



## AGENDA

## CABINET

**Monday, 15th September, 2008, at 10.00 am** Ask for: **Karen Mannering /  
Geoff Mills**  
**Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Telephone (01622) 694367/  
Maidstone 694289**

*Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the meeting.*

### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

12. Other items which the Chairman decides are relevant or urgent (Pages 1 - 4)

**Peter Gilroy**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Friday, 5 September 2008**

*Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.*

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To: All Cabinet Members, all Chief Officers - 12 September 2008

From: David Cloake, Head of Emergency Planning  
Marcus Chrysostomou, Media and Operations Manager

Subject: Medium term impacts of Operation Stack following the Channel Tunnel Fire  
(11<sup>th</sup> September 2008)

Summary: This paper highlights some of the issues surrounding the possible longer term implications of protracted Operation Stack activities to the county and its residents.

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## 1.0 Background

On the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008, a substantial fire onboard a France-bound Eurotunnel Freight train caused the tunnel to close completely to all freight and passenger traffic.

The Channel Tunnel has a well understood and well rehearsed multi-agency emergency plan that is designed to manage a broad range of emergency incidents that might arise. All agencies have worked extremely closely together at all stages of preparation and over the last forty-eight hours have deployed these arrangements to great effect in a co-ordinated bi-national response. This has included co-ordination on fire fighting and rescue; evacuation; emergency healthcare and public information.

The damage caused by the fire is more extensive than the fire in 1996 with several hundred metres of the tunnel lining and infrastructure severely damaged. This will take many months to repair. By good fortune the train did not come to a halt near a 'cross over' and so it is possible to use the other tunnel for two way traffic. However this will significantly reduce the volume by perhaps up to 70%.

As a result of the fire, Operation Stack was invoked to safely manage freight traffic affected by the incident and to ensure that the extra burden on Dover Harbour could be managed in a safe and controlled manner. However, intelligence and experience suggest that a swift reopening of the tunnel to resume operations is unlikely in the short term, therefore necessitating the deployment of Operation Stack for a protracted period. Additionally, Operation Stack may be required when there is a partial return to service, depending on how limited the service provision is and consumer demand.

## 2.0 Current situation and dynamics of Operation Stack

As a sensible precaution, the greater lorry parking capacity of Operation Stack (phase 2) was implemented by the Police on the evening of the event. However, trends and monitoring suggest that the situation is very manageable due to a range of circumstances:

- Dover is managing well with the extra burden, with extra staff provision and the full capacity of the port being utilised to ease congestion.
- Options are being sought to increase ferry numbers by one, thus providing extra capacity.
- Holiday traffic is at a minimum, therefore reducing demand.
- Weather is good, therefore assisting in port capability.
- An associated Police and Highways Agency operation, "Gridlock", has been deployed to monitor traffic flows and to respond promptly to any event which may cause county-wide gridlock on our roads.

It has now become clear that the French bound Channel will be closed for a significant period of time. However, the operator is confident that a partial resumption of service will be

in place next week. Whilst this is positive, it has been recognised that there will still be reduced capability in transporting commercial traffic across the English Channel.

To ensure that any backlog of commercial traffic is managed in a safe and organised manner, Phase 1 of Operation Stack will be implemented on a permanent basis until full service resumes within the Tunnel. This will inevitably cause congestion around junctions 11 to 12 of the M20. However we are pleased to report that a new system of traffic management will be applied enabling one lane of traffic to proceed coast bound. Previously this has not been possible.

### **3.0 Key Risks**

A range of risks have been identified that may affect this situation and lead to protracted Operation Stack activity and congestion problems across the county if the tunnel remains completely closed for a protracted period of time:

- Port capacity is reduced or stopped due to:
  - Bad weather
  - Strike action
  - Reduction or lack of availability of vessels
- An increase in demand that overwhelms capacity at the port for example at half term or Christmas holidays
- and any reduced tunnel services (both freight and domestic).

### **4.0 Key Consequences**

If these risks are realised to their full extent over a period of time, it is likely that all phases of Operation Stack will be used or considered, thus reducing availability of the strategic road network and placing an extra burden on other highways, in particular, major A class roads and other primary routes.

At that time, the county would experience congestion that could lead to a level of gridlock. This would impact the whole county in terms of resilience, emergency response, free movement of traffic, people, and trade.

### **5.0 Predicted Situation**

Based on our experiences from the Easter period, (which was port strike action plus a huge seasonal increase in traffic) and the current good capacity being experienced at Dover, it is likely that whilst Operation Stack will have a moderate effect to our road network, it will not be as substantial as the threats faced last Easter. However, this could change if any of the risks mentioned above are realised over a protracted period of time.

### **6.0 Monitoring and Support**

A multi-agency Gold group has been established to continually monitor this situation, and is likely to be in place as long as there is a threat that congestion could escalate and cause significant congestion issues within the county. A broad range of operational and communications-based contingencies will be managed accordingly, including advice to our own staff regarding the impacts of Operation Stack on their movements. Additionally, KCC are helping with a dedicated information line for the public, and our Community Warden Service has been made available to assist in any general support duties. If the situation escalates the KCC emergency plan will be deployed.

## 6.0

### 7.0 Stack Solution

KCC will continue to work on a solution for Operation Stack. When in force, Phase 1 can only hold up to 800 Lorries for no more than three to four hours using the Quick Movable Barrier system.

Extending this system will still close a large percentage of the M20 and does not solve the problem of Lorries parking overnight in our villages and lay-bys.

The only long-term solution is to build a lorry park which will provide overnight parking with proper facilities and hold an additional 2,500 Lorries during Operation Stack.

The following appendices are attached for information:

- I. Q and A
- II. Example of service station poster
- III. KCC web information
- IV. Multi-agency press statements
- V. Extramail to KCC staff and members

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