2,100 lorries on the M20 junction 8-9 coast-bound carriageway. However, between January and August 2015 Operation Stack was implemented on a record 32 days. This included three instances each lasting five days and on two occasions both carriageways were closed to general traffic and used to hold over 5,000 lorries.

■ **Use of Manston Airport**

Manston is currently unused for aircraft and offers a large area of hard runway upon which Port of Dover traffic can be parked.

The Government has an agreement in place with the owners to make this site temporarily available as part of Operation Stack, but recognises that it is not ideally located to serve Eurotunnel and cannot provide more than short-term relief to traffic congestion.

Each of these measures helps address the growing pressure on our road network, but we need to do more to ensure that an effective solution is developed to reduce traffic congestion and keep traffic flowing smoothly on the motorways and roads of Kent.

The map shows the main road network in Kent, the cross-Channel ports and the location of the current traffic management response measures.



Current and future lorry parking

Many communities and businesses in Kent are adversely affected by lorries that do not currently use lorry parks, often because of a lack of available spaces. Some lorries park illegally and action can be taken by the appropriate authorities. Others simply park inappropriately, causing problems and inconvenience to communities and road users. Kent County Council studies have found that there are up to 900 illegally or inappropriately parked lorries each night within the county.

With the growth of cross-Channel lorry traffic and the increasing use of delivery services in Kent, the need for additional lorry parking becomes greater. Some commercial lorry park operators and promoters are seeking to address this issue by applying to extend existing lorry parks or create new ones. It is unclear at this time whether collectively they will be able to provide sufficient parking spaces to meet Kent's current and future lorry parking needs.

We are considering whether our proposed lorry holding area solution could also provide everyday 24-hour parking for lorries. This would mean that lorry holding area facilities would be in constant use. In contrast, if the purpose of our lorry holding area solution was just to avoid the more exceptional levels or durations of congestion, then use would only be occasional. However, use of lorry holding area facilities for everyday 24-hour lorry parking would help reduce the problem of illegal or inappropriate lorry parking in Kent.

Border control facilities for lorries

The Government is committed to a frictionless border following the exit from the European Union. This could involve the use of technology coupled with some checking away from the border, and we are exploring how border facilities might be incorporated into a lorry holding area solution should there be a requirement. The extent of any requirement will depend on the outcome of Future Economic Partnership negotiations with the European Union, but we are aware that some lorry parks in Kent already provide a limited range of border facilities to support cross-Channel lorry travel.

The case for action

Without intervention, existing and likely future issues will continue to put pressure on motorways and roads in Kent. Forecast increases in general and lorry related traffic levels mean that doing nothing is not an option, so a permanent solution is required.

Forecasts tell us that traffic is expected to increase on the M20/A20 and M2/A2. The number of lorries travelling to and from the Kent ports is also expected to increase significantly. Since severe weather, equipment failure and other disruptive events can never be completely avoided, the risk is that Operation Stack will be implemented more frequently if action is not taken. Without action, the safety and journey time reliability of everybody using the motorways, major and local roads in Kent is likely to be affected.



The Government, Highways England and many regional stakeholders agree that Operation Stack (as currently used) should be the last resort. We also recognise that none of the existing traffic management measures satisfactorily address the problems that arise when extraordinary cross-Channel travel disruption occurs.

There is a strong and urgent case for an alternative approach to traffic management. In the past a large range of potential approaches have been suggested, including the transfer of large quantities of freight to other modes of transport and the use of mobile phone applications (apps) to better manage lorry movements.

However, none of the suggestions involving other modes of transport are supported by robust evidence that offers the taxpayer value for money. Neither are they deliverable in an acceptable timeframe, operationally efficient or easily enforceable.

The use of technology including mobile phone apps to inform lorry drivers about traffic congestion has an important part to play in any solution. However, it is not a standalone solution because while an app can warn lorry drivers about congestion, it does not remove the need for additional lorry holding capacity for those already heading towards the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.

Because of this, the Government has instructed Highways England to explore on-road and off-road solutions (or a combination of each) that would avoid the need to activate Operation Stack in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

On-road and off-road solutions

A lorry holding area solution could comprise one or more lorry holding areas at on or off road locations. It may also be possible to provide a combination of on-road and off-road locations to solve the issues.

By on-road, we mean any solution that would make use of our roads, either as they currently exist or in a modified form. For example, we could:

- Make use of existing roads as Operation Stack does currently.
- Make more use of land within the existing highway boundary by converting the hard shoulder into an additional lane or space solely for the use of lorries.
- Acquire land adjacent to the road in order to widen the road and create additional lanes or space only for lorries to use.

In each case, lorries would be held on the road in question and separated from other traffic by a barrier until the period of disruption improves. At the same time, measures would be in place to ensure that all other traffic could remain on the road to complete their journeys.

By off-road, we mean any solution that would require the acquisition of land to build a completely separate area for lorries.

This would mean:

- Lorries would have to leave the road to enter the lorry holding area and later re-join the road.
- The lorry holding area would have to be located in an area that allows lorries easy access and use of a site. This could require using an existing junction or building a new one.

Any off-road solution would need to avoid disrupting other road users, so that all other traffic could remain on the road to complete their journeys unhindered.



The table below (and on page 12) contain what we believe to be the main benefits and effects of on-road and/or off-road lorry holding areas. They would apply equally to a combination of on-road and off-road solutions.

On-road solution

Any on-road solution would be subject to the following benefits and disadvantages:

Benefits	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Will hold enough lorries to avoid most activations of Operation Stack. ■ Lorries can be held in one or more locations to ensure flexible responses to disruption. ■ Could provide all users with additional road capacity at other times, helping avoid congestion, improve journey time reliability and offset any future increase in traffic. ■ Could be less visually intrusive than constructing one or more off-road lorry holding areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Could require large areas of land, with potential impact on some communities, businesses and the environment/landscape. ■ There are no existing welfare facilities for lorry drivers, such as toilets, water and waste bins. ■ Difficult to provide additional facilities to support everyday 24-hour lorry parking, if required. ■ Difficult to provide border control facilities for lorry checks, if required. ■ Difficult to ensure that lorry drivers are able to take legally required rest breaks, meaning drivers may drive illegally or when tired. ■ May require extensive works to existing bridges or roads, causing disruption to motorways, major and local roads. ■ Not necessarily quicker to construct than an off-road solution.

Off-road solution

Any off-road solution would be subject to the following benefits and disadvantages:

Benefits	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Would hold enough lorries to avoid most activations of Operation Stack. ■ Lorries could be held in one or more locations to ensure sufficient resilience to disruption. ■ Could provide sufficient basic welfare facilities for lorry drivers, such as toilets, water and waste bins. ■ Could provide any necessary additional facilities to support everyday 24-hour lorry parking, if required. ■ Could provide border control facilities, if required. ■ Lorry drivers can take their legally required rest breaks meaning drivers have no reason to drive illegally or when tired. ■ Construction works are less likely to disrupt motorways, major and local roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Could require large areas of land, with potential impact on some communities, businesses and the environment/ landscape. ■ Could require new motorway or major road junctions or improvements to existing junctions. ■ If everyday 24-hour lorry parking is provided, may restrict the ability or willingness of other organisations to provide alternative lorry parking facilities. ■ If everyday 24-hour lorry parking or border control facilities are provided, the site will be in use every day, thereby increasing its potential impact on the road network and on nearby land, businesses and people.

How we will develop a permanent solution

There are a number of requirements that are likely to apply to any emerging solutions selected for further investigation, including:

- Progression through a comprehensive planning process that would include extensive public consultation and full environmental impact assessment.
- Provision of a solution that is safe to operate and maintain.
- Understanding of existing and forecast numbers of lorries crossing the Channel and delivering within Kent in order to ensure an appropriate number of lorry spaces can be provided at lorry holding area facilities.
- Avoiding restricting the commercial sector from bringing forward plans for additional lorry parking and/or border control facilities. We will discuss additional lorry parking options with commercial operators and other key interested parties.
- Understanding the needs of the haulage industry and ports.
- Being operationally resilient so that we can manage a range of disruption issues.
- Achieving compliance with Highways England strategic aims to deliver economic growth, provide a safe, serviceable and accessible network, provide better customer service, more reliable journey times, and an improved environment.



Temporary measures

We are developing temporary traffic management measures for use on the M20 in the event of congestion caused by cross-Channel travel disruption, while we explore a longer-term permanent solution that must follow a formal planning process.

The temporary measures will be available by March 2019. Unlike Operation Stack, the temporary measures will ensure that the M20 remains open to traffic in both directions while managing lorry traffic heading towards the ports.

The temporary measures will only be used if necessary, as deployment will affect the capacity of the M20 between junction 8 and junction 9 for non-freight traffic. A lower speed limit will be required for safety reasons, but the planned temporary measures will ensure that non-freight traffic continues to flow. This means that road users can expect more reliable journey times compared to if no action was taken, so few travellers should need to seek alternative routes.

Further information about the temporary measures can be found:

Online

www.highwaysengland.co.uk/kentlorryarea

Or email us

M20TemporarySolution@highwaysengland.co.uk

Next steps

We will analyse all responses received and publish a summary of the feedback in a public information exercise report.

This is just the first step in our process. If a scheme is progressed, we intend to consult all interested individuals and organisations on more detailed options and proposals as part of the formal planning process expected to commence during winter 2018-2019.

For more information please visit our website where you can also sign up for email alerts whenever the webpage is updated at

www.highwaysengland.co.uk/kentlorryarea

If you have any queries about this scheme please contact Highways England by calling

0300 123 5000

or email

kentlorryarea@highwaysengland.co.uk



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Highways England creative job number GDF18_0100

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Printed on paper from well-managed forests and other controlled sources when issued directly by Highways England.

Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ
Highways England Company Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363