

HGV Parking Update.

To: **Ashford Joint Transportation Board – 14th June 2016**

By: **Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager**

Classification:

Ward: **Across the District – Various**

Summary:

An update on continuing overnight HGV parking enforcement and clamping of persistent offending HGVs in Ashford.

1.0 Background

- 1.1. The HGV clamping trial was launched on Sunday 12 April 2015 and ran until Sunday 11 October 2015 in partnership between Kent County Council (KCC) and Ashford Borough Council (ABC). Multi agency teams including Kent Police and multi lingual collection agents carried out enforcement patrols at various times during the trial.
- 1.2. The locations where clamping was carried out were The Orbital Park, Sevington Business Park and Henwood Business Park in Ashford.
- 1.3. The Orbital Park and Sevington Business Parks have been subject to an overnight HGV parking ban since 2003.
- 1.4. The purpose of the trial was to ascertain if clamping persistent offending HGVs was an effective method of achieving compliance with long standing HGV parking restrictions. Also to gather information to assist in the formulation of a Countywide protocol.
- 1.5. During the trial the effect and extent of associated littering and anti-social behaviour problems were also investigated.

2.0 Update on clamping and enforcement operations..

- 2.1 Since the conclusion of the trial our Civil Enforcement Officers have continued to conduct regular enforcement operations in the three-targeted areas of The Orbital Park and Ashford Business Park Sevington and Henwood Business Park in Ashford. We have also continued to conduct joint operations with the Police our European Collection Agents (EPC) and a newly appointed clamping operative London Parking Solutions (LPS). Operations conducted in April 2016 resulted in a further 4 HGVs being clamped at the Orbital Park and the Ashford Business Park Sevington.

- 2.2 The numbers of HGVs parking regularly at the two locations where there is an overnight waiting ban has reduced significantly and is currently at a manageable level for the enforcement team.
- 2.3 The new clamping operative, LPS have the ability to release and collect the £40 release fee as well as the reduced rate payment for the PCN issued when the vehicle is clamped. This is all we are legally able to collect unless there is a change in legislation. LPS are also able to obtain registered keeper details when removing the clamp and taking payment which will allow us to recover the remaining unpaid PCN payments.
- 2.4 The percentage of PCNs paid continues to be rise and is now 30% higher than at the start of the clamping trial. Collection rates at present are 47% of those issued.
- 2.5 Individual complaints of HGVs parking in residential areas continue to be investigated and no trend towards parking in any residential area has been observed.
- 2.6 Parking on private roads and on private land within industrial estates is observed in various locations however we have not received any complaints directly from landowners about this problem.
- 2.7 Anti-social behaviour and littering has reduced at the target locations due to the reduced HGV parking. This continues to be a problem where there are large numbers of HGVs parking.
- 2.8 We will be targetting all haulage operators with warning letters regarding both inappropriate parking and anti-social behaviour in particular those in mainland Europe. Our European Collection agents EPC have an extensive list of contact addresses so will be assisting us with this in addition to providing the translations for warning notices we will be issuing to drivers in a continuing effort to educate.
- 2.9 Kent Police as part of operation Kindle are continuing to enforce dangerous overnight HGV parking on major roads and have trained dedicated local officers to issue graduated Fixed Penalty Notices to assist in this continuing process. However their capability is limited and the long term solution is still an increased provision of off road HGV parking.
- 2.10 During June, KCC will be conducting surveys across the county on identified HGV parking locations to ascertain accurate numbers to assist in the formulation of future solutions. We have advised of the areas of concern within the borough. We continue to work closely with KCC in order to alleviate the problems in isolated areas and to work towards solutions borough wide. Some areas are likely to require physical changes to the highway to deliver on this.

3.0 Individual Areas

- 3.1 **Wotton Road and Ellingham Industrial Estate** – this area was identified as a concern with residents, businesses and by the enforcement team. Consultation has now taken place on these areas that includes a proposed overnight HGV ban Monday to Friday and all weekend. The results of the consultation on the overnight ban, along with the proposed restrictions to support the free flow of the HGV's during operational hours, is on this evenings agenda to be considered by the Joint Transportation Board.
- 3.2 **Hothfield Laybys** – Officers from KCC and ABC met with members and local residents in March 2016 to understand the concerns. Since this meeting officers have been working on a number of proposals that would result in physical changes to layouts, access and enforcement. These proposals are currently being costed with a view to a further meeting to take place at the end of June 2016. Further updates will be provided to the JTB in September.

4.0 Available off road HGV parking.

- 4.1 Off road parking is very limited in the borough. The only dedicated off road HGV parking is at the Ashford International Truck stop at Sevington. A redesign of the site has increased capacity from 290 spaces to 325 spaces. Further planned redesigns will increase the capacity to 390. However, some of the redesign will increase capacity for their best and most responsible customer Warberer.
- 4.2 During the first few months of 2016 it was noted that on most nights there was some availability at the Ashford International Truck Stop however over recent weeks (the latter weeks in May) this capacity has started to disappear and the truck stop as in 2015 is now frequently full.
- 4.3 The land in Beaver Lane Ashford that was nightly accommodating up to 40 HGVs has since been granted retrospective planning permission to operate as a trailer transfer site. Operating as an overnight truck stop is now specifically prohibited. This is likely to increase pressure on on-street overnight HGV parking in the borough and is something we will monitor.

5.0 The Future

- 5.1 We are working with KCC to increase the areas within the borough for clamping to ensure we can act in all areas when necessary.
- 5.2 The Council's new Local Plan will be considered by the Cabinet meeting on the 9th June and includes a specific policy for the Waterbrook site that proposes the expansion of the current lorry park on site to 600 spaces. The new Local Plan will go out for an 8 week period of public consultation following the Cabinet meeting.

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