



Oliver Dowden CBE MP

Member of Parliament for Hertsmere

End of Term Report – Winter 2018



As we approach Christmas, I have prepared my latest End of Term Report, setting out what I have been doing locally and nationally for you as your Member of Parliament since the Summer.

Clearly events at Westminster have been dominated by the ongoing discussions about the future of our relationship with the European Union. This is something to which I have devoted a lot of my time. Rather than attempt to summarise it here, I have prepared a full statement setting out my position on how Britain should proceed with leaving the EU. If you would like to receive a copy, please request one by return to this email and I will send it.

In order to see my work locally however, please carry on reading below. Sadly it is not possible to cover everything in a document of this length, therefore this report aims to give a few select highlights. As always, if there are any other issues you would like to raise with me, do not hesitate to get in touch.



Transport



After a long campaign, with many ups and downs, I am delighted that the Government have announced that **Oyster** will be extended to **Radlett** and **Potters Bar** next year. This is something I have pressed for constantly since becoming your Member of Parliament. In the run up to the Budget, I lobbied the Chancellor heavily. At my most recent meeting with the new Rail Minister in late November, I was frank with him about how frustrated people were at the repeated delays to the roll-out of the system.

cheaply. This will bring great benefits to our local economy and just as importantly enhance the best of both worlds we enjoy living in our area; wonderful countryside right on our doorstep and convenient access to one of the greatest cities in the world. I will not ease up the pressure though until the system at the station is fully operational and actually being used by passengers. I will monitor the progress of the extension closely over the coming months to ensure that the Department for Transport sticks to its promises.



After the appalling year of disruption we have had to put up with on **Thameslink**, **Great Northern** and **London Northwestern** services, I hope this announcement will come as welcome news to everyone who, like me, commutes on the train into the city each day. More widely though, the extension of Oyster will allow people to travel more flexibly, easily and



I was also delighted to secure additional **compensation** for everyone affected by the terrible disruption earlier in the year. This was a significant win for passengers. We faced serious resistance and at times during my campaign Govia utterly refused to budge, but I am pleased to have secured the compensation that people deserve.

To follow this up, I met with Govia executives at **Elstree & Borehamwood** Station. While some progress has finally been made, there is still a huge amount of work to do. I made clear to them how utterly fed up passengers are with their services and pressed them for urgent improvements. I am pleased they took on board my points, with works to upgrade the station now underway and new carriages being rolled out on Great Northern.

Finally, local **bus routes** are vital to our community. That is why in October I wrote to Hertfordshire County Council calling for more services between **Bushey** and London. The County Council are currently finalising their South West Herts Growth & Transport Plan, which covers the village.

Local Infrastructure and Services

The Borough Council are currently in the process of updating **Hertsmere's Local Plan**, the document that will shape building in our area for the next few decades. The latest stage, published in October, sets out all the potential sites that have been offered to the Council. However, only a proportion of them will actually be used and therefore the Council are asking for comments on which ones would be most appropriate for development. It is vital that residents respond to this as the public's views are crucial in helping the Council determine which sites will be included.



Now is the time to make any objections you have about specific sites known, in particular in terms of any impact on local infrastructure and the environment. If residents do not make their voices heard now it will be much harder to do so later. Now is the moment.



I have been clear in my support for protecting our precious **green open spaces** which make Hertsmere such a wonderful place to live. I therefore have grave concerns about many of the sites. I will continue to raise these on behalf of my constituents and am reassured the Council has clarified that most of these sites will not ultimately proceed to development. However, these are rightly decisions that have to be made by the Borough Council and I do not want to pre-judge the correct consultation process that they are going through. I also understand that the Council has to build new homes for our children and grandchildren.

In every meeting I have had with the Council I have stressed three things. First, they must consult with residents at every stage to ensure they understand the process and secure as much consent as they can for it. Second, development must not be at the expense of what makes our area so special, in particular the distinct charm and character of its individual towns and villages, and the open space between settlements preventing urban sprawl. Finally, I have also

been clear that new housing must be matched by new infrastructure, including schools, healthcare facilities and transport links. This is something I repeatedly raise with other concerned agencies, including the County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

I had a very useful meeting in October with the managers of Borehamwood JobCentre to understand their work on the ground, including the roll-out of **Universal Credit**. It was good to hear that where Universal Credit has been rolled out elsewhere in Hertsmere and Hertfordshire it has really helped people get off benefits and into work. Discussions like this are vital in helping me better represent our area in Parliament and to my colleagues in the Government.



It was also good to see measures in **the Budget** to help the struggling high street, with cuts to business rates and a high street regeneration fund. I pushed for both, particularly for Potters Bar. There were also welcome announcements on new cash for pothole repairs and a beer duty freeze, which I lobbied for as well. I will now press for Potters Bar to receive its fair share.



I am also delighted to have secured definitive commitments to the future of **Potters Bar Hospital**. Like many others I was concerned when clinic closures were announced, which was why it was important to meet with health officials from Herts Valley CCG and Herts Community NHS Trust to understand their long term plans. They were clear that the Hospital is integral to their plans for the future of healthcare in Hertsmere. This is something I have been pushing for over the last year and I hope this news reassures residents about the Hospital's future.

I know how angry people are over the unauthorised **traveller incursions** our community has faced this year. I saw the consequences first hand when I visited with the Leader of the Council, Morris Bright. A park used by all the community for recreation, and particularly by children for playing, was blighted with piles of rubbish, used household items and even dirty nappies. This is completely unacceptable.



Our community prides itself on being open and welcoming to everyone. But people must obey the law and accept the responsibilities that underpin it.

This is an issue that is going to require local and national solutions, and that is why I convened a meeting with the Housing Minister, Kit Malthouse MP, and Morris to discuss what action needs to be taken. I welcome the news that the Government is now exploring in detail the measures used in Ireland to strengthen the authorities' legal powers to move on trespassers. This is something I have been pushing for over the past few months. I am also glad that locally the Council have installed bollards around the most at risk green spaces. This will help protect the parks and public land we all treasure. Resolving this in the long term will not be easy and I will be continuing to work on this issue over the coming months on your behalf.

Westminster News



In November I was honoured to speak at the event marking the 80th Anniversary of the **Kindertransport** in the Speaker's State Rooms in Parliament. The Kindertransport saved thousands of Jewish children from Nazi Germany before the Second World War and it was a particular privilege to speak again with Radlett Holocaust survivor, Harry Spiro.

Finally it was also a pleasure to speak at the Hertfordshire **Modern Slavery** Partnership in Parliament, organised by Borehamwood charity, the Shiva Foundation run by Councillor Meenal Sachdev. It brought together all the different agencies who are fighting this barbaric crime and I talked about what I am doing in my work as a Minister in the Cabinet Office.



Out and about in Hertsmere and Westminster

As ever, I've been out and about across Hertsmere and London and I've included some of the photos below.

Some real highlights were planting the tree saplings on Woodcock Hill, as part of the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy project and visiting Hilfield Reservoir.



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