

The Archbishop of Canterbury has expressed concerns for the communities of Kent in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit.



The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, has expressed concerns for the communities of Kent in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit.

Speaking in the House of Lords today, Archbishop Justin expressed support for the outcome of the 2016 referendum, but made clear that a 'no-deal' exit from the EU could only be justified if it could be demonstrated "beyond question" that the most vulnerable would not suffer as a result.

Addressing the likely impact of no deal on Kent's business and infrastructure, he said: "My own diocese being Canterbury, which covers the eastern end of Kent, I shall start by speaking for a moment about the small picture: about local issues in Kent as an example that applies in many other places that would be exacerbated and strained by the impact of a no-deal Brexit, which serve as a reminder to us all of the seriousness of the challenges we face should we, perhaps by default rather than by design, leave the EU without an agreement.

"The Channel ports handle over 10,000 lorries every day, so that 89 represented less than one percent of the flow. Aside from delivery issues, if there are border delays as a result of no-deal, which will of course impact on the rest of the country, in practical terms these lorries will take up an enormous amount of space. Anecdotally, one day's lorry supply would stretch from Dover to Leicester.

"Furthermore, if 10,000 lorries are stuck in East Kent daily, there are 10,000 drivers who will need to use the local facilities to eat, drink, go to the bathroom. This will have a major impact on local towns and villages, as we seen in Operation Stack three or four years ago.

"Support services will be physically unable to access those in need – that also was our recent experience – if roads are logjammed. People will be unable to get to work. Tourist sites and haulage companies suffer very severely and go out of business, with an increase in unemployment.

"Having spoken to local officials I have heard time and time again that Kent does not have the structural capacity to cope with a no-deal Brexit, or time to prepare."

The Archbishop also spoke of the threats made against members of Parliament in recent days, saying: "These threats have rightly united all sides in being an attack on democracy.

"Our Christian heritage, and also the heritage of other faiths and non-faith traditions, calls for us to treat others as we would wish to be treated – the golden rule. Christ himself went on to call for love for enemies. That does not mean the absence of passionate difference, but calls for respect for human dignity.

"And that requires active leadership, my Lords, politically and in security means, against such threats, and it must require now – not after 29th

March – examples of reconciliation by public figures who have differed most profoundly during this painful process over the last two or three years. That is leadership."

Read the full speech [here](#).

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