

SPECIAL REPORT

EX-BORDER FORCE CHIEF BACKS MP

An MP's demand for a new Dover Patrol has been backed by an ex-general and a former Border Force boss.

Charlie Elphicke, for Dover and Deal, wants a patrol led by the Royal Marines to tackle people traffickers landing migrants on Kent's shores in small craft. Now Maj Gen Julian Thompson, a former Royal Marine and a Falklands veteran, and Tony Smith, director general of the Border Force until 2013, have backed his plan.

Maj Gen Thompson told the Sunday Express that having just three Border Cutters to patrol the entire coast was not enough. He said: "We could requisition a dozen fast twin-engined civilian seagoing motor cruisers and equip them with gun mounting, military radars and communication systems. We need to do this next week, not next year."

Mr Smith told the paper that the Border Force cannot tackle the people traffickers alone.

He said in order to crack down on the smugglers the UK needs more boats in the Channel, greater surveillance on the coast and more collaboration between Border Force and the Royal Marines.

Mr Smith is quoted as saying: "The number of incidents we're seeing is beginning to be worrying. The Border Force

can't do this on its own. We are responsible for all official points of entry into Britain, but managing an emerging maritime threat is different.

"We don't just need more boats, we need a new and proper surveillance, a maritime coast defence strategy and collaboration between agencies which should include the Ministry of Defence and, particularly, Royal Marines."

Mr Elphicke said: "Like the people of Dover and Deal General Thompson and Mr Smith can clearly see how more must be done to shield our shores."

"We must guard our English Channel and catch these criminal gangs and modern slavers on the high seas."

Just last month three Iranian migrants landed on Walmer beach. In August five Iranians were brought to Winchelsea and 18 Albanians were found in a dinghy off Dymchurch in May.

Security on the route between Dover and Calais has been tightened since the pandemonium last summer.

Waves of illegal immigrants tried to break into Britain, often via the Channel Tunnel but also by breaking into lorries using ferries to Dover.

It contributed to the knock-on effect of havoc on Kent's roads with Operation Stack being used for 32 out of 40 days.



'We must guard our English Channel and catch these criminal gangs and modern slavers on the high seas'
- Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke



Above, the scene on Dymchurch beach after a boatload of migrants was rescued off the coast
Right, migrants in Calais trying to get on a lorry
Left, a Border Force craft



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