

## RHA Briefing Note

# Kent needs a contingency site

8 April 2022

It is clear to the RHA that an alternative to Operation Brock is needed.

When operational disruption occurs to cross-channel traffic the people of Kent, the drivers of lorries and the companies moving goods in Kent and across the Dover straits face massive disruption. For the drivers the situation is particularly bad, they have no toilet facilities and no way to take rest as the law and road safety demands.

We ask that the Department for Transport, BEIS, Number 10, Kent County Council, the police and National Highways urgently work with industry on a specification for a "Channel Contingency Site" and to identify viable locations and options.

The M20 - Dover Straits route is Great Britain's most important corridor for international road freight. It accounts for around 3.6 million lorry movements per year, 55% of the market. It is the main corridor for fresh food to move between the UK and continental Europe and is the most important route for time sensitive manufacturing components.

The effective management of this route is of strategic national importance. It is not acceptable that the burden of disruption falls so heavily on the authorities and people in Kent. When operational disruptions to cross-channel traffic occur, there needs to be nationally provided infrastructure in place and a collective understanding of both the time and systems needed to recover.

For this reason, the RHA believes there needs to be a permanent contingency site for handling lorries adjacent to the M20. A site designed for contingency use when there is disruption crossing the channel, used and managed by the police and highway authorities to control and direct the flow of lorries and to provide rest, food and hygiene facilities for drivers while held.

Permanent communication and control infrastructure would be available on the site, allowing for more efficient, safer control of the lorry flow. It could be used for tunnel and/or ferry disruptions to avoid the now routine on road holding of lorries. Such a site could also be used to provide priority for perishable and hazardous products when managing disruptions.

Everyone is doing their best, working very hard, to keep the county and trade moving safely. But it is not good enough, and we cannot keep doing this every time operational disruption occurs. It is unfair on the people of Kent, unfair for lorry drivers, expensive and time consuming for the police and is damaging the economy and reputation of the UK.

It is time to take decisive action and deal with this long-term problem.

**RHA Policy**

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