



Oliver Dowden CBE MP

Member of Parliament for Hertsmere

End of Term Report – Autumn & Winter 2016



I am sure you will agree with me that 2016 has been an historic year. The vote to leave the EU has set the United Kingdom on a new course. I know that there were strong views in Hertsmere on both sides of the argument as to whether we should leave or remain, something reflected in the narrow margin of the result. I am clear though that the people of the United Kingdom have voted to leave the EU and will support measures in Parliament to implement this. My job as your Member of Parliament is also to scrutinise this deal and ensure we get the very best outcome for the UK and Hertsmere. I am glad that in Theresa May we have a new Prime Minister who is very much up to the task of delivering the best deal for the UK while continuing to press forward on important domestic priorities, particularly, helping those families just struggling to get by. We saw further progress on that agenda in this year's Autumn Statement.

I know that many constituents have taken a strong interest in the US Presidential election. Whilst it is not for British Members of Parliament to become involved in the democratic decision of the American people, the consequences of any American election, particularly this one, relate to the United Kingdom. Britain and the United States enjoy cultural, military, economic and diplomatic relations going back over centuries. I am absolutely sure that these will endure. At the same time, I will continue to make the case that NATO remains a cornerstone of our security and I very much hope that the new President will re-commit to it.

As ever, this End of Term Report sets out what I have been doing on your behalf in Westminster this Autumn and Winter. For more frequent updates, please do follow me on Facebook – www.facebook.com/oliverdowdenhertsmere – or visit my website: www.oliverdowden.com.

I have continued to work on the following priorities:

On Transport

I have met twice with the Transport Secretary in the last month to raise with him the recent significant deterioration in the service being run by Govia Thameslink. As a daily commuter on the line, I completely share your frustration. I took the opportunity to present him with a dossier of more than a hundred of your complaints about the appalling service provided by Govia Thameslink. I was glad that he shared my concern and promised to investigate the causes of the recent problems – both with Govia Thameslink and Network Rail.



I later spoke directly with Charles Horton, Chief Executive of Govia Thameslink and a number of senior representatives to demand an explanation for the recent deterioration in service and what action they are taking to fix these problems. I have also repeatedly raised their performance both on this line and their line in Potters Bar in Parliament.



To follow this up and hold them to account, I will be organising another public meeting in the New Year so you can speak directly to Govia executives. I will be publishing the details of this meeting in the coming weeks.

I've also responded to Govia Thameslink's timetable consultation by calling for more services through Radlett and Elstree & Borehamwood, which is an issue many of you have raised with me.

Turning to buses, I share the concerns of many of my constituents who have contacted me about the proposed changes to the 298 route in Potters Bar. I first contacted Transport for



London back in May this year to raise this issue and to make sure the concerns of residents were heard. I am pleased that the majority of the route has been preserved and I have responded personally to the consultation and strongly encourage others to do so as well.

On Education



I continue to support our local schools. I have lobbied the education funding agency for a replacement block at Dame Alice Owen's. At the same time, I am working with Hertswood on its development and continue to support Yavneh's new primary, along with moves towards an additional Jewish faith school in the wider area. I am also working with Highwood Primary to help resolve the serious flooding problems that continue to affect the school.



I have visited many local schools and welcomed many school parties to Westminster, including students from Dame Alice Owen's, Bushey Academy and Hertswood. It was a pleasure to open Cowley Hill Primary School's new teaching building and open Hertsmere Jewish Primary School wonderful new learning facility. I also enjoyed the Nativity play at Meadow Wood in Bushey.



In the New Year, I will also be holding an urgent meeting with education planners at the County Council to make sure they are taking the necessary measures to address the rapidly growing demand for school places in Hertsmere, particularly around Radlett.

On Defending our Green Open Spaces

I am not letting go of my campaign against the Radlett Rail Freight Terminal. I have met on many occasions with the campaign group STRIFE, my neighbouring MP, Anne Main, and officials at all levels from the Planning Minister down. Anne and I have repeatedly exposed the complete lack of planning by both Network Rail and SEGRO the developer.



Now that St Albans District and City Council's draft Local Plan has been rejected by the Inspector, there is a real opportunity to look again at this blighted site. Planning permission for the terminal is a material change in circumstance which would fully justify St Albans Council removing the site's green belt designation. I have always said that I do not want this green belt site developed at all. If development is to take place, it would be better for all options to be considered for the site, including much needed houses. I have been making the case to St Albans Council that they owe it to local people to be open minded and to look again at its designation.

I have met with campaigners and engaged with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Draft Local Plan consultation to make clear my deep concerns about the proposed housing developments near Little Heath. I do not believe that this Draft Local Plan has yet fulfilled its vital duty to co-operate with Hertsmere Borough Council on how to meet the additional pressure that will be placed on key public services and local infrastructure. Little Heath lies just inside the southern boundary of Welwyn Hatfield but it will clearly rely heavily on the services and infrastructure of Potters Bar and Hertsmere. These services are already under strain.





I also know how worried people are about the latest news from Aldenham Reservoir and the owners' apparent intentions to lower the water levels or even drain it completely. I have since been working closely with the Borough Council and have made urgent enquiries with the Department for the Environment and the Environment Agency. I have also tabled a number of parliamentary questions and I am keeping in close contact with local councillors, the Environment Agency and local groups like the Sailing Club. I will continue to work with the Borough Council and others to help protect this key community asset.

I know there are concerns about Newberries car park. As your Member of Parliament, I am always keen to make sure that voices of residents are properly heard. Whilst I recognise and respect that this decision must be taken at the Borough Council level, I continue to make sure that concerns raised with me are properly represented.

In Westminster

I have been heavily engaged with the debate around Brexit. This has included contributions to debates in Parliament, as well as in the media, about how we make it a success, including against Nick Clegg MP.



I was proud to lead a debate in Parliament opposing the Dog Meat Trade in South Korea, which has been raised with me by many constituents.

In October I raised the serious issue of elderly people being discharged from hospital into care homes without proper clothing or basic necessities. This has been brought to my attention by a number of constituents.

At Prime Minister's Questions I highlighted the crucial importance of combating anti-semitism. This is something that many of you have raised with me.



We see time and time again that the commitment of pharmacies to their customers goes way beyond what we would see from a normal retailer. I have seen this in recent visits to many local pharmacies, including Manor Pharmacy in Elstree, the Crown Pharmacies in Borehamwood and Shenley and Bushey Pharmacy. Also I spoke



in the debate on this in the House in November.

Away from the Commons, I accompanied my constituent Kamran Foroughi and his family to Downing Street and the Foreign Office to present a letter and two petitions calling for the release of his father, Kamal, from Evin Prison, Tehran.

In the News

You may also have seen me on television and radio in the past months on programmes such as the Daily Politics, BBC News, Sky News, the Week in Westminster and with Roberto Perrone on BBC Three Counties Radio. Topics have ranged from Brexit, the Autumn Statement and the political situation in Iran, to Thameslink and records in Potters Bar.



Out and about in Hertsmere

I've attended a huge number of great events in Hertsmere in the last few months. These have included Apple Day in Shenley to Small Business Saturday in Potters Bar, helping charities in Borehamwood, talking to the Civic Society in Radlett and attending Harvest festival in Bushey. Please have a look below to see some of the photos:



*Lastly, Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!*



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Come to one of my surgeries: In Borehamwood, Bushey, Potters Bar or Radlett. Please contact my office on 020 7219 3415 to make an appointment.