



THE WAIT GOES ON: Dover MP Charlie Elphicke, inset, is unhappy that the 'absurd speed limit' will now remain on a section of the A20 until the summer after Highways England held the move until this time

Plan to axe the 40mph speed limit on A20 shelved for June decision

Frustration over Highways England delay

By **Jordan Bluer**
jordan.bluer@kentlive.news

HIGHWAYS England has delayed a plan to scrap the despised 40mph speed limit on the A20 between the Roundhill Tunnel and Aycliffe in Dover.

The government body originally pledged to install a variable speed limit on the busy A-road by March 2017.

This would allow motorists to drive at the national speed limit, apart from at exceptionally busy times.

Sluggish

However, drivers will now face more months of sluggish speeds after Highways England said it would not be ready until June.

Dover MP Charlie Elphicke blasted Highways England for the delay, saying: "Last Autumn, Highways England said they would have this absurd speed limit gone by March. Now they say it won't be gone until June.

"Yet again they show they are

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

■ Why was a 40mph speed limit imposed?

The speed limit alongside Dover TAP – Traffic Assessment Protocol – was brought in to tackle gridlock leading up to the Port of Dover.

The speed limit was permanent – even when there was little to no traffic, motorists still had to drive at 40mph.

A hefty number of drivers were caught out by the speed limit. Some 180 speeding offences were committed in the first seven days of the scheme, according to Kent Police.

■ How will I know when the speed limit changes?

Highways England will install and control a series of electronic variable signs along

not fit for purpose and have failed to get on with the job. It's wrong they continue to subject local people to yet more delays.

the A20 from the Roundhill Tunnels to Aycliffe – the signs will tell motorists at what speed they should be driving.

■ Why can't I drive at the national speed limit all the time?

You can (after June), except when Dover TAP is imposed. At that point the speed limit will change to 40mph. Bear in mind, Dover TAP was used 200 times in 2016.

■ Why not get rid of Dover TAP?

Cllr Nigel Collor, DDC cabinet member for Access, said: "We still need to have Dover TAP for when there are problems, especially with the volume of traffic using the Port of Dover increasing."

"I am seeking an urgent meeting with the Transport Secretary to discuss this latest bungling by Highways England."

People smuggler jailed for 15 months



GUILTY: Ibrahim Erkal

A MERCEDES driver is now behind bars after trying to sneak an Iraqi national through the Channel Tunnel in his boot.

Ibrahim Erkal claimed he had been to Paris on a "sight-seeing trip" when he was stopped by border officers in Coquelles in September 2015.

Officers searched the British-registered vehicle and found a man hiding beneath a pile of cardboard. Forensic evidence revealed while Erkal was abroad he was in contact with a phone carried by the illegal migrant.

Erkal, from Swindon, pleaded guilty to assisting unlawful entry

into the UK at at Canterbury Crown Court on Tuesday, January 17. He was jailed for 15 months.

The Iraqi man involved was passed to the French Police Aux Frontières.

Assistant Director David Fairclough, from the Immigration Enforcement Criminal Investigations team, said: "This was an unsophisticated attempt to breach the UK's immigration controls and one, the court found, was motivated by money. The sentence handed out yesterday should serve as a warning to anyone tempted to get involved in the vile trade of people smuggling."



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