



Oliver Dowden CBE MP

Member of Parliament for Hertsmere

End of Term Report – Easter 2017



As your local Member of Parliament, it's important to me that you are kept up to date with the work that I do on your behalf locally and in Westminster. This latest update covers the period from Christmas to Easter 2017.

This session was marked by two major events. In March, there was the attack on Parliament. I know all our thoughts and prayers were with the victims of the attack, particularly the family of PC Palmer who died defending us. We were all safe in the Chamber thanks to his dedication and that of all the police and security services. We owe them a debt of gratitude. We came together in the Commons for a one minute's silence and the Prime Minister made a moving statement to us.



This session also saw us take significant steps towards Britain leaving the European Union. We legislated to give the Prime Minister the power to invoke Article 50, commencing the negotiations to begin Britain's exit from the EU, which she did on 29 March. In addition, the proposals for the Great Repeal Bill, which will make the legislative changes necessary for Britain to leave the EU, were outlined to us. I know this is a subject of great interest to many people and I have contributed extensively to the debate. The speech I made on 31 January – <https://goo.gl/i4ZGtq> – sets out my position. I have also raised issues relating to the rights of UK and EU nationals and competitiveness. As I have said before, I know that people have different strongly held and sincere views on this subject.

I see my job as your MP now to implement the will of the British people as expressed in the referendum and also seek to scrutinise the Government's plans and make sure we get the best deal for people in Hertsmere.

I have also continued to pursue many other issues which are outlined below. Finally, may I take the opportunity to wish everyone a very happy Easter and also a happy and peaceful Passover to all my constituents who celebrate.

I have continued to work on the following priorities:

On Transport and Infrastructure

Following my meeting in December with the Transport Secretary about the appalling service on Thameslink, the Government has committed an extra £300 million to make the line more reliable. The money will go directly to Network Rail and be spent on areas known to cause delays. This is another step in my ongoing campaign to bring about a better service for passengers between Radlett and Elstree & Borehamwood and London.



At the end of last year, I also met with the Transport Secretary to make the case for better access to and from Elstree & Borehamwood station and I secured a commitment from him to improve facilities at the station. I know it can be hard for passengers at peak times and it is crazy that it sometimes takes ten minutes from the train pulling up to getting out of the station. I am delighted that these works have now been completed and hope that this will improve journeys for passengers. Of course, we also want more reliable trains and that is something for which I continue to campaign.



I organised a meeting with the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership in January, the public body responsible for supporting economic growth in the county. We had a constructive discussion about how they could help address the decline of Darkes Lane and the High Street in Potters Bar and how they could support alternative uses for the proposed rail freight terminal site near Radlett. We will continue to work together on both issues in the months ahead.

It's vital that as our community grows and more housing is built we get the right infrastructure to go alongside it. I raised this with the Chancellor in the Commons in February and was glad that he shares my view about the need for additional investment. I know this is a concern for many people locally and is something I make the case for regularly with Ministers.

In recent months I have met with many local doctors, local hospitals and the Clinical Commissioning Group. I have been particularly engaged with what we can do to ease pressure on social care. I have lobbied for additional resources and was pleased to see more funding in the Spring Budget. I am also involved in plans to secure a new healthcare facility in Borehamwood.

On Education



I am pleased that the latest figures from the County Council show that most children in our county are able to go to their preferred school. But we must not be complacent. Projections show that we are going to be short of secondary school places in the coming years. This is a particular problem in Radlett where primary school pupils are already forced to go to dozens of different secondary schools. Tackling this requires the combined efforts of our Borough, County and National Government. That's why I convened a meeting last month of these interested parties to discuss how we can address it. In the medium to long term, a new school will be needed to serve Radlett. At the meeting we agreed the steps required to work together to deliver that new school.

It's been wonderful to meet with many pupils from Hertsmere schools in Westminster during their tours of Parliament, including Immanuel, Fair Field and St Nicholas'. I very much enjoyed talking with them about Parliament and what they had seen on their tour of the Palace. It is important that our children get the chance to see first-hand the way our democracy works and how our country's laws are made.

It was a pleasure to be on a Question Time panel for Radlett Youth Council. It was a fascinating discussion and it was great to see young people so engaged in politics. We covered a wide range of topics – from Brexit and social care to local parking.



It was also a pleasure to welcome HRH the Prince of Wales to Hertsmere last week. He got to see first-hand what a fantastic school we have in Yavneh. It was a very special day for staff and pupils alike and as the Chief Rabbi said will be cherished for years to come.

I visited Elstree UTC in February. The college is a great example of a local college linking in with our successful film and TV industry to help support high skilled jobs and investment locally. I made exactly this point to the Business Secretary in Parliament.



I know that many people are concerned about the implications of the proposed National Funding Formula. Whilst the formula is necessary to correct the historic underfunding of counties such as Hertfordshire, I share concerns about its current formulation and have made extensive representations to the Education Secretary, including two face to face meetings.

On Defending our Green Open Spaces

The housing white paper was published in February this year and I made the point in the debate that was held on it that it was important to continue to protect our precious green belt which defends our towns and villages from London urban sprawl. In the previous month, Hertsmere Borough Council opened their first public consultation on their new Local Plan which will shape building development in our area into the 2030's and beyond. At this stage the Council wanted to hear local people's views on the types of developments they wish to see in Hertsmere



before drawing up proposals in greater detail. I would strongly urge anyone who is interested to get in touch with the Council and make your voice heard as this process is your opportunity to have your say on how Hertsmere meets the housing needs of this and future generations.

I know from correspondence I receive and meetings I have had with residents, most recently with nearby Fairytales Nursery, that there is considerable concern about the environmental impact of the Reviva Recycling Plant. I have already responded to Reviva's planning application. I visited the site with neighbouring MP, Matthew Offord to raise people's concerns directly with the owners. As a Member of Parliament, I do not have control over planning or environmental decisions in relation to the site. However, I am always keen to make sure constituents' voices are heard. I will continue to engage with local residents to address these issues.



Trees are an immense and indispensable part of Hertsmere's wonderful green landscape. I know many people are concerned about the loss of trees in Potters Bar and I have been raising residents' concerns in conjunction with the local County Councillor, Peter Knell. We made good progress and I am pleased that the County Council will now be replacing all of the felled trees with like for like replacements. I will continue to work with Cllr Knell and others to make sure that these replacements are delivered and that our local environment is preserved for future generations.

Westminster News



I know that people are concerned about the safety of NHS staff – there have been 1,000 attacks on staff in trusts serving Hertsmere alone. I led a very good debate in Parliament on how we can protect them and I was pleased to hear from the Justice Minister that he will now be working with the Director of Public Prosecutions to make sure that when cases of assault against NHS staff come before the courts, they are clearly highlighted for stiffer sentencing. I also look forward to meeting with him, the Policing Minister, the Solicitor General and the Health Minister to discuss what more

can be done to prevent and punish assaults on NHS staff. I will keep you updated on the progress of my campaign.



I met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February for over an hour at his residence in New Delhi as part of a British Parliamentary delegation. We had excellent discussions around trade, defence and security and the future of UK-India relations.



I know that many people took a close interest in the vote of the UNSC on Resolution 2334 in relation to settlements. I have made representations on this extensively with the Foreign Secretary, the Prime Minister, her team and the Conservative Friends of Israel group.

I also renewed my campaign for release of my constituent's father, Kamal Foroughi, from Evin Prison in Iran.

I know from my meetings with local businesses how concerned people were about the business rate revaluation. I lobbied extensively on this and was pleased that the Chancellor responded with a package of additional relief worth £435 million. I raised with the Business Secretary the vital importance of supporting Britain's creative industries in the Government's new industrial strategy, including our world class Elstree Studios here in Hertsmere. Other topics I have raised with Ministers in the House have included the ivory trade in the UK and Britain's Trident nuclear missiles.



Out and about in Hertsmere

Over the past few months, I have visited a wide range of schools, nurseries, retirement homes, local businesses and community groups. All these meetings help me better understand the needs of our local community so I can better represent Hertsmere in Parliament.

In particular, I was pleased to meet with the new Chief Inspector of Hertsmere to discuss the latest police operations and issues raised with me by constituents. Meetings like this are a great opportunity to make sure there is a strong relationship between my work as Hertsmere's Member of Parliament and the Chief Inspector's work on policing and crime reduction. We agreed this would be the first of many.

I also continue to hold surgeries by appointment and drop-in across the constituency. Please follow me on Facebook to receive updates of when they are taking place and do pop in as I would be very glad to see you there if you would like to raise any issues with me.

To keep up to date with all my visits and meetings in the constituency, do follow me on Facebook or visit my website, but here's some more pictures from my work and visits in the last few months:



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Follow me at: www.facebook.com/oliverdowdenhertsmere Visit me at: www.oliverdowden.com

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.