

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

11 October 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

M20 Lorry Park Proposals Consultation Response

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Goodenough, Transport Planner, Spatial Policy; Cheryl parks, Project Manager, Local Plan
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All Wards

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The Committee is asked to note the report and the response to the consultation which was completed and submitted by officers under delegated authority on 23 September 2016.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all -
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough -

The delays and issues attributable to the introduction of Operation Stack and to inappropriate HGV parking have a clear effect on the local environment, population and businesses.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	11 October 2016

M20 Lorry Park Proposals Consultation Response

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides the Committee with the Council's response to the recent consultation on proposals for a lorry park on the M20 to alleviate congestion and other issues associated with the introduction of Operation Stack to manage volumes of freight traffic en route to both the Channel Ports and the Channel Tunnel and other problems associated with inappropriate HGV parking on and near the strategic road network.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Highways England held a consultation earlier in 2016 relating to site options for a significant lorry park to accommodate both freight traffic queuing to cross the English Channel during periods of adverse weather and/or industrial action, and also as a solution to alleviate the problems of inappropriate parking by HGVs and other freight vehicles on and near the strategic road network.
- 2.2 Historically, when there are problems at the Channel Ports, Operation Stack has often been introduced on the M20 motorway. Commentary on the Highways England website included below gives a clear and concise picture of the problem:
- 2.3 *"Over recent decades, the number of lorries crossing the English Channel has increased seven fold. Nearly 90% of all UK roll-on, roll-off international freight goes through the Strait of Dover and that puts 11,000 lorries per day on Kent's roads. There are projections that by 2025 the number of these lorries could double.*
- 2.4 *Usually the road network copes well. But unexpected events cause problems, as there is little slack in the system.*
- 2.5 *Extra parking has recently been provided at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel, but we expect that severe weather, security threats or industrial action will still mean that queues of lorries have to be held on the M20 using a procedure known as Operation Stack. This happened on 32 days in 2015.*
- 2.6 *Operation Stack can cause significant problems as it shuts the M20. Kent residents struggle to get to work or school, to medical appointments or to carry out everyday tasks. People from further afield get held up or delayed and businesses are affected."*
- 2.7 During the highlighted days in 2015 the problems became acute, with large sections of the motorway closed in both directions for several days, leading to significant problems on alternative routes for cars, issues with lorry drivers trying to avoid the queues by using local roads, and an inability for local people to go about their lives in a normal way.

- 2.8 The people of Maidstone, as well as surrounding villages and towns, experienced difficulties in commuting to and from work, getting children to and from school, or even simply travelling around the borough in the affected areas.
- 2.9 On 6 July 2016, following analysis of the previous consultation, the Secretary of State for Transport announced that a single lorry area would be provided at Stanford West off the M20 near Folkestone. The new lorry park will have space for around 3,600 HGVs, and will include 500 overnight parking spaces alongside welfare facilities. These would be supplemented when the site is in use as a holding area for cross-channel disruption to provide an alternative to the use of Operation Stack.
- 2.10 A further consultation was subsequently held, focussing on that decision and on finer details relating to the site itself, including access to and from the motorway. The consultation closed on 23 September 2016, and officers responded under delegated authority. The response is included for the Committee's information at Appendix A to this report.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the response provided.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 As set out in 3.1 above, the Committee is asked to note the consultation response provided at Appendix A.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 In advance of finalising the consultation response, the views of officers from other departments were sought to ensure as full a response as possible.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Officers will continue to monitor developments in regard to the proposed lorry park and will act, where appropriate, in response to any further consultations, keeping the Committee updated as part of the process.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The introduction of an alternative to Operation Stack will have a positive impact on Maidstone Borough. Keeping both the M20 and local roads free-flowing will have a beneficial impact on local residents and businesses allowing them to operate as normal. There may also be benefits in terms of a reduction in littering and other associated behaviours that could result from freight traffic being held in one place for long lengths of time, although this is perhaps only anecdotal.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	There are no risks associated with the proposals for Maidstone. The proposed area is outside the borough and its introduction will benefit the local area. Care will be needed to ensure that high overnight parking fees do not lead to avoidance by parking in other areas such as local roads and verges – an issue the lorry park is designed to alleviate.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Financial	There are no direct financial implications for Maidstone at this stage. An alternative to Operation Stack is likely to have an overall beneficial effect on the economic development of the Borough.	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	There are no staffing impacts in relation to the proposals. Officers will keep a watching brief on progress as part of their daily work.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Legal	There are no direct legal implications as a result of the consideration of this report	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid-Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs	The proposed lorry area if	Anna Collier,

Assessment	effective will alleviate the both the problems of Operation Stack and also issues with inappropriate HGV parking for all those living and working in Maidstone, as well as those commuting through the borough.	Policy & Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The proposed site is located in close proximity to the AONB and so careful design will be imperative. It will be important to ensure a balance between the clear benefits of the scheme and the protection of valued landscapes.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Community Safety	There is potential for a reduction in some of the anti-social behaviour issues relating to excessive littering and lack of toilet facilities when freight traffic is parked on local roads and verges.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Human Rights Act	There are no implications for the Human Rights Act.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Procurement	There are no procurement implications.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development & Mark Green, Section 151 Officer
Asset Management	There are no asset management implications.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: M20 Lorry Area Consultation Response – Maidstone Borough Council.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.