

BLIGHT ON COMMUNITIES

Action to tackle illegal lorry parking

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Small lorry parks are being considered to stop the blight of illegal and nuisance lorry parking. Kent County Council is carrying out a consultation until March 12.

Dover has hot spots for this problem such as Poulton Close, Coombe Valley Road and Channel View Road.

A KCC survey also found that Dover has had some of the highest frequencies of overnight parking, an average of 75 cases over three nights in June, the third highest out of Kent's 13 council areas.

And the demand for overnight parking is growing as the volume of cross-Channel freight increases.

The new parks would be run as a private and public partnership and KCC will work with the private sector to look at options.

Cllr Paul Carter, leader of Kent County Council said "We are taking action to find a solution. These illegally parked lorries are a blight on the county, anti-social and dangerous.

"I believe a series of intelligently placed small lorry parks would alleviate this problem.

"If we put these plans in place



More lorry parks are needed to stop problems of nuisance parking, says KCC

and drivers have somewhere safe and secure to park overnight, I am confident the police will support the plans by imposing tough enforcements on lorries parking in unauthorised places."

KCC's consultation covers overnight parking, preventing HGVs going along rural roads and minimising their impact on communities.

The Freight Action Plan sets out five actions for managing

freight through Kent. They are:

- To tackle the problem of overnight lorry parking in Kent.
- To find a long-term solution to Operation Stack.
- To effectively manage the routing of HGV traffic to ensure it stays on the main road network for as much of its journey as possible.
- To solve problems caused by trucks to communities.
- To ensure that KCC continues



Cllr Paul Carter - 'it's a blight on the county'



Cllr Matthew Balfour

to make effective use of development control powers to reduce the impact of freight traffic.

Cllr Matthew Balfour, KCC cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "The freight transport industry makes a significant contribution to Kent's economy and the UK as a whole.

"For that reason, it's important to recognise both the need for HGVs to use the highway network and the positive economic benefits this brings.

"We must, however, ensure that residents, businesses, and visitors to Kent are not disadvantaged by the fact we are the gateway to Europe.

"I would encourage everyone to read the consultation and take part."

TAKING THE INITIATIVE



Cllr Lesley Anne Burke with Dover MP Charlie Elphicke next to a parked lorry in St Radigund's

KCC says it has already come up with a number of initiatives to deal with lorry problems.

This includes lobbying government to achieve £250 million of funding for a permanent holding area as a solution to Operation Stack.

Another is developing and adopting the freight journey planner, a route planner to help HGV drivers plan their routes within Kent.

It has implemented a number of Lorry Watch schemes across the county so that residents can record details of vehicles breaking restrictions.

There are also sign improvements across the county including pictorial ones to help foreign drivers whose English is limited.

Operation Kindle has been set up, in which KCC works with police, Highways England and district, borough and unitary councils to clamp or move on illegally or anti-socially parked HGVs.

So far this has resulted in

just under 500 fixed penalty notices issued and over 2,000 HGVs being moved on.

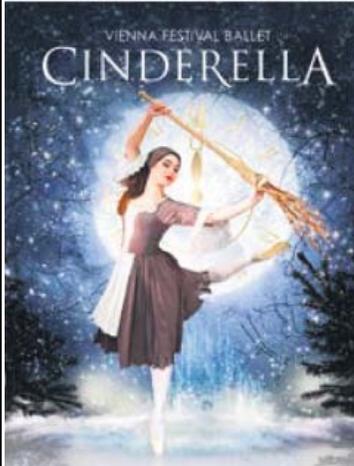
KCC has lobbied government to introduce an HGV road user levy to ensure all truck users help pay for maintenance of the national road network.

Last November Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke and Dover town councillor Lesley-Ann Burke, for the St Radigund's ward, called on traffic wardens to step in to find nuisance drivers.

Only police at present can deal with vehicles parked dangerously or in front of homes and businesses. But, the two argued, officers tackling serious crime have to treat this problem as low priority.

Visit kent.gov.uk/freightactionplan to download a draft copy of the Freight Action Plan and fill in the online questionnaire.

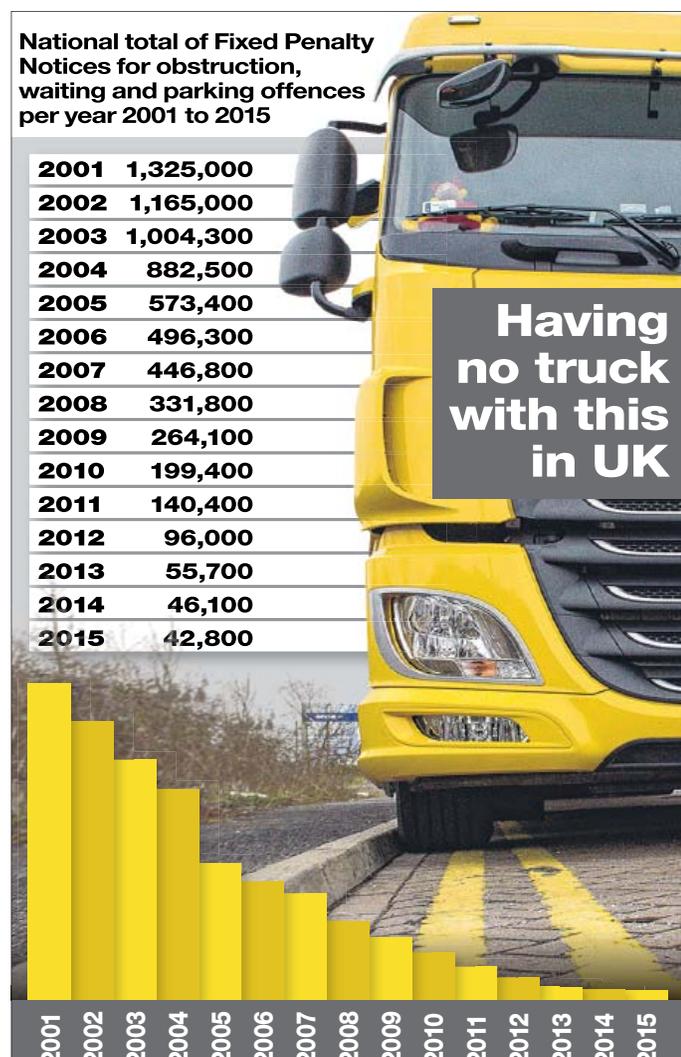
Consultation responses will be used to help produce the final version of the Freight Action Plan.



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Results of snap survey

On average 10,800 HGVs cross the Strait of Dover each day, 5,400 in each direction. The Port of Dover is the busiest ferry port in Europe. It handles 13 million passengers and 2.5 million freight vehicles per year. A snap survey by Kent County Council showed that an average 75 lorries were parked overnight on three occasions last June, the third highest figure for Kent's 13 district, borough and unitary council areas. It was 52 on June 7, 120 on June 8 and 53 for June 10. This was on KCC roads. Dover was the sixth worst in a follow-up study in September with an average of 57. That was 91 on September 13, 42 on September 14 and 37 on September 16. This was for both KCC and Highways England roads. Last November the Mercury reported that the number of fines for obstruction, waiting and parking offences has dropped by 97% in the last 15 years, from more than a million across the UK in 2001, to just 42,800 last year.



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