



# The UK's Brexit Border - Security and Money

Charlie Elphicke MP  
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## **The UK's Brexit Border – Security and Money**

*Report to the Home Secretary by Charlie Elphicke MP*

This report calls for the UK Border Force Budget to be increased by £250m, sets out how we can increase border security and pay for this by collecting funds at the UK border post-Brexit.

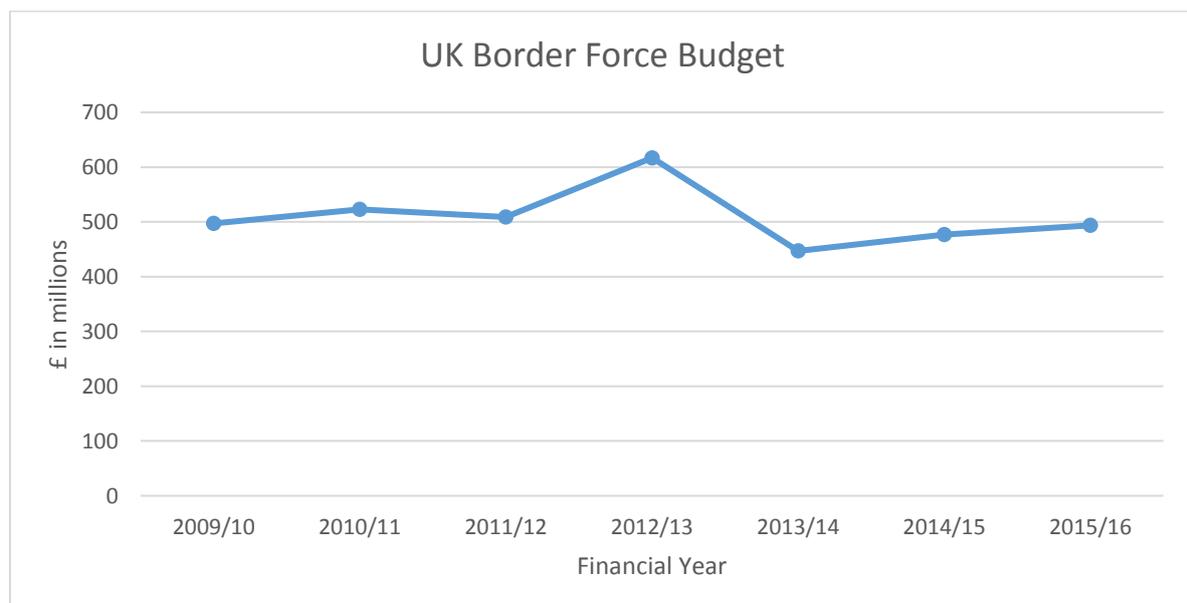
By increasing the Border Force budget we can crack down on the two biggest sources of illegal immigration – “lorry drops” and migrants landing undetected on our beaches. By enforcing a European Travel Authority visa waiver requirement to travel to the UK, we could collect hundreds of millions more in revenue at the border. We would also gain valuable information on who is coming to the UK ahead of their arrival at the border.

### **Recent developments highlighting the need for urgent action**

- 1) *Brexit.* The role played by the UK Border is more important than ever post-Brexit. Leaving the European Union will present a challenge to trade – but it is also a real opportunity to strike the best deal for Britain. An effective, free-flowing yet secure border is vital to keep trade booming.
- 2) *Terrorism and trafficking.* The rise of ISIL/Daesh, and recent horrific terror attacks in Germany, Belgium and France, highlight the need to make security at the UK border stronger. We need to collect data so we know exactly who is travelling here – and disrupt the cells of terrorists and traffickers across Britain and Europe.

### **The UK Border Force budget**

These recent developments highlight the need to increase the Border Force budget. As the graph below shows, the 2015/16 budget (£494 million) was lower than the 2009/10 budget (£497 million)<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Figures provided in answer by then Home Secretary Theresa May to written question from Andy Burnham in January 2016 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-01-19/23143/>

The budget for 2016/17 saw a further reduction of 0.4%<sup>2</sup>. There was a rise to £617 million in the 2012/13 financial year, coinciding with the London Olympics.

The border is at the frontline of the war on people traffickers and their evil trade of modern slavery. Since 2009/10, people traffickers have developed new and different ways of getting people into Britain – through “lorry drops” and migrants landing on our shores in small craft. In addition, cross referencing passenger information against watch lists is reported to be patchy.

It is vital to invest in state-of-the-art technology and improve data collection at the border most effectively to counter threats. How this initial investment can be recouped through the ETA visa waiver is set out later in this report.

## Security

The number of migrants encountered by the Home Office entering the UK clandestinely has been rising. In the six months from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, the number (6,429) was three times as many for the same period in 2014 (2,411)<sup>3</sup>. So-called “lorry drops” and migrants using small craft to land on British beaches are two significant threats to the UK’s security.

- 1) *“Lorry drops”*. Most of the migrants encountered by the Home Office in 2014 and 2015 had arrived in the UK concealed in a HGV, according to a report by David Bolt, Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, published in July 2016<sup>4</sup>. While frontline staff coped well with the extra demands of increased “lorry drops”, this was at the expense of other immigration enforcement priorities such as illegal working and sham marriages<sup>5</sup>. The increased workload also meant the number of outstanding asylum claims rocketed from 200 in 2014 to 3,964 in 2015<sup>6</sup>. David Bolt recommended the Home Office ensure “appropriate structures, staffing levels and contingency plans in relation to ‘lorry drops’ are in place and properly resourced”<sup>7</sup>. Lorry drops are still a serious concern – just last week a smuggling ring involving Lidl Lorries was brought to light<sup>8</sup>.
- 2) *Landings on Britain’s beaches*. In 2016 there has been a striking increase in the number of migrants landing on our beaches in small craft as a result of cross-Channel people trafficking. There have been several high-profile cases, including in my constituency, which has understandably raised public concern. The case of traffickers recently convicted of illegally transporting Albanians to Dymchurch in Kent<sup>9</sup> is just the tip of a very large iceberg. Indeed, the National Crime Agency has warned of the growing small craft trafficking problem<sup>10</sup> and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.civilserviceworld.com/articles/news/border-force-faces-resource-spending-cut-theresa-may-confirms>

<sup>3</sup> ‘A short notice inspection of the Home Office response to ‘lorry drops’. October 2015 – January 2016’. David Bolt, Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. Published July 2016. p8  
<http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ICIBI-report-on-Lorry-Drops-210716.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p2

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p17

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p28

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-38329439>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-36921682>

<sup>10</sup> “Vulnerable small ports are back door for people smugglers and terrorists”, *The Times* 28 May 2016 – internal assessment seen by *The Times*.

has discovered an extensive trafficking trade being run via 200 social media sites<sup>11</sup>. The Home Affairs Select Committee has reported that the increased security at the main Channel Ports has caused trafficking gangs to seek out alternative trafficking routes<sup>12</sup>. And, most recently, a report published earlier this month by David Anderson QC, Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, underlines the serious concerns about people landing illegally on beaches and in small ports along the south coast. The report also noted a worrying level of complacency about this threat<sup>13</sup>. David Anderson QC warned of the risk posed by returning jihadis from Syria. The report stated that small ports, marinas and landing places “might be an option for returning foreign fighters or other terrorists [...] in order to get into the country.”<sup>14</sup>

It’s clear that Britain faces a double-threat at the border. It is likely more people will now use small craft to try to gain illegal entry via one of the UK’s unguarded beaches. It is also essential to improve access to advance information as also recommended by David Anderson QC in his report<sup>15</sup>. This is why it is important to invest in greater surveillance and intelligence operations at the UK border.

### Money and information

Post-Brexit there must be a plan in place to ensure the smooth flow of traffic if we are to maintain growth in trade with not just the European Union but across the globe. This is of particular importance to the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel, through which 40% of the UK’s trade is transported. Yet Brexit is also a great opportunity to modernise our ports and border systems with the latest data and technology.

With investment in technology it will be possible to enhance border security and to introduce a European Travel Authority (ETA) visa waiver requirement for travel to the UK. The number of people from elsewhere in the EU visiting the UK has grown from 20 million in 2011 to 24.2 million in 2015<sup>16</sup>. **If we were to have charged each of those arrivals a £10 fee for an ETA visa, this would have yielded £242 million.** That’s 50% of the UK Border Force Budget.

We could base our European visa waiver system on the ESTA system used by the USA. The USA collects detailed passenger information and charges a fee of \$14<sup>17</sup>. This is of great security benefit as the US authorities are able to use the detailed advance passenger information to “de-risk” people before they arrive at the US border. Even the EU is looking at bringing in a similar system – the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). This will require all non-EU arrivals to complete an online application before entering the EU.

In the UK, we could develop this further, storing data in one simple database, accessible to police, Border Force, the NCA and other relevant authorities. It means by the time people arrive at the UK border, important checks will have already been done by automated systems that cross reference passengers against watch lists. Persons of interest will have been flagged up for denial of travel altogether or for more detailed checks on arrival at the UK border. Therefore border officers can focus

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3536285/Migrants-trying-Britain-pay-gangs-13-500-head-smugglers-target-quieter-ports-east-south-coast.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/24/2402.htm> - paragraph 23

<sup>13</sup> ‘The Terrorism Acts in 2015’. David Anderson. 1 December 2016. p49, para 7.38

<https://terrorismlegislationreviewer.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/TERRORISM-ACTS-REPORT-1-Dec-2016-1.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. paragraph 7.40

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. paragraph 7.41 onwards

<sup>16</sup> Office for National Statistics, Travel Trends, Overseas Residents Visits to the UK (2011-2015), Table 2.10

<sup>17</sup> US ESTA online application system <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

on risk while legitimate people and trade can flow freely. By way of example, a state of the art system like this could have detected, disrupted and prevented the passport fraud ring reported to be operated by the UK “No Borders” anarchist group<sup>18</sup>.

The ETA visa waiver is an option which should be seriously considered as a substantial revenue raiser at the UK border post-Brexit – as well as a very significant security advance.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that the UK border requires significant investment post-Brexit, to keep trade free flowing while enhancing security. We need to raise revenue to pay for security and to keep our country as safe as possible.

An ETA visa system would deliver revenues of £250 million a year paid for by travellers from the EU – this would be a 50% increase to the UK border budget. That’s more money to crackdown on illegal immigration and to increase our intelligence operations against a terror and other security threats.

In the longer term, the UK could become a world leader in trade and border security – but only if we invest in state-of-the-art technology and improve intelligence and data collection. By taking action now, we can be ready to implement such a scheme on Brexit and in doing so secure both free-flowing trade and enhanced security at the UK border.

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**Dover & Deal**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> December 2016**

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3794575/I-cleared-FIVE-checks-fake-passport-jihadi-Anarchists-Syrian-migrant-bogus-documents-smuggle-UK-RYANAIR-FLIGHT.html>