

An issue that continues to fill my inbox is that of transport. They alternate between which one dominates but at the beginning of the year it always seems to be trains.

For those attempting to use the trains over Christmas it was a disaster. There were limited services available to them which although I understand was part of the wider scheme to upgrade London Bridge station, is still immensely frustrating for those still needing to get to work or visit family in the city.

Furthermore once the services resumed in January they have been beset with delays, short formed trains, problems at ticket offices and unclean stock. Although Government has managed to keep price rises to the bare minimum it is a fact that our trains are still an expensive outgoing. If people are paying a large fare it is not at all unreasonable for them to expect a clean service that runs on time! It is a collection of these issues over a long period of time that has led to increased calls for Southeastern to lose its franchise. It had been extended to cover the works at London Bridge but unless significant improvements are made which reflect the cost that people pay then nothing should be guaranteed when discussions begin in November about its future operations in Kent.

In the meantime, I am getting a significant increase in the number of complaints about Arriva's bus services. Long established routes have been cancelled and those that remain are regularly delayed, including journeys to school. When you then add these complaints to problems on roads, particularly heavy congestion around our local pinch points, it is fully understandable that people want a holistic solution.

I hope that many of these problems are short term but we need a fully integrated transport network operating properly if we are to live and work comfortably.