

PORT WORRIES

No deal 'would see lorry delays cause gridlock'

Delays at Dover could cost freight companies half a billion pounds if Brexit happens without a deal in place, says Labour. The party fears that scenario risks the South East grinding to a halt and harming British business.

Its warning comes as new analysis by Labour reveals that the number of lorries set to pass through the Port of Dover will increase by more than a third by 2022 to 3.6 million a year.

Daily traffic of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) through the port is predicted to hit 9,856 that year. This is the equivalent of a 104-mile queue of lorries, nearly the entire length of the M25.

Trucks travelling through Dover are currently processed in around two minutes.

However, lorries could face delays of 45 minutes at the border if the UK crashes out of the European Union without an agreement, the party fears.

These delays could cost freight companies alone nearly half a billion pounds each year (£495m) by the end of the Parliament. However, the wider economic cost would likely be far higher.

Two leading members of the party, Sir Keir Starmer and Andy



Andy McDonald, Labour Shadow Transport Secretary, left, and Sir Keir Starmer, Shadow Brexit Secretary, outside Dover Eastern Docks

McDonald, visited the Dover Eastern Docks area on Thursday.

Ironically it happened on a day that lorries were queued up on the A20 going into the docks, and parked en masse inside, because of a blockade at Calais by French fishermen.

During their visit to the port, Sir Keir, Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary, said: "It's essential that any post-Brexit deal with the European Union is good for the Port of Dover."

"That means an agreement which maintains frictionless trade and the swift transportation of goods between the UK and our European neighbours."

"However, Theresa May's reckless red lines have hindered the negotiations at every twist and turn and increased the likelihood that no agreement will be reached."

"Labour has been clear that if in government we would seek to negotiate a final deal that retained the benefits of the single market and the customs union. Options for achieving this should not be swept off the table."

Mr McDonald, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary added: "If the Tories allow the Brexit talks to fail then the consequences for the Port of Dover would be absolutely devastating."

"A failed Tory Brexit would bring the south-east of England to a halt, with miles of gridlock causing daily disruption for businesses, commuters and holiday-makers."

"And yet ministers have provided no assurances that they understand the scale of the risk facing the port or any workable solution for what happens after we have left the European Union."

"It's time the government rethought its reckless approach to the Brexit negotiations and started putting jobs and the economy first."

But after their visit Dover MP Charlie Elphicke accused the party of undermining Brexit.

He said: "Yet again it's all Project Fear from Labour."

"They don't believe in Britain's future and talk us down at every turn."

"Everyone knows Labour are doing all they can to undermine the Brexit process - so they can drag us back into the EU."

"People in Dover will not appreciate Sir Keir Starmer coming grandly down from London to patronise us. It's clear he wants to keep uncontrolled EU immigration too - which everyone here wants to end."

"We've been setting out detailed plans to make Brexit work with a positive vision for the future of our nation. Labour have nothing positive to offer. They are just doomsters who are hoping it all goes wrong."

Kent County Council has warned the government an alternative to Operation Stack is needed before Brexit. See page 22

No of road haulage vehicles forecast to pass through the Port of Dover

Year	No of RHVs	Annual increase (%)
2022	3,597,406	6.7%
2018	2,775,440	6.7%
2017	2,601,162	3.8%
2016	2,591,286	2.0%
2015	2,539,918	4.9%
2014	2,421,537	9.7%
2013	2,206,728	13.0%
2012	1,952,138	

In the event of a no deal scenario, lorries passing through the Port of Dover could be subject to the same 45-MINUTE CHECKS that take place for non-EU goods.



The FTA has calculated the financial cost of port delays on freight companies:



The max length of a truck is 12 metres:



A queue of 9,856 trucks (including a five metre space between each) would be

104 miles

Traffic at a standstill as French fishermen blockade Calais

Ferry services from Dover to Calais were disrupted for a day when French fishermen staged industrial action.

Both P&O and DFDS Seaways suspended their scheduled services to the French port for nine hours, although sailings to Dunkirk were still available through DFDS.

The port of Calais was shut, but reopened at 4.15pm on Thursday.

It caused a long queue of lorries coming into Dover Eastern Docks and countless more left parked inside.

It's believed French fishermen blocked entry to Calais, which is France's busiest passenger port. It halted all ship movements



Traffic queued up at the entrance to the Port of Dover after the French blockade

until the blockade was lifted. The fishermen were said to have been protesting against losses they claim were inflicted

by some countries' use of electrified fishing nets. Earlier, a DFDS Seaways spokesman said the ferry operator was still transport-

ing all passengers and freight out from Dover to Dunkirk instead of the Calais route. Passengers were advised to head for Dover as

planned, while passengers travelling to the UK from France who were due to travel from Calais were being advised to travel to Dunkirk instead.

Janette Bell, CEO of P&O Ferries, said: "It is utterly unacceptable that a small number of individuals have been allowed to bring to a standstill a port which thousands of businesses and tourists rely on every day."

"We call on the French authorities to ensure that the blockade is cleared without further delay, and that Calais opens for business." She apologised to passengers affected by the delays.

Dover MP Charlie Elphicke said: "This underlines yet again

how strikes in France can cause chaos on our roads in Kent.

"President Macron urgently needs to get a grip of the situation and put a stop to the disruption - which is damaging for both the French and British economies."

"This shows why we urgently need more investment at the Dover frontline - and in the roads that lead to the Channel Ports."

"That means dualling the A2 and getting more lorry parking facilities built to stop trucks from clogging up traffic."

"We must invest now to ensure traffic continues to flow freely when we leave the European Union."

Waterfront Hotel - Deal

CARVERY

Every Tuesday to Friday from 6.30pm

Main plate only £7.95

Starters from £5 ~ Desserts from £3.50

A choice of 3 meats, roast and mashed potato

Selection of fresh, seasonal vegetables

Yorkshire puddings, trimmings and lashings of gravy!

(Gluten free gravy and stuffing balls on request)

RESERVE YOUR TABLE for VALENTINE'S DAY

February 14th ~ You spoil them, we'll spoil you!

Free fizz on arrival plus a little gift too!

From just £7.95

