

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION TO REPORT TO CABINET 19TH JANUARY 2016.

REPORT REFERENCE: C/15/70

SUBJECT: Public Consultation: Managing Freight Vehicles Through Kent

SUMMARY

The main report in paragraph 2.2 says that feedback from the Community Overview Committee, who met on 4th January, and other key stakeholders will be available to the Cabinet in a supplementary report prior to the meeting. This report sets out that feedback and summarises with slightly amended recommendations relating to report C/15/70.

Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendations of the Community Overview Committee and all the stakeholder views set out below.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

The Community Overview Committee resolved:

- 1. That Stanford West is the preferred site of this Committee because:-**
 - a) They do not want to see any permanent buildings on the chosen site and the Stanford West site offers opportunity to maximise the use of STOP 24 facilities;**
 - b) The access issues to existing facilities for freight vehicles at STOP 24 are preferred;**
 - c) There is direct access on/off the M20 for this site;**
 - d) The J11 North site is unsuitable as it has no link to STOP 24, more new buildings will be needed, it does not have direct motorway access and it is too close to the North Downs AONB.**

- 2. That the following is also taken into consideration with this preferred site:-**
 - a) That refrigerated lorries are parked in an area set aside away from any residential properties;**
 - b) That the number of buildings on site are kept to a minimum so as to reduce visual impact in the countryside;**
 - c) That developers are sympathetic to screening the site with the correct landscaping;**

d) That security of the site is high priority and must be in place when the site opens and when it is not in use. An on-site presence is required; and

e) That waste facilities are provided on site.

TOWN COUNCILS

The Leader of Shepway District Council and Members of the Cabinet invited key members of Hythe, Hawkinge and Folkestone Town Council's to meet with them on 22 December 2015 to hear their views in respect of the Highways England Consultation – Managing Freight Through Kent. The three town councils' views on the proposed lorry area are set out below.

Hythe Town Council met on the 17th December 2015 and resolved that:

- 1 This council supports Shepway District Council in its proposal to site the lorry park at Stanford West.
- 2 This council strongly opposes the location at Stanford East.

Folkestone Town Council's Planning Committee met on the 7th January 2016 and the following comments were made:

- The Committee is in favour of the Motorway West Junction option because of the useful facilities at Stop 24 and less disruption to Stone Street.
- The lorry park should be manned and policed 24 hours a day.
- Waste and toilet facilities must be controlled.
- Refrigerated lorries should be segregated on the park furthest away from residents.
- Concern regarding the potential for flooding.

Folkestone Town Council meeting is on the 14th January and their position will be reported to Cabinet on the 19th.

New Romney Town Council met on 11th January and decided that Stanford West and Alternative 4 should be supported. In addition they supported the use of Traffic Orders to allow for additional enforcement activities to take place.

Hawkinge Town Council met on 13th January 2016 and confirmed their support for Stanford West and Alternative 3.

PARISH COUNCILS

The Leader and senior officers held a meeting with five parish councils on 9th December in order to raise awareness and to share information ahead of the formal launch of the consultation. Senior officers also offered to attend local parish council meetings to hear local perspectives and views on the proposals.

Postling, Sellindge, Stanford and Stowting Parish Councils have all had meetings to consider Highway's England consultation but minutes of these meetings are not currently available.

Postling Parish Council met on the 16th January and it is understood that in principal the parish strongly oppose a lorry park north of the M20 but are generally supportive of an extension westward from STOP 24 for overnight lorry parking. The parish felt the circumstances of 2015 were exceptional and the proposal is a knee-jerk reaction to a problem partly caused by the UK Government and the requirement for Eurotunnel to sell its ferries which lowered capacity at a crucial time. The parish consider better IT systems and the use of sophisticated contraflows on the M20 are a better solution.

At the meeting of Sellindge Parish Council on 12th January the debate centred on the case not having been made by Highways England for a single large new lorry area and issues of air quality. While recognising the problems of indiscriminate lorry parking in the village it was suggested that smart technology, such as automatic number plate recognition, could be used to fine and enforce unauthorised parking and to control speed particularly through the village. A ban on HGVs using the A20 between junctions 10 to 11 was supported.

At the meeting of Stanford Parish Council on 13th January the debate centred on the lack of information on the range of potential sites that have been considered and rejected by HE in arriving at the two options. Insufficient information had been conveyed on the need for a single large site, and why the two areas were shortlisted. There was a high degree of support for the expansion to the west of STOP 24 for additional lorry parking capacity. An Option 3 appears to be supported by the Parish Council which includes a site off junction 11a for emergencies and TAP with 3,000 space capacity, with an additional 1,000 space parking capacity at STOP 24. The Parish Council will promote this option to HE.

At the meeting of Stowting Parish Council on 17th December residents from adjoining parishes were invited to attend and there was a lively question and answer session on the impacts of the lorry park.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Kent County Council's Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee met on 13th January 2015 and the published paper gives provisional support, subject to the environmental statement, to Highways England's proposal for a lorry park, with the preferred site being Stanford West.

The report also proposes that the lorry area operate as Alternative 3: General Disruption and Overnight Parking. Alternative 3 is supported in the report on the basis that this proposal in addition to emergency use in place of Operation Stack on the M20, will alleviate the Dover TAP queues at Euro Tunnel and address inappropriate overnight lorry parking.

The report notes that truck stop facilities are already provided at the STOP 24 services and therefore should not be replicated in the proposed permanent lorry area, thus minimising disturbance to local residents.

Finally the report recommends that the site should accommodate a minimum 3,600 HGVs so as to reduce the need to implement Operation Stack stages 1 and 2 (junctions 8 to 11 coast bound) in all but extreme circumstances.

The minutes of this meeting and the subsequent formal cabinet member decision are not yet available. However, it is understood that the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee agreed the recommendations set out above subject to revised text that clarifies the role of Dover TAP, reinforces the need for homeowners to be properly compensated and refers to the need for other freight management measures.

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Leader of Dover District Council in a letter to the Leader of Shepway District Council makes a number of points that are summarised below:-

- Dover supports the provision of a permanent lorry area to reduce or remove the need for freight traffic to be queued on the M20 and consider that the Stanford West site is by far the best option of the two sites being considered.
- He shares Shepway's proposed support for Alternative 3 as this will maximise facilities for drivers using the proposed lorry park whilst avoiding the replication of facilities already commercially available within the adjacent STOP 24 service area.
- While more effective management of freight traffic could reduce the frequency of Dover TAP, Dover still see TAP as part of the overall package of traffic management measures and will continue to lobby most strongly for its retention.
- The concerns voiced by Shepway regarding the impact of TAP on traffic circulation locally are recognised but it has brought major benefits to Dover Town Centre in terms of reducing congestion and impacts on the environment, residents, business and the local economy.
- Dover considers most strongly that the proposed lorry area should support not replace Dover TAP and should be part of a package of measures to improve resilience including improved VMS signage across the country and investment in the A2 corridor.
- Dover do recognise the need to introduce variable speed controls and that Dover TAP is only implemented when the arrival rate of goods vehicles exceeds the capacity of the port to process the freight vehicles prior to embarkation.

- Measures need to be put in place so that the length of the queue is controlled to such an extent that traffic wishing to use the A260 junction and ideally that also using the B2011 junction are never affected.
- The use of CCTV, the introduction of box junctions and the proposed permanent lorry area will support such measures by providing the buffer storage area for HGVs that is currently lacking.
- Dover TAP should therefore be retained within the overall package of traffic management measures on the presumption that technical solutions can be found to ensure its effective management.
- The Leader of Dover District Council concludes that he trusts that these points can now be made clear in Shepway's response to the consultation.

Cabinet may wish to consider a minor amendment to the original recommendations relating to TAP as set out in the main report and captured in the revised recommendations at the end of this supplementary report. Any reduced version of TAP should invest in improved information communications technology and have the twin objectives of keeping local roads open in and around Shepway and in preventing town centre congestion and adverse environmental impacts in Dover town centre.

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet agreed their response on the 14th January as follows:

- Welcome the proposal to provide a permanent lorry parking area adjacent to the M20 to tackle the problems caused by Operation Stack and help to meet the need for overnight lorry parking;
- Consider that the detailed evaluation of the site locations is a matter primarily for Shepway District Council but considers that in operational terms option 1, with its direct access to the M20, is likely to be the better option; and
- Support the use of the site for alternative 3 which is for the site to operate as an emergency lorry holding area (with free provision for Operation Stack and Dover TAP / Eurotunnel excess traffic) but with additional chargeable basic overnight parking all year round.

SHEPWAY BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

Cllr Collier, Cabinet Member for the District Economy invited the Shepway Business Advisory Board to view the exhibition at the Civic Centre on the 5th January.

Five members attended and there was general support for Stanford West as it would minimise congestion on local roads. The Board is due to meet formally on Thursday 21st January with a single item agenda on the lorry park options. The Board collectively will decide on its position and a response will be submitted. The Board's response to an earlier presentation and their subsequent letter to the Prime Minister indicated a desire for a solution that would minimise congestion on local roads and minimise the impact on current private sector lorry park operators in the district. Individual businesses have also been encouraged to submit responses too.

FREIGHT ASSOCIATIONS

The Road Haulage Association has advised officers that it supports the principle of an off road solution with parking made available to avoid shunting compromising rest periods. They support direct access on and off the M20 close to exit points from the UK. The Association is also supportive of Alternative 4 in terms of the operation and management of the lorry area because of the opportunity to provide improved facilities for lorry drivers, although the association did acknowledge that improved facilities could be provided at STOP 24.

The Freight Haulage Association has also discussed their views with officers. They are encouraging more joint working between HE with European Freight Associations to better understand driver behaviour and perspectives on the matter. They are also pressing the UK Government for more to be done with the French authorities on the root causes of Stack. In terms of the site, it considers that security and good facilities, such as site wide wi-fi to aid communications, are essential elements of a new lorry area.

DOVER HARBOUR BOARD

Dover Harbour Board shared their views with officers on the 14th January and highlighted their preference for an on highway solution for Stack. However, of the two sites they support Stanford West because of its direct on / off access to the M20. They also support Alternative 1 for emergency use only and are acutely concerned about commercial matters relating to the investment potentially distorting private sector activity if anything other than emergency use is agreed. Dover TAP is strongly supported with an appreciation of the benefits it brings to Dover town centre although they also recognise the associated problems to movement flows when the 'tail' gets too long. An additional 220 space Port Buffer Zone has been created recently to provide additional holding capacity to ease some pressure on the M/A20.

EUROTUNNEL

Eurotunnel have advised officers that it is supportive of the principles of a lorry park close to their facility and recognises the difficulties faced locally with inappropriate lorry parking. It reports that freight traffic through the facility has reached its highest level since 2007 at 1.5m freight vehicles this year, and its priority is ensuring that lorry flow is continuous with minimal disruption caused on the M20. An additional 230 lorry holding spaces on the approach to a new freight check-in terminal has been built which is due to open on the 8th February offering some modest relief to traffic holding capacity off the M20.

Its overall preference is for a managed motorway solution with a widened motorway with traffic held in the direction of travel. However the company recognise that a lorry area is likely to be built and while not stating a preference for a particular site, it does appear to be supportive of direct access to a facility on and off the M20.

In its view site management is critically important with lorries being processed in the order of arrival and parked lorries kept separate from lorries held in Operation Stack. They highlight that access to the site needs very careful management to prevent upstream problems back on the M20 which could potentially cause problems at junction 10.

Additionally Eurotunnel is supportive of reducing the 'tail' of Dover TAP to remove local congestion and strategically supports the upgrade of the A2/M2 with additional HGV holding capacity for the Port in Dover as a new Lower Thames Crossing is considered.

KENT POLICE AND KENT FIRE AND RESCUE

Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue are discussing the consultation document with council officers at a meeting on Friday 15th January and any key points arising will be reported verbally to Cabinet.

THE KENT DOWNS AONB UNIT

The Kent Downs AONB Executive Committee met on 14th January to consider its formal response to the consultation. In summary it's consultation response when finalised will be based on the following points:-

- Object in principle to a lorry park on either site and recommend that alternative solutions are sought.
- Notwithstanding the in principle objection, that the Executive puts forward the Stanford West site as the site which would have less impact on the AONB in the event of a lorry park being taken forward.
- Should the Stanford West site be taken forward, then the Executive supports the use of the southern part of this site for overnight lorry parking subject to land levels being lowered and a carefully chosen, restricted and landscaped part of the site being used to avoid the need for Dover TAP.
- Alternative 3 potentially forms the basis of the most suitable management of the site subject to it being able to accommodate a version of Dover TAP that safeguards Dover Town Centre without having an adverse impact on the AONB on the A20 approach above Dover.

REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To receive and note report C/15/70.**
- 2. To note the content of the public consultation.**
- 3. To make the following responses to the public consultation on the basis of the content of this report:-**
 - a. That Shepway District Council strongly supports Stanford West as the only feasible option presented by HE for providing a lorry area to alleviate the problems resulting from Operation Stack.**
 - b. That Shepway District Council objects in the strongest possible terms to the Junction 11 North option.**
 - c. That Shepway District Council expects HE to have investigated all credible options and to provide clear evidence for other sites being rejected.**
 - d. That subject to further details, Alternative 3 forms the basis for the most appropriate operation and management of a lorry area at Stanford West as unlike Alternatives 1 and 2 it potentially includes provision for overnight lorry parking and provides for a pre Dover TAP holding area.**
 - e. Alternative 4 is not supported as it involves an unnecessary new Truckstop that has not been justified, would duplicate the existing STOP 24 facilities and would be likely to have significant environmental and traffic management impacts.**
 - f. That Highways England progress a public sector/private sector partnership solution that involves an expansion of overnight lorry parking on the south side of the M20 at STOP 24 services as an integral part of the Stanford West option.**
 - g. That the lorry area must provide not only a permanent solution to Operation Stack, but also capacity for different management of Dover TAP allowing for a shorter tail at Dover and free flowing local traffic.**
 - h. That the selected site be the subject of a full environmental impact assessment, prior to the final decision to proceed being taken. Shepway District Council should be consulted on the scope of the EIA.**

- i. That the Council should make representations to Highways England and the Department for Transport requesting them to deal swiftly, fairly and transparently with regard to any issues of compensation to local homes and businesses affected.**
 - j. That Highways England consult as soon as practicable on the introduction of new information technology communications that would be deployed alongside the introduction of a new lorry area to efficiently manage HGV and local traffic on the M20 and the local road network throughout Kent. Improved information technology should also be introduced on the national strategic road network to more effectively manage HGV movements and avoid bottlenecks occurring on the M20 in Kent.**
- 4. That the Leader of the Council incorporates the above recommendations and the key contents of this report in a formal letter of representation to Highways England, prior to the consultation deadline. This representation will also include a Council response to Highways England's questionnaire which is attached as Appendix B to this report.**
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