

# News story: Government fully committed to Operation Stack solution

The government today (15 November 2017) reaffirmed its commitment to a [permanent alternative to Operation Stack](#) to keep Kent moving, as it announced it was no longer defending a judicial review over a planned lorry park near the M20.

The Department for Transport has informed the High Court it will withdraw plans for a lorry park at Stanford West, Kent. A judicial review hearing was due at the beginning of December. Since the judicial review, work has continued to deliver the lorry park as quickly as possible while also meeting environmental obligations. However, this has not been possible.

Highways England will now develop new plans for a permanent solution, including a lorry park, to cope with disruption on Kent roads caused by cross-channel disruption as well as providing daily parking for lorries. A consultation is set to take place next year, ahead of a planning application in 2019.

An interim innovative plan is also being developed by Highways England to allow motorists to carry on using the M20 when Operation Stack is implemented, minimising the impact on Kent's economy as well as residents.

This could see a dual carriageway created on the M20 by using moveable or steel barriers to safely store lorries in the centre of the motorway. This solution should be in place by March 2019 and more details will be confirmed early next year.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

We know how seriously the lives of Kent residents and the prospects of businesses were affected when Operation Stack was implemented in 2015 and we remain fully committed to a permanent solution.

However, we need to go through the proper procedures to ensure our plans, which include a lorry park, best fit the needs of Kent and the freight industry.

In the meantime we are developing an interim measure to keep the M20 open to traffic in both directions if Operation Stack is implemented – ensuring disruption is kept to a minimum.

An arrangement with Manston Airfield and the Department for Transport is also being extended to allow it to continue to be used during severe cross-Channel disruption, helping to further reduce the impact on Kent.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has started targeting lorry drivers

who illegally sleep in their cabs, including those in Kent. [Drivers sleeping in their vehicles in laybys, business parks and residential areas will be fined £300 for breaching drivers' hours](#). Highways England is also developing plans to provide daily parking for lorries to reduce the problem of fly-parking.

---

## **Statement to Parliament: Road haulage update: 15 November 2017**

The impact of disruption at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel in Kent can lead to significant congestion in that county and further afield. In the event of such disruption, Operation Stack is deployed which queues lorries on the M20 until they can access their ferry or train, closing parts of the motorway to other traffic. However, it has been accepted that this is not an ideal contingency solution particularly given the impact it has on the M20, the surrounding roads, and in particular on people and businesses in Kent.

Following significant and long-running disruption in the summer of 2015, due to French ferry employee industrial action and migrant activity in France, Operation Stack was deployed for over 30 days that summer. The government determined to find a solution to the issue and announced that a new lorry holding park would be built at Stanford West in Kent. The lorry park was to be designed to mitigate the worst impacts of Operation Stack by taking lorries off the road until they could be released to Dover or Eurotunnel.

However, in October 2016 this decision was judicially reviewed on the grounds that the government had not properly taken into account the environmental impact on a local business and the area in which the lorry park would be built.

Today (15 November 2017) I am withdrawing the earlier decision to site a lorry park at Stanford West on the grounds that the government can no longer defend the judicial review. My department and Highways England have, since being judicially reviewed, tried to find a solution so that the lorry park could be delivered as quickly as possible to mitigate the impacts of Operation Stack, whilst also meeting our environmental obligations. However, it has not proven possible to do so.

But I can announce today that we are immediately starting the process to promote a lorry park through the normal planning process, including a full environmental impact assessment, as a potential permanent solution to Operation Stack. As part of this we will reassess the scope, scale and location of our solutions, taking into account changes since the original concept of the lorry park was promoted, in particular the UK's exit from the European Union but also the need for 'business as usual' lorry parking in Kent. Highways England intend to consult on the options in early 2018 with a

view to submitting a planning application in 2019.

Alongside this, I have tasked Highways England with developing an interim solution to be in place by March 2019. Highways England have developed a number of options that, while continuing to hold HGVs on the M20, would allow non-port traffic to continue to travel in both directions reducing the levels of traffic disruption seen in Operation Stack. This could, for example, be through holding HGVs in the centre of the motorway rather than on the coastbound carriageway. Different technologies ranging from steel barriers to moveable barrier systems could be deployed to deliver these solutions. A final decision on which option to take forward will be made in early 2018, with a view to completing delivery by March 2019.

Specific investment decisions on both the permanent and interim solutions will, of course, be subject to normal considerations of affordability and value for money.

[Today's announcement](#) demonstrates that despite the setback to our plans to build a lorry park at Stanford West, the government is still serious about finding both short and permanent solution to help tackle the traffic disruption that can occur from disruption at our busiest border for lorry freight.

---

## **News story: Completion of Longbridge accommodation for Royal Centre for Defence Medicine staff**

The ceremony to open the new mess, known as the Glenart Castle Mess, was attended by the military's Acting Surgeon General, Major General Martin Bricknell.

Service personnel at the RCDM, based at the nearby Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, provide care for the public and members of the armed forces returning from active duty around the world. They will be living in the new 6 storey building in Longbridge, which contains 180 ensuite bedrooms together with a dining room, gym and secure parking for military staff.

The work has been conducted for the MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Surgeon General's Headquarters by national developer St. Modwen, and forms part of the ongoing £1 billion redevelopment of the former MG Rover site in south-west Birmingham.

Sinead McGoldrick, DIO's Project Manager, said:

We're delighted to have completed the new accommodation for the military medics serving at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine. These purpose built facilities will be a comfortable home-from-home during their posting to the hospital and will contribute to a positive work-life balance.

Major General Martin Bricknell, Acting Surgeon General, said:

The ribbon cutting marks an important step in the relationship between the Defence Medical Services and the City of Birmingham. The ceremony has been an opportunity to recognise some the key contributions which have made this project possible, with St Modwen, DIO and the military working together to create a new home for RCDM personnel.

Colonel Katherine Richardson, RCDM's Commanding Officer, said:

The new accommodation at Longbridge, named the Glenart Castle Mess, provides excellent facilities for RCDM personnel. With all 3 Services and all ranks living under one roof, the mess will further enhance unit cohesion and community, an important part of being in the military.

Flying Officer Niall Dowse in one of the new bedrooms provided for military medics at Longbridge. Crown Copyright MOD 2017. All rights reserved.

Mark Batchelor, Senior Construction Manager at St. Modwen said:

The decision to choose Longbridge for this incredible facility and the investment from DIO is testament to the success of the ongoing regeneration. We very much welcome DIO and the fantastic accommodation they have provided to help improve the lives of people working in incredibly serious and stressful situations.

We are soon to commence pedestrian footpaths and cycle links from The RCDM across the River Rae and under the A38 into Austin Park and the town centre, making for a more accessible and environmentally friendly community.

The opening of Glenart Castle Mess follows the announcement that St. Modwen was granted planning permission for a £20 million leisure scheme at Longbridge.

St. Modwen has been regenerating the former MG factory site since 2003, investing more than £300 million into the area, creating more than 4,000 new jobs.

---

## Press release: Foreign Secretary meeting with Richard Ratcliffe

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson held a positive meeting with Richard Ratcliffe today to discuss Iran's continued imprisonment of his wife Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

The Foreign Secretary updated Mr Ratcliffe on the FC0's efforts on behalf of his wife, and said that the British Ambassador in Iran had once again raised the case with the Iranians this morning and urged:

- Consular access
- Appropriate medical treatment
- A decision on Richard Ratcliffe's visa application
- Access for Richard Ratcliffe to see his wife if a visit does go ahead

They discussed Mr Ratcliffe's recent suggestion of diplomatic protection. The Foreign Secretary and officials outlined that the key question is whether diplomatic protection will have a positive impact on the case, given all the representations that have already been made. They agreed that lawyers should meet in the coming fortnight to discuss it further.

They also talked about the Foreign Secretary's plan to visit Iran before the end of the year and Richard Ratcliffe's request to accompany him on that visit. The Foreign Secretary said that our overriding principle in handling this case is to secure a permanent family reunion, not a temporary one. Any decision must be guided by that principle.

The Foreign Secretary concluded the meeting by saying that no stone would be left unturned in the case of Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe, and that of our other dual nationals detained in Iran.

---

## Press release: Significant milestone reached on Newhaven flood defence project

These works will reduce flood risk to 244 homes, 88 commercial properties and vital infrastructure.

The Newhaven flood alleviation scheme has been developed in partnership with Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council, the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and South East LEP. Construction work started on 3 January 2017 following consultation with the local community.

JacksonHyder are designing and building the scheme. Construction has initially focussed on the west bank of the River Ouse, where defences will protect mainly residential properties. Work here has varied from minor measures to plug gaps in existing defences, to sizable sections of new concrete flood wall and earth embankment.

This has included:

- Building a 150-metre-long bund north of Cantell's Boatyard.
- Building a 130-metre wall built along the edge of the footpath either side of Denton Island Bridge.
- Realigning and raising the flood defence bund at the rear of Huggett's Green, plus constructing various concrete walls in this area for seating and to support a new floodgate.
- Building a 140-metre-long reinforced concrete wall which runs from near the Swing Bridge to just north of the Ark Pub with access to fishermen's jetties.
- Raising 20 metres of flood defence bund in West Quay.

With just a few finishing touches to be done on the west bank, focus now shifts to the east bank. Work here has recently started, and the whole scheme is expected to be completed by 2019. Once finished, it will reduce flood risk to approximately 430 homes and 390 commercial properties and vital infrastructure, as well as bringing significant economic benefits to the coastal East Sussex town.

The whole scheme will cost around £18 million, with the majority of funding coming from government in the form of Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid (GIA). The 'Coast to Capital' and 'South East' Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), are each contributing £1.5 million as part of their wider commitment to the regeneration of Newhaven. This partnership approach will both significantly reduce flood risk to the local community, and provide confidence for developers to contribute to the regeneration of Newhaven.

In December 2013 the south coast of England was hit by a storm surge coming down from the North Sea. The storm saw hurricane-force winds and the highest tide in some places for almost 60 years. The tidal surge in the Newhaven area badly affected between 50 and 60 properties in the Railway Road area, as well as closing the railway line between Lewes and Seaford.

Gordon Wilson, Environment Agency Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, said:

I am delighted that works have been completed on the west bank at Newhaven, and that residents and businesses will now benefit from a significantly reduced flood risk. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Newhaven community for their support and

encouragement throughout the construction period and ask for their continued forbearance, as there will inevitably be some disruption whilst this essential work is completed.

When the flood alleviation scheme is completed in 2019, it will reduce the tidal flood risk to hundreds of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area, as well as protecting important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway tracks and the train station. We believe that it will also contribute to the wider regeneration of Newhaven, helping to bring new investment, jobs and homes to the town, and the surrounding area.

Jonathan Sharrock, Chief Executive at Coast to Capital, said:

With the impact of adverse weather being felt across the world and the UK, improving flood defence resilience is of huge importance. We are thrilled to have contributed to a project which will not only protect the economic, social and environmental assets of Newhaven but will also have a direct impact on enhancing regional growth.

Councillor Isabelle Linington, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environmental Impact, said:

I am very pleased that work is now completed on the west bank which takes us one step further to completion of this scheme that is so vital for local residents, businesses and community.

Further information on the scheme is available by calling 03708 506506, by emailing [newhavenfas@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:newhavenfas@environment-agency.gov.uk) or by writing to:

SSD Enquiries,  
Environment Agency,  
Guildbourne House,  
Chatsworth Road,  
Worthing,  
BN11 1LD

[Check you are at risk of flooding](#) for information on how to prepare for flooding and the latest flood warnings in your area or ring Floodline on 0345 9881188.

For all media enquiries please contact 0800 141 2743 or email [southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk).