

Kent County Council Lorry Parking Update

For a number of years Kent County Council (KCC) has been working to address the dual issues of inappropriate overnight lorry parking as well as the impact that Operation Stack has on the county when it is called. Initially a largescale (over 2,000 spaces) lorry park was considered however the cost of a facility on this scale was undeliverable in the short to medium term. More recently the County Council has been working to deliver a network of smallscale (300-500 spaces) lorry parks across the county over a number of years.

The objective of such a lorry park network would be to address the urgent need for more overnight lorry parking in the county. KCC has carried out work that shows that there is a need for more lorry parking space in Kent now, and it is estimated that lorry parking demand in the county will more than treble to 2060 showing that the need for additional capacity will only increase over time.

The lorry park network, along with the existing lorry parking provision in the county, would act as holding areas for Operation Stack when it is called as an alternative to closing the M20 coastbound between junctions 8 and 9.

In order for the lorry park network to function as described above, there are 2 further strands of work that KCC are taking forward with partners in parallel to developing the first of the lorry parking sites. These are firstly, work on how effective enforcement will be carried out to ensure the new lorry parking provision is used and minimise the inappropriate parking that takes place in the county, and secondly, work on motorway information systems that will direct HGV drivers to the lorry parks in the event of Operation Stack.

In terms of the enforcement workstream, KCC has worked closely with Ashford BC to understand the current HGV enforcement carried out and has established that the Borough Council is leading the way in its proactive enforcement of HGV parking particularly in industrial estates across the district. KCC has also recently granted Ashford BC permission to clamp vehicles at specific agreed locations following the submission of a detailed business case. As part of this enforcement element of the lorry parking project, KCC will work with other district and borough authorities to encourage and support increased HGV parking enforcement. The County Council will also seek to implement its own framework for assessing appropriate measures that can be put on the ground to help prevent inappropriate parking and will work with Kent Police who have indicated that they are willing to enforce provided there are lorry parks to move these vehicles on to.

We are engaging with the Highways Agency on potential intelligent information systems that could be appropriate for directing HGV drivers in the event of Operation Stack as well as investigating potential funding streams to deliver on this.

A report to KCC Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 17 September 2014 made recommendations on a preferred site for the delivery of the first in the network of lorry parks. The report explained the extensive work which started with a long list of 54 sites and the process to get to a shortlist of 3 sites. The report recommended that a site at Westenhanger off Junction 11 of the M20 be the first lorry park site to be developed. Cabinet Committee supported these recommendations following which the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport made his formal decision as per the report. This report can be found at: -

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/g5644/Public%20reports%20pack%2017th-Sep-2014%2010.00%20Environment%20Transport%20Cabinet%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Ann Carruthers
Head of Strategic Planning and Policy
Kent County Council