

The controversy over Operation Stack rumbles on much to the frustration of businesses, residents and tourists of Kent. I wrote about it in this column a couple of months ago when we suffered at the hands of the first set of strikes by French ferry workers. I don't think anyone would have predicted that it would still be here this far along into the summer.

Since then I've been really grateful to constituents and readers who have been in touch with me over the matter. Along with other Kent MPs I have been in regular contact with relevant ministers and authorities to discuss the problem. Many have criticised us for only having meetings and demanding action instead. It is easy to do that without remembering first that it was initially just considered a "Kent problem" and it took three weeks for national media to report it so part of our responsibility was to get it on an agenda.

Now it is there on the agenda we need to help provide a solution for when in the future it happens again. Highways England like Operation Stack – it is an easy option for them. It is a pain for the rest of Kent and effects too many people for different reasons. The truth is that there is no one solution to this issue. It is part preventative. There are more reasons for disruption than the migrants in Calais but we do need to recognise that if we can stop the disturbances there then that will help. However we also need to look at alternative lorry holding places other than in Kent. With advances in technology we must be able to get freight virtually in Stack without them needing to be on the M20.

I hope this doesn't continue throughout the summer. I fear it might. However people can be reassured that I am around and here to do what I can to support businesses and residents to flow freely around Kent.