

Appendix - Summary of issues raised with Ministers

Abstracts from letter from the Leader of Kent County Council to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, dated 6 August 2019

- **Kent's preparedness for delays at the Port of Calais, Dover/Folkestone**
Working in partnership with the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Kent Resilience Forum, I now believe that we have a sensible strategy known as "Operation Brock" that is ready to "Go Live" at short notice which will manage disruption and delay at the ports. The new plan will, for the first time, keep all Kent roads open at all times. (For information, the previous "Operation Stack" strategy depended upon the closure of the M20, causing massive disruption across Kent – in some cases lasting for many weeks.) The detailed Operation Brock infographic is attached, which sets out the various phases which enable Kent to hold up to 12,000 goods vehicles at any one time. Should the 12,000 capacity be exceeded it will be necessary for goods vehicles to be detained outside of Kent county. The manpower issues are also well catered for, I understand that Highways England have a call off arrangement for highways officers to be drawn into Kent from around the country at short notice and similarly Kent Police have an agreement with other police forces for additional manpower to be drawn from around the country.
- **Extended traffic management powers to help facilitate Operation Brock**
Urgent consideration should be given to exploring the extension of traffic management powers to enforce and direct HGVs heading to the ports, giving Kent Police, Kent County Council Highways Officers and Highways England Traffic Officers the necessary powers of direction. These additional powers will help to marshal traffic from day 1 and will help ensure the success of Operation Brock. History has shown that without significant enforcement powers, HGVs take every available shortcut to the port and cause chaos across East Kent (particularly on smaller inappropriate rural roads).
- **Priority freight including medicine supplies**
You will be aware that the DfT are currently going through the procurement process to replace the previously commissioned additional capacity placed with DFDS and Brittany Ferries via Portsmouth to Le Havre. I understand this agreement has now expired. There is a suggestion that priority freight may end up being channelled through Folkestone and Dover which in my view is very high risk and by no means optimal. If there are delays at Calais/Dover/Folkestone, priority freight could get held up in the disruption and to my mind alternative ports in the South East seem to be more sensible and practical.
- **Licences for UK hauliers to operate in the EU and vice versa for foreign lorries entering the UK**
Under a No Deal Brexit, I understand that UK operators will require a permit to operate in the EU and vice versa for foreign lorries coming into the UK. Remember approximately 80% of lorries coming through the Dover straits are foreign owned with 40% being Polish registered. Just before the March 29th deadline the timelines for

having permits in place was extended until the end of December 2019. I believe this should be extended for at least a further six months with our European counterparts.

- **Cabotage**

Cabotage currently provides an opportunity for non-UK registered hauliers delivering goods into the UK to carry out return journey contracts within the UK. Whilst this helps address the demand to transport goods throughout the UK, it also helps to reduce the volume of vehicle through our ports. I would urge you to seek to extend the cabotage arrangements beyond 31st October. If not, there is a danger there could be too few HGVs to support the domestic UK economy.

- **The Common Transit Convention (CTC) agreement**

The CTC was agreed in December 2018 and allows goods to move between the United Kingdom and Europe without paying import duties – until goods arrive at their destination. The intention is that CTC checks can be carried out at the Office of Departure (i.e. where the goods originate). However, private sector hauliers are reluctant to invest until the Brexit conditions are known. They are therefore dependent on picking up the necessary customs clearance forms from Customs Stations prior to arriving at the port. It is therefore essential that HMRC provide appropriately located sites for the right paperwork to be obtained across the country. This important issue has been brought up at many meetings in Westminster in recent months with little progress being made. It is our view in Kent that the Customs Stations for border readiness should be situated predominantly outside of Kent, however I am hearing that it is suggested three or four to be in Kent and only one so far identified outside of Kent. I would urge a serious review of this policy to diminish the risk of freight in transit arriving at our ports without suitable customs paperwork and being turned away and drivers then having to turnaround to search for the Customs Stations in Kent and creating more mayhem. We accept it will be necessary to have two or three sites in Kent to address the needs of Kent based hauliers.

Opportunities may exist for pop-up Customs Stations/Services to be set up across the major Motorway network outside of Kent. This would enable the checks on the border readiness of freight who have not signed up to the CTC.

The Treasury should also consider methods to reduce costs on hauliers and exporters who I am told will have to face processing charges per consignment arising from the CTC process.

- **Communications**

During the course of our meeting on Wednesday, the first point you made was about public communications. I could not agree more. I am picking up from the logistics/transport/haulage industry that importers and exporters feel poorly informed on what is essential for them to carry out to satisfy customs clearance, how duties are to be paid, the paperwork needed to import and export from and into the UK (including aviation) and more broadly how the systems will operate. I imagine there will need to be both an A and a B plan, dependant on whether our withdrawal from Europe is an acrimonious or amicable on the 31st October. However, the Communications Strategy needs to be comprehensive, intelligible and clear as

possible utilising all media channels. It is important to mention too that the Communications Strategy must apply to haulage and logistics operators in mainland European so that they have the same knowledge and understanding to be able to operate in the most effective way.

**Email from the Leader of Kent County Council to Jesse Norman MP, the
Financial Secretary to the Treasury, dated 23 August 2019**

Subject: Brexit Preparedness

Importance: High

At our regular meetings we did discuss the need to work out exactly what paperwork was needed for fluidity in the Ports both inbound and outbound and the necessity for intelligent sited additional Customs Stations (well-staffed and with sufficient parking availability) to allow hauliers to pick up the correct paperwork on the main route network, preferably before entering Kent and in many cases the paperwork assembled before the goods leave their place of origin. It is somewhat disappointing that three additional customs stations I am told are to be established in Kent and only one additional station outside of the county.

When a robust system is designed, which needs to happen urgently, it would be good if the relevant agencies operating as part of the Kent Resilience Forum can road test the new system to make sure it is well thought through and practical. As we have discussed on many occasions, when this has been finalised, we need to communicate this far and wide to all those involved in import and export, hauliers and freight operators and more broadly the logistics industry, both in Europe and within the UK.

I strongly believe if that we get this right, we can minimise disruption, especially with the cooperation of the French Ports, which has been stated by Jean-Marc Puisseuseau, Deputy Mayor of Calais and President of the Ports of Boulogne: *“C’est la bullshit. Nothing is going to happen the day after Brexit... Britain will be a third country, that’s all, and there is no reason why this should lead to any problems. If both sides do their homework, traffic will be completely fluid.”*

(Email set in the context of Jesse Norman having previously been the Minister of State for the Department for Transport)