

This Report will be made public on 30 January 2023

Report Number **OS/22/09**

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 7 February 2023
Status: Non-Key decision
Responsible Officer: Ewan Green, Director of Place

SUBJECT: OPERATION BROCK HOLIDAY TRAFFIC DISRUPTION

SUMMARY:

This report presents background information to support the committee in consideration of matters raised in relation to the deployment of Operation Brock in the summer of 2022.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The matter has been referred to this committee as agreed by Councillor Keutenius (as Chair of this committee) in response to a question from Councillor Peall at the Council meeting of 27th July 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report OS/22/09.
2. To consider the report and contributions from partners taking part in the meeting.
3. To make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Operation Fennel is a multi-agency response to adverse volumes of international and national heavy goods vehicles and tourist traffic that are affecting the local and strategic road network because they are unable to leave the country via the Port of Dover and/or the Channel Tunnel in a timely manner.

The Operation Brock contraflow system forms part of this overall approach. It is designed to keep traffic on the M20 and other roads in Kent moving when there is disruption to travel across the English Channel.

- 1.2 When there is any sort of disruption in the channel, HGV traffic on the M20 heading for the Port of Dover or the Eurotunnel has nowhere to go. Operation 'Brock' is a contraflow that can be set up overnight. It separates traffic into different lanes across both carriageways and keeps the M20 and other local roads open and moving. It means, once the contraflow is in, if on the M20 but not going to the port or the Eurotunnel, the journey continues as normal. During peak periods there has been significant travel disruption experienced on the roads network in the East Kent area.
- 1.3 Operation Brock was deployed on 5th July 2022 in preparation for the predicted summer traffic. The deployment of Operation Brock is managed by National Highways and overseen by the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) which includes representatives from the Council at strategic, tactical and operational levels.

Further detail on the deployment of Operation Brock can be found via:
<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/travel-updates/operation-brock/>

Further background on the KRF can be found via:
<https://www.kentprepared.org.uk/>

- 1.4 Parts of Folkestone and Hythe, and the wider East Kent area, suffered large scale disruption between 22 and 24 July 2022. The area became congested with holiday traffic attempting to cross the channel to Europe as well as a road traffic collision on the M20 which saw the motorway closed in both directions for a considerable amount of time on 22nd July 2022.

This led to Councillor Peall raising a question to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at full Council on 27 July 2022:

From Councillor Peall to Councillor Keutenius, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 'Following the appalling traffic chaos of the weekend, that led to queues for the first time in both directions of the M20, the length of the M20 being used again for Brock, the M2 and A2 brought to a halt, local residents being stuck in traffic for hours on journeys that would normally take minutes; the people of Hawkinge being essentially denied access to buses, schools, Folkestone, the beaches and shops on another great weather weekend; the impact on council services such as waste collection and street cleansing; tourists to our area; and local businesses, it is clear that in all the so called planning, Folkestone and

Hawkinge have been forgotten, whilst focus is given to keeping streets clear in Dover.

Can I ask that Overview and Scrutiny arrange an urgent special meeting, open to include all members of the council if they so wish, to invite the Kent Resilience Forum, KCC Highways, National Highways, the Police, Eurotunnel, Port of Dover, the French authorities and any other relevant party to explain why we can expect a summer as “the hotspot of hell” and what they will do to avoid such issues with immediate effect? ‘

Answer from Councillor Keutenius:

‘Thank you, Councillor Peall, for your question.

I agree that the disruption experienced at the weekend to residents and businesses across the district was unacceptable. I am happy to ask officers to support Members of OSC in preparing for and hosting a special scrutiny session as soon as is practicable.’

- 1.5 Following the significant events of 22-24 July 2022 a number of Kent authorities and partners wrote an open letter to the Secretary of State for Transport to express concerns over the impact of Operation Brock and to seek assurances that short and long term interventions to address these issues will be forthcoming. This letter and the response from the Secretary of State are attached as Appendix 1.

2. SCOPE OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

- 2.1 The significant events of 22-24 July 2022, which impacted upon Folkestone and Hythe and neighbouring districts, are linked to wider traffic management and border control issues which necessitate the deployment of Operation Brock. It is suggested that the scope of the scrutiny review includes the following:

- What were the issues which caused the traffic disruption throughout the deployment of Operation Brock? Were there additional issues which resulted in the severe disruption experienced on 22-24 July 2022?
- What reviews and debriefs have been undertaken in relation to Operation Brock and what are the outcomes and learning points from these?
- Are there identifiable socio, economic, financial and environmental impacts resulting from the traffic disruption?
- What assurances can be offered that the levels of disruption experienced throughout the deployment will not happen again; what measures will be put in place; and what is the timeline for implementation?

- 2.2 In addition to hearing from the lead organisations and agencies involved, the review will hear from those affected by the disruption including communities and businesses in the area. Invited attendees will have the opportunity to make opening statements to give their perspective and views to aid considerations of the committee. A list on invited partners is attached as Appendix 2.
- 2.3 The Kent & Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) carried out a survey of Kent and Medway businesses on the impact of Operation Brock. The report is attached as Appendix 3. This is a comprehensive report which provides background on the deployment of Operation Brock and a detailed analysis of views from the business community.

Further background to KMEP can be found via: [KMEP](#)

- 2.4 A KRF debrief was commissioned in order to capture any learning points and best practise regarding Traffic Management deployment over the summer period 5th July to 5th September. This involved key partners and reviewed all aspects of the deployment including mobilisation, traffic management, communications, driver welfare, partner engagement and communities. The outcomes from this debrief will be used to shape the future deployment of Operation Brock.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 3.1 There are no direct risk management implications to note.

4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER POLICY MATTERS

4.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NM)

There are no direct legal implications to note.

4.2 Finance Officer's Comments ()

There are no direct finance implications to note.

4.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)

There are no direct diversity and equality implications to note.

4.4 Climate Change Implications (OF)

There are no direct climate change implications to note.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

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The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Letter to Secretary of State

Appendix 2 Partner Organisations Invited to Scrutiny Review

Appendix 3 KMEP Survey of Business Views