

**Report To:** Joint Transportation Board  
**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
**Report Title:** Lorry Parking Update – Clamping  
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| <b>Summary:</b> Report to update JTB on the lorry clamping project. |
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## **Background**

1. Ashford is the only borough in Kent that actively enforces the on street overnight parking of HGVs. Ashford has a particular problem with regard to overnight parking compared to other Local Authorities in Kent due to the tacographs on HGVs forcing drivers to stop at certain points, this generally being within the Ashford Borough after a trip across the Channel. Enforcement is now being taken to the next level and Ashford Borough Council has been successful in receiving authority from Kent County Council for a pilot period to clamp HGV's within the borough.
2. Some years ago the problem of HGVs parking overnight on two of the towns business parks the Orbital Park and Ashford Business Park at Sevington were identified, An overnight waiting ban was introduced prohibiting parking of HGVs of 5 ton and over between 8pm and 7am.
3. Preventing British registered vehicles from parking was very successful however preventing foreign registered vehicles from parking proved more difficult primarily because there is no reciprocal agreement with most European countries to supply Registered Keeper details.
4. To overcome this Ashford Borough Council employed a firm of Bailiffs (EPC) who operate in mainland Europe to assist in chasing outstanding fines. We also mounted several 'Clean Sweep' operations with EPC and Kent Police to target foreign registered HGVs who persistently evaded paying their parking fines. This was successful however not sustainable as whilst compliance with the parking restriction temporarily improved quite quickly the numbers illegally parking again increased.
5. Over recent years the problem has spread to other areas in the town in particular to other nearby business parks such as Henwood, Ellingham and Cobbs Wood. None of these areas are covered by an overnight waiting ban however there are 'no waiting at any time' restrictions in some areas. These are particularly ignored

within the Henwood estate meaning that enforcement action is necessary. In addition, there are a number of laybys across the Borough that are regularly used by HGVs for overnight parking. Some of these have restrictions and others don't.

### **The Clamping Project**

6. ABC has been working closely with KCC Highways to try and address this ongoing problem and KCC intend to facilitate the building of another lorry park on the M20 corridor.
7. Parking Services regularly visit and carry out enforcement in Orbital Park, Sevington and Henwood. They also monitor the availability of space at the Ashford Lorry Park and on most occasions there is capacity to take all of the vehicles we find parking in contravention of the overnight waiting ban.
8. During the discussions with KCC it was decided that the only way to fully address the problem of illegally parked HGVs in areas where all other efforts such as education, the introduction of specific parking restrictions and active enforcement have failed, was to clamp persistent offending vehicles.
9. Enforcement protocols have now been agreed with KCC, as was a policy to decide what action should be taken when an HGV parking problem was identified anywhere in the county. This is a measured approach including exploring all other options before a borough or district council can request clamping. One of the concerns of implementing a blanket and rigidly enforced prohibition of HGV parking in business parks was that the problem could be displaced into residential areas.
10. It has been agreed that ABC will pilot a six month clamping scheme and the outcomes will be reviewed. During this six month period ABC Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) will be working with an accredited clamping company (a partner of EPC) and will be clamping according to the agreed protocols.
11. We have been working closely with our partners with EPC and the Kent Police Specialist Goods Vehicle Department to put together a launch operation where the Civil Enforcement Team will be working alongside a team of our multi lingual bailiffs (EPC) and Kent Police. Both have agreed to support this operation. This initial operation will not be to clamp vehicles but to advise drivers of the imminent clamping operation direct them to the Ashford Truck Stop and inform them of alternative truck stops along the M20 corridor. We will be distributing warning notices in several languages to the drivers.

## **Current position**

12. A date for the launch and education has been agreed. We are also working with the Ashford Truck Stop to ensure availability of space for HGV's during this pilot. The problem is at its worst at the weekend so our operation is likely to have a greater focus at this time.
13. After the initial educational operation our CEOs will be working closely with the clamping company to enforce on a regular basis.

## **Risks**

14. It should be noted that a number of concerns relevant to HGV's relate to anti-social behaviour, littering and noise. The proactive approach being taken will assist with moving those HGV's that are illegally parked into the Lorry Parks; however, it will not have any impact on those that are legally parked. All areas of restrictions will be reviewed as part of this pilot and reported within the findings at the end of the 6 months. The waste facilities required for each area will also be identified and reviewed. As well as issuing warning notices to drivers who are illegally parked. The CEOs will also be distributing warning notices in multiple languages to all HGVs parked on the highway in areas affected by the waste they leave behind warning them that littering is a Criminal offence and advising them to dispose of their waste properly or to take it away with them.
15. The risk of HGV's moving to other areas, such as residential, during this pilot is also going to be monitored. The risk of displacement is high but cannot be identified until the pilot is underway.
16. This is a pilot period that will be positive in increasing compliance but is also likely to identify further areas for concern. A six month period provides time to identify these areas and contain them to be addressed at the review stage.
17. The data collected will also provide a more accurate and very useful picture for the necessity of a further Lorry park on the M20 corridor.

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