



Andrew Dismore

Member of Parliament for Hendon

Constituency Report #2
23rd January 2006- 22nd February 2006

Welcome to the second of my monthly updates, which I hope you find of interest.

House of Commons and Westminster

You might be interested to know about three issues in particular which caught the headlines: ID cards, the ban on smoking in public places, and the new counter-terrorism powers.

I voted in support of the **ID cards bill**. There have been a number of improvements to the Bill and ID cards can only become compulsory after a further Bill in Parliament. This seems to me to be an appropriate safeguard: and also accords with the consultation I carried out in the constituency which showed a majority, over two-thirds, in favour of ID cards.

On **smoking**, I voted for a complete ban on smoking in enclosed public places. I do not think that either of the proposed exceptions was appropriate. In my view it was a straightforward health and safety issue. I believe that to exempt pubs which do not serve food would be an unworkable exemption and open to abuse. I also do not think it was right to exclude private clubs, as some of these are very large organisations indeed, for example, casinos. I believe in a level playing field, with the health and safety of all employees being protected in the same way.

On the **Counter-Terrorism Bill** I voted for the re-introduction of the new offence of glorification of terrorism, which had been removed from the Bill by the House of Lords. I believe this to be a very important measure. If this had have been in force previously, along with the other new offences in the Bill, it could well have dealt with the likes of Abu Hamza much earlier.

I have been in the forefront of campaigning against extremists and I was very pleased to see my seven year campaign to bring Abu Hamza to justice finally brought to fruition. If you wish to look back over my attempts to expose Abu Hamza and his associates, you can do so by looking up all the questions that I have asked about him, Finsbury Park Mosque, and his associates over the years [click here](#) for instructions on how to use the [Parliamentary Search Engine](#), which you can use to see these questions. You can also search for my speeches on anti-Semitism and on the various Anti-Terrorism Bills through this website [click here](#) for instructions.

The **Schools White Paper** debate is also a very lively topic amongst political colleagues. I have reservations particularly about admissions criteria, bearing in mind some of the difficulties we have locally. I organised a meeting at the House of Commons for headteachers from Hendon schools to meet with **Andrew Adonis, the Schools Minister** and discuss education issues, particularly focusing on the White Paper, with him.

As **Chair of the London Group of MPs**, I also held a meeting for London MPs with Secretary of State for Education, **Ruth Kelly**. We have also met with the Chancellor, **Gordon Brown**, to discuss the London economy and Government investment in the Capital.

The **Joint Select Committee on Human Rights**, which I chair, also produced a report on the Schools White Paper, from the Human Rights point of view. We raised our concerns that the new schools regime could result in the exclusion of certain existing rights for children and parents if not dealt with on the face of the Bill when published. The JCHR report can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

I have also continued to raise issues relating to **Barnet and Chase Farm Hospital**. I had a meeting with **Health Minister Lord Warner**, to discuss problems at the hospital, where the Government has appointed a 'turnaround team' to look at the hospital's continuing deficit.

In my previous report I referred to my work on the **Liaison Committee**. I am a member of this Committee of Committee Chairs in my capacity as Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights. At our recent meeting, I particularly questioned the **Prime Minister** over the implications of the Private Finance Initiative for Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals' finances, particularly in the light of the new Patient Choice system in the health service. To read my exchanges with the Prime Minister, please [click here](#).

I will be issuing a **health update** soon, in which I will explain patient choice in more detail. For a copy of this report or my others [click here](#) for my online form.

As Chair of the **Fire Brigades Union Parliamentary Group**, I also spoke in the debate over the proposed changes to fire precautions regulations particularly affecting London Underground. In my 'previous life' as a trades union solicitor, I represented many of the families and victims involved in the King's Cross fire, and this has been an issue of particular interest to me ever since. For my speech please [click here](#).

I am also one of the sponsors of a Private Members Bill, which is due for second reading at the beginning of March, the **Emergency Workers (Protection) Bill**. The purpose of this Bill will be to strengthen the position of emergency workers such as the fire and ambulance service against the risk of assault when answering emergency calls.

I have also met with the **Defence Minister, Don Touhig MP**, to discuss the ongoing campaign for compensation for former civilian internees of the Japanese. I believe that we are making real progress and I am hopeful of a successful outcome to this campaign, which would be to the benefit of a number of Hendon residents.

I also hosted a meeting for constituents of **African origin** at Westminster, with the Foreign Office Minister responsible for Africa, **Lord Triesman**, which gave the opportunity for constituents to question Government policy towards the continent.

As Chair of the London Group of MPs, I also met with **Ken Livingstone**, to discuss his proposals for further transfer of powers from the Government to the Mayor of London.

Finally, it was my pleasure to entertain a number of children from **Deansbrook, Woodcroft and Fairway Primary Schools** at Westminster. The children were all winners of my various greeting cards competitions at the end of last year, and their reward was a special guided tour by myself around Parliament, together with a special tea, a souvenir gift and sweets for their classmates, at school.

I have also signed a number of **Early Day Motions**, a list and text of which can be found at [here](#).

I was very pleased to see the news from the Government that the second tranche of investment in **social housing in Barnet** has now been announced, **£29.7 million** over the next two years for housing improvements in the borough. This will go a long way to improving substandard accommodation for social housing tenants.

The **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister** also announced a grant to Barnet of **£7 million** to replace and widen the Aerodrome Road railway bridges.

Constituency

The most important event was undoubtedly the **visit of the Prime Minister** and the **Secretary of State for Work and Pensions**, John Hutton MP, to **Brent Cross Shopping Centre**. They came to launch the Government's new Green Paper, a policy statement on helping people with disabilities get back to work. The Prime Minister and John Hutton, accompanied by myself, visited Marks and Spencer at Brent Cross, which has an excellent recruitment scheme, helping people who had previously been written off in the job market, into worthwhile, secure employment and careers. It was very humbling to hear the stories of many of those who had previously been out of work for a very long time but had now found employment with M&S, including lone parents, people with learning difficulties, those with former mental health problems and physical disabilities. I was particularly taken by the case of a homeless person who had found work in 1997 after eight years out of employment, and was now not only in secure work but had his own flat, too. The Prime Minister was also very impressed about this, to which he referred when I was able to raise this in Prime Minister's Question Time with him, [click here for the transcript](#).

On the campaigning front, much of my time has been taken up with the efforts to save **Mill Hill Post Office** from franchising. I am working very actively with the local community to press the cause for people through the 'Magical Mystery Protest Tour' bus, where we have made unannounced visits to Post Office headquarters, the accountants who are the registered office of the proposed franchise company, and the home of the owner of the franchise company to make our protests known. I do not believe the Post Office has ever seen a campaign as vigorous and active as this one, showing the strength of feeling of local residents and the community as a whole.

I also visited **Copthall and St. James Secondary Schools** to meet with students and discuss issues of concern to them.

I also called on **Orion Primary School**, which is doing extremely well, and **Broadfields Primary School**, for their '1st Birthday' celebration.

I met the **Metropolitan Police Borough Commander** in Colindale Police Station to discuss local policing developments and in particular the early roll-out of the Safer Neighbourhood teams to the rest of the constituency. Further details of this will be in my next **law and order update**, which is presently in preparation. For a copy of this report or my others [click here](#) for my online form.

I also visited the **National Institute for Medical Research** to discuss their concerns over the proposed move to Central London. This has been severely criticised by the security services as posing a potential safety risk.

I visited **West Hendon Mosque** to discuss issues of concern to the local Muslim community and their wish to set up a new centre for the wider community in the area.

I was present at the launch of the **Grahame Park** regeneration scheme, with the bulldozing of derelict buildings on the site.

I also held one of my regular tea parties for residents in the north part of the constituency at the **Royal British Legion**.

I was also pleased to be invited to the **Edgware United Synagogue** party to celebrate the 25 years service of Rabbi Rabinowitz, there.

Finally, there is a change of personnel at my constituency office: my former case worker George Chalkias is moving to a job with another MP at Westminster, and his replacement is Dimple Patel, who will be working to the same schedule of advice surgeries during the week.

Media

As usual, you can access my press releases over the last month by [clicking here](#), as much of the news which I refer to the press do not get picked up locally.

You may also be interested to hear of some of the national and regional coverage that I have received over the last month.

I appeared on the flagship **Radio Four 'Today'** programme to discuss the election of Hamas in the Palestinian Authority area. I had a full page story in the **Guardian** over the issue of war crimes investigations (I persuaded the Metropolitan Police to reopen the investigation) and this story has been followed up in other national newspapers, as well as on **Radio Five** and on **ITV news**.

The **Independent on Sunday** also featured a story, at half page length and in the editorial, over an anti-Semitic cartoon, which I commented on, contrasted with the protests against the Danish Government.

My campaign against **Abu Hamza** came to fruition, and received a degree of coverage and I was particularly quoted in a number of newspapers, including a full feature in the **Observer**. I also appeared on the **World at One Radio Four** programme, to comment on the Terrorism Bill.

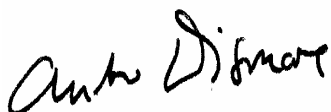
The **Evening Standard** and **BBC London TV and Radio** also carried the National Institute for Medical Research story, with a full page and editorial in the Evening Standard, commenting on the information that had come into my possession, over the security service's concerns over the plan to move to London.

I do not think any other backbenchers have had so much coverage on so many different stories in the national press at once!

I hope that you have found this report of interest, and if you would like to receive my specific subject based reports just [click here](#). If you have any comments, please do not hesitate to let me know by emailing me at updates@hendonlabourparty.com with 'Constituency Report 2' as the subject, so that I can be sure which of my reports you are referring back to!

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Dismore
Member of Parliament for Hendon

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