

Here we are again. Another strike in France and the whole of Kent, or at least it feels like that, grinds to a halt. It is forty odd miles to the Port of Dover and yet the Aylesford, Larkfield and Snodland stretch of the M20 is impacted heavily creating a nightmare on the surrounding roads.

Earlier this year I joined my colleagues for Dover, Folkestone and Ashford at a meeting with the then roads minister to discuss the urgent need for a solution to the problems the county faces when French port workers strike. The impact of Operation Stack on transportation is obvious but less so is the impact on our local economy and of course the environment. Many logistics companies base themselves in and around my constituency because of the easy access to two motorways which in turn give them access not just to this country's motorway network but the continent's. Each time industrial action takes place it creates additional financial pressure due to the often consequential lost business.

In the meantime many of our UK drivers, both lorry and car, affected on the other side of the Channel by the strike have this week been subjected to rather frightening scenes of migrants at Calais trying to board their vehicles in order to get to the UK. I regularly get contacted by constituents concerned about this but seeing the pictures in the news really captures both the migrants' blatant opportunism and sheer desperation.

Something has to be done. We need solutions to two problems. Firstly how do we stop our roads grinding to a halt whenever there is a problem at the Ports and secondly how do we protect our drivers from being subject to migrant invasion every time they near a halt. Time for me to sit back down with my colleagues and Ministers and thrash this out once and for all.