
Operation Stack Update Report

To: **ALL**
By: **Highway Manager**
Classification: **For Information**

Summary: This report provides an overview of Operation Stack.

1. Operation Stack was originally introduced as a method to safely hold goods vehicles unable to cross the channel due to industrial action. Originally the M20 from Ashford to Folkestone was used, however in time a phased approach was implemented; Phase 1 was M20 junction 11 -12, Phase 2 was M20 junction 8 – 9, and phase 3 was M20 junction 9 – 8.
2. In June this year, industrial action due to the sale of the My Ferry Link ferries caused a blockade of the Port of Calais. Operation Stack Phase 1, 2 & 3 were implemented and Phase 4 was created due to the increasing quantity of goods vehicles. Added to the problems caused at Calais, the Channel Tunnel was affected by migrants gaining access to the tunnel, causing increased delays through the tunnel, adding to the quantity of goods vehicles in Stack.
3. Due to the problems with capacity of the phases of Operation Stack, a review by Kent Police, Highways England (HE) & Kent County Council (KCC) agreed that new stages should be created; Stage 1 is M20 junction 8 – 9, Stage 2 extends to junction 11, Stage 3 is junction 9 – 8 and Stage 4 extends from junction 11.
4. During July, Stage 1 & 2 were regularly implemented and Stage 3 also implemented on occasion. Traffic congestion between Maidstone and Dover increased with increased pressure on HE, KCC & Kent Police to find a solution.
5. On 24th July a meeting was held at County Hall where HE was tasked with implementing a contraflow on M20 to relieve pressure on A20. HE concluded that a contraflow was not safe to be implemented. On 31st July the Roads Minister Andrew Jones MP chaired a further meeting at County Hall following which alternative locations for stacking goods vehicles were considered; Ebbsfleet Station, Manston Airport and Ramsgate Port.
6. Following discussions between DfT, HE, KCC & Kent Police, plans were developed for a trial to use Manston Airport as an alternative site to stack goods vehicles. If required, Operation Stack Stage 1 would be implemented followed by Stage 2. If Stage 3 probable, Operation Stack (Manston) would be initiated with Port of Dover goods vehicles diverted away from M20 to Manston and then along A256 to Dover, whilst Channel Tunnel freight would continue to use M20.

Recommendation: Kent County Council Highways, Transportation & Waste request that the Board note this information report.

Contact Officer;

Toby Howe – East Kent Highway Manager 03000 410219