

## STRIKE RISK

Lorries heading for Calais travel 75 to 100 miles non-stop to avoid gangs of migrants.

And the threat to truckers in the region is creeping back up despite the closure of the notorious Jungle camp, says a Dover driver.

The trucker, who did not want to be named, backed Cllr Collor's call for a rest area in Dover and agreed that there was a risk of overtired drivers causing fatal accidents.

He told the Mercury: "That is definitely possible.

"There is no way that a driver will stop 75 to 100 miles before Calais. It is foot down and non-stop.

"But when they get there they can get held up for six to seven hours if there is a delay such as through a storm.

"Yet the tacograph only gives you a spread of 15 hours, four-and-a-half hours of driving with 45-minute breaks in between.

"We need a place of rest within 15 minutes' drive from the Port of Dover when we get to England.

"Lorry drivers have had enough and are talking about going on a 24-hour strike.

"Once that happens and people see there is no food in the supermarkets, then they will realise the sort of job we do.

"I fear for my own life and safety. I drive through the villages to get to Calais rather than the main roads and I travel between midnight and 3am, when it is quietest.

"I have been threatened with knives by migrants, have had bricks thrown at me and had my lorry broken into. But if the migrants get into my lorry, I drive to the police. At least they are armed."

The CRS (French riot police) have been criticised for being too aggressive towards migrants.

But the driver said: "They are not gentle but they are doing their best and they are outnumbered 1,000 to one. They can't cope.

"Originally the migrants tended to be from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan and they tended to be more gentlemanly.

"It was like a game of avoiding getting caught.

"Migrants now tend to be from north and central Africa and they are much more aggressive."

# 'Lorry park is necessary for road safety reasons'

by Sam Lennon  
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Lorry drivers running the gauntlet of migrants in France need space to park and rest near Dover, said a councillor.

He said they could otherwise kill people in the South East after going non-stop through the region and becoming overtired.

District and county councillor Nigel Collor said that truckers were going straight through northern France to prevent their vehicles being broken into by migrants.

Cllr Collor spoke out after council officers proposed stopping truckers parking in certain parts of Dover.

He told a Dover joint transportation board meeting on Thursday last week: "We have to look at the other side of the coin.

"I have friends who are lorry drivers on the Continent and they are coming from Reims non-stop to avoid picking up unwanted passengers before they get to Calais."

Reims is 170 miles from Calais and Cllr Collor has said that when they arrive in Dover they have just 30 to 45 minutes left on their tacographs.

He said that there was a risk of truckers becoming overtired and added: "I don't want to have on my conscience that a family is wiped out when a car is hit by a lorry because the driver has fallen asleep."

District councillor Peter Walker said: "It's a really serious issue. There are these problems on the Continent and we hear of them nearly every single day.



Cllr Nigel Collor

"These are problems for foreign and British lorry drivers. We need to help lorry drivers find safe parking spaces."

Officers had proposed a lorry parking prohibition already on parts of Hawkesbury Street and Poulton Close in Dover, to also be brought to a section of Coombe Valley Road.

Cllr Collor said: "We have to look across the district to see where we can find spaces."

The meeting heard that Highways England is planning to build a 4,000-space lorry park at Stanford, near Hythe.

The site is half an hour's drive from Dover.

But the scheme may not be developed for years even if it gets Department for Transport approval.

There is still a long process of consultation and recommendations ahead, and there is a judicial review planned for later this year.

Councillors were also told that the agency had recently removed lorry parking bays on the A2



Lorries parked in Poulton Close, Dover

at Dover. They voted to both consult residents on the lorry parking prohibition controls at Coombe Valley Road and write to Highways England to discuss promptly finding alternative sites for drivers to rest.

Parts of Dover have had problems of nuisance parking from

lorries leading to obstructions, with some trucks left on double-yellow lines.

But truckers in France heading for Dover have the constant problem of migrants trying to break into their vehicles to smuggle themselves into Britain.

They have regularly com-

## 'Putting people's lives at risk'

Dover MP Charlie Elphicke said: "This underlines yet again how the extreme tactics of ruthless people-traffickers are putting lives at risk.

"We cannot have a situation where truckers are constantly fearing attack in Calais.

"Building new lorry parks on the M20 would help these drivers get some rest when they reach our shores.

"Yet it is vital that we tackle the cause of this crisis - by cracking down on people-traffickers and ending their evil trade of modern slavery."

plained of being attacked and threatened by the migrants and people traffickers.

Cllr Collor does not believe there would be the space for a lorry parking area in Dover town itself but something could be found a short distance further out.

Lorry drivers would certainly have a period of physical rest during the 90-minute crossing between Calais and Dover, but Cllr Collor says that may not be enough.



Lorries parking on double yellow lines in Dover

## Talks on new parking restrictions

Two neighbourhoods cluttered by visitors' and commuters' cars may be given parking restrictions.

And such controls in other parts of Dover district are anticipated after the St James' development opens in a few months.

Dover's joint transportation board agreed on Thursday to consult householders at Priory Hill, Laureston Place and Victoria Park over bringing in residents' parking restrictions.

Cllr Peter Walker said: "It is likely that residents' parking will become a necessary evil given that the DTIZ (Dover

Town Investment Zone) is coming closer and closer. I would see a rise in them in the district."

Cllr Nigel Collor, district council portfolio holder for access and licensing, said that there are also parking problems at Castle Hill Road, which connects to Laureston Place and Victoria Park, and added: "Traffic has drifted up to Priory Hill."

Some householders at Priory Hill have already asked Dover District Council for the restrictions because parking spaces are taken up both by town-centre visitors and commuters using Dover Priory station. Those at Laure-

ston Place and Victoria Park want them because of a rise in demand in parking after the closure of the nearby Russell Street car park after it became part of the St James' site.

The £53.25 million St James' retail and leisure development, between Townwall Street and Castle Street, is due to open in the first quarter of 2018.

It will include a six-screen cinema, major retailers such as Marks and Spencer, and restaurants such as Bella Italia.

There will also be a 108-bed Travelodge. The development will have 445 parking spaces.

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