

Our ref: FOI 154-40

[REDACTED]

Sent Via Email: [REDACTED]

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4 August 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information, which you requested on 9 July 2015.

Please see the response to your questions below.

1. Can you explain how implementing or even permitting “Operation Stack” is allowed under your remit of keeping traffic moving?

Operation Stack is initiated by Kent Police as a co-ordinated multi-agency response when the capacity for vehicles to leave the UK via the Port of Dover or through the Channel Tunnel is restricted. We support the police and Operation Stack as the operator of the M20 motorway.

In 2010, Kent Police maintained that the basis for the Operation in law stems from the Civil Contingencies Act which provides, amongst other things, for action in the event of an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in the UK and applies if it involves or causes or may cause disruption to transport.

The primary purpose of Operation Stack is to minimise disruption, provide safe holding for freight vehicles and to allow, prompt and orderly movement of freight to the Port of Dover or Channel Tunnel. It stops the build-up of traffic in Dover and the surrounding areas and reduces the impact on the environment such as pollution and other matters. In this way we are keeping traffic moving on our roads including the A2, M2 and A20.

By putting in place Operation Stack and sacrificing part of the road network, it does enable the rest of the network to operate, albeit not as efficiently as we would wish. In the absence of Operation Stack, experience indicates the whole network would become at risk of complete gridlock.

2. How many times has it been implemented since 2001?

Since 2001 until 9 July 2015 Operation Stack has been implemented approximately 80 times. With the majority of implementations occurring between 2001 and 2010.

3. How many extra accidents have been caused by it?

We do not hold this information as it is not possible, for example, to measure whether or not an accident has been caused by Operation Stack or other contributing factors such as human error. Please also note that we do not hold information about the local road network.

What is the cost to residents and businesses of Kent in terms lost time increased journey times, lost working hours?

Highways England does not hold this type of information.

4. Why aren't the Lorries parked on the M25 instead - after all they are not just visiting Kent but the whole of the UK?

The M20 is used for Operation Stack is because of its close proximity to the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. The impact of closing the M25 would be greater than for the M20, as figures show that it carries more traffic daily. Also it would be significantly more difficult to operate stack as HGVs would be further from the ports and it would be less easy to efficiently manage their journey to the ports.

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If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk. You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number FOI 154-40 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

NDD Asset Development Team Area 4

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