

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

07 March 2017

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Recommendation to Cabinet – Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 KCC DRAFT FREIGHT ACTION PLAN FOR KENT

Kent County Council has produced a consultation draft Freight Action Plan for Kent that sets out 5 specific actions on how KCC and partners plan to reduce the impact that road freight can have on local communities in Kent. They are seeking views via a questionnaire on the draft document, by 12 March 2017. The Freight Action Plan (FAP) acts as a ‘daughter’ document to the KCC Local Transport Plan 4.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The current consultation draft seeks to build on the achievements of the previous Freight Action Plan (2012 to 2016) and address the impacts road freight has on the County’s roads and communities.

1.1.2 Key achievements to date include:

- Lobbying government to achieve £250 million of funding for a permanent lorry holding area as a solution to Operation Stack
- Developing and adopting the Freight Journey Planner, a web based route planning tool to help HGV drivers and Transport Managers to plan their routes within Kent.
- Implementing a number of Lorry Watch schemes across the county to empower local residents to record the details of vehicles contravening restrictions.
- Continuing signing improvements (pictorial signage) across the county to help drivers whose first language is not English.
- Establishing Operation Kindle – collaborative working between KCC, Kent Police, Highways England and Medway/ Borough and District Councils to clamp and move on illegally or antisocially parked HGVs.

- Lobbying government to introduce a HGV Road User Levy – a taxing mechanism to levy financial contributions towards improvements and maintenance of the national road network.
- ECO Stars Scheme, pilot scheme (Swale Borough Council) to provide public recognition for operators who are actively taking steps to improve efficiency, reduce fuel consumption and reduce their impact on local air quality. The scheme provides support for operators in better fuel management and driver training.

1.2 Freight Action Plan for Kent Consultation Draft 2017

- 1.2.1 The Consultation Draft sets out the County's position with regards to freight, recognising the important role Kent plays in the distribution of goods between the continent and the UK. Freight vehicles account for up to 41% of all vehicles on the county's strategic road network via the M2/ M20 and the M20/A20 corridors. The document acknowledges the positive economic and social benefits that the industry brings both to Kent and to the UK as a whole but also recognises the negative impacts too. The purpose of the Freight Action Plan (FAP) is specifically to mitigate these negative impacts, a 'daughter' document to the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) document 'Delivering Growth Without Gridlock'.
- 1.2.2 The key stakeholders of freight transport within Kent include a wide range of bodies and organisations as the impacts of freight are varied. Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, along with Medway Council and the other Borough/ District Councils in Kent are key partners due to responsibilities to coordinate and manage air quality action plans and parking enforcement powers.
- 1.2.3 Other partners include Parish and Town Councils, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association, Eurotunnel, Port of Dover, Port of Ramsgate and Thamesport. The Department for Transport, Kent Policy and Highways England also have a role to play.
- 1.2.4 The five actions for the FAP are:
- 1) To tackle the problem of overnight lorry parking in Kent
 - 2) To find a long term solution to Operation Stack
 - 3) To effectively manage the routing of HGV traffic to ensure that such movements remain on the strategic road network for as much of its journey as possible
 - 4) To take steps to address problems caused by freight traffic to communities; and
 - 5) To ensure that KCC continues to make effective use of planning and development control powers to reduce the impact of freight traffic.

1.2.5 A proposed response to the consultation questionnaire is contained in **annex a** of this report. To summarise, the Officer level response is generally supportive of the actions set out in the FAP and in particular supports:

- Measures to increase the amount of parking for HGVs in lorry parks, particularly in West Kent where there is a lack of provision, and the continued use of cost effective deterrents such as on the spot fines.
- A multi-agency approach to managing the needs of local communities and the freight industry within this context.
- The proposal for a permanent lorry area to reduce/ remove the need for freight traffic to be queued on the M20 at the Stanford West site located to the west of M20 junction 11, i.e. a long term solution to Operation Stack.
- The creation and provision of opportunities for HGV drivers and Transport Managers to use the strategic road network as much as possible and every opportunity should be taken to ensure that the strategic road network is well maintained and improved as necessary to ensure the free flow of all traffic through the County.

1.2.6 In addition, the following comments are proposed:

- If the Lower Thames Crossing goes ahead, there will be significant implications for north/ south links between the M2 and the M20. These links, particularly the A227, A228, A229 will need to be improved as the bifurcation of traffic to and from the ports will result in increased traffic, particularly HGV movements along these routes.
- In the absence of a Lorry Watch scheme, there should be clear and easy mechanisms for reporting inappropriate HGV parking and other behaviours which are unacceptable.
- KCC should continue in their efforts to work with local planning authorities and developers to keep impacts of HGV movements to a minimum. For example, wherever possible, planning and development control powers can be used to ensure new developments that have large scale HGV movements are located next to the strategic road network.
- TMBC has 4 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) that are likely to be impacted by freight traffic along the M20. There is one AQMA on the M20 itself, and 3 along the A20, which runs adjacent. The amount of freight traffic in this area will be contributing to the levels of air pollution experienced by local residents. If some of the freight traffic is travelling down smaller roads not intended for such traffic in order to park overnight, then this is also likely to be having an adverse impact on local air quality. This will be particularly true for vehicles with engines left running in order to maintain power to on-board equipment such as refrigeration. The

appropriate provision of a lorry holding area for freight traffic away from sensitive receptors (e.g. homes, schools, care homes) will help to address this issue. A lorry watch scheme will also assist here, however it may also simply push the problem to another area.

1.2.7 Members are asked to **ENDORSE** the content of this report and the attached questionnaire as the Council's response to the Consultation.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health.