



Andrew Dismore Member of Parliament for Hendon

Constituency Report #7
26th July– 20th September 2006

This report covers most of the Parliamentary recess period, up to the start of the annual party conference season. A lot of people think that Members of Parliament have long holidays, but I hope that this report will show you otherwise! Like most people, I had two weeks summer holiday in Greece, and the remainder of the time I was at work, either catching up in my office at Westminster, or in the main, in the constituency.

House of Commons and Westminster

At the start of the recess, the Select Committee which I chair, the Joint Committee on Human Rights, published a report on counter-terrorism policy. This drew on extensive research we have done and evidence we had received, to put forward proposals for a human rights compliant counter-terrorism strategy, making recommendations as to better coordination within Government and reforms of the criminal justice system. For text on the report please visit the committee website [click here](#).

I also met with Shami Chakrabarti, the General Secretary of Liberty, to discuss this report and other work the committee has in train. Our next report will be published shortly, on the very serious and worrying issue of people trafficking.

On his return from the Middle East, the Prime Minister asked me and four other MPs to meet with him for a detailed briefing on his visit. Despite what the press would have you believe, it is clear the Prime Minister maintains the confidence of the leadership of both the Israelis and Palestinians, in trying to bring the parties together and return to the road map. The briefing was extensive, and it is clear the Prime Minister is absolutely committed to doing what he can to restore progress, despite the recent serious eruption of violence in Gaza and Lebanon.

I also met with the new immigration Minister, Liam Byrne MP, to discuss recent changes to the immigration rules, which have particularly worked against skilled migrants who have been in the country a number of years, who wish to apply for permanent settlement.

I also met with the newly appointed Chair of the new London wide Strategic Health Authority, George Greener, to discuss issues relating to the NHS both London wide, and as they particularly affect our area. He was very anxious to learn from me, the

detail of the problems facing the NHS both in London and locally.

As part of its process of engagement with the Muslim community, the Government held a **cross-faith forum meeting**, particularly focussing on how we can combat extremism within the Muslim community. The meeting was hosted by Tony McNulty MP, the Home Office police minister, and I appeared on the platform with him. This half day conference was very successful, with many constructive views and points put forward by both Muslims and people from other faiths.

Also in central London, I attended the **Holocaust Education Trust** annual fundraising dinner.

I also attended the signing of the contract being let by the Ministry of Defence, for the move of the army from **Inglis Barracks**, Mill Hill, to RAF Northolt, and for the marketing of the site which will become vacant next year. This was a good opportunity for me to meet with the contractor, to discuss local concerns about both these issues.

Finally, you would obviously expect me to say a little about the issue of the leadership of the Party and the position of the **Prime Minister**. Luckily for me, for the two weeks that this was the focus of media attention, I was on my holiday referred to above! Nevertheless, journalists were still able to track me down in Greece, calling me on my mobile phone when I was half-way up a mountain on a long hike, amongst other occasions!

I was one of the signatories to a letter which welcomed the clarification of the Prime Minister's position, that it is his intention to step down as Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party before next year's Trade Union and Labour Party conferences. It is my view that the transition should be handled in an orderly fashion, with an election for a new leader of the Labour Party. I very much hope that there will be a contest, so that the Party and the nation as a whole can see the merits of the different candidates for the leadership, and the particular policy positions which they wish to put forward. It is right that whoever becomes the next Prime Minister of the country should have their views fully and properly aired and considered in this way.

Constituency

As I do most summers, I carried out formal **'walkabout' inspections of the major housing estates**, with Barnet Homes, council officers and the police, to look at particular problems on the estate and what needs to be done. On most of the visits, I was also accompanied by local residents who wished to point out particular matters that needed to be attended to.

These inspections each take several hours, often more than half a day.

After each inspection I wrote confirming, in detail, the issues that needed to be dealt with by the Council, reported back to residents, and followed this up with a further response once I heard back from the Council on progress.

I carried out inspections on **Grahame Park, North Road, Spur Road / Stonegrove, Broadfields, West Hendon, Belle Vue and Fosters Estates**. Inevitably this generated considerable amounts of work, which I am now ploughing through! [Click here](#) for my reports page.

Turning to transport, I have long been a critic of the problems of the **Northern Line**. Tube Lines, the PPP company partner of London Underground, having got fed up with my criticisms, invited me to spend the night with their maintenance teams to see what work is being done. I had to undergo a health and safety training course before they would allow me to go underground, but it was a fascinating visit, to spend a shift over the weekend, with the maintenance teams. I visited two sites, one doing routing maintenance, replacing rails and another involved in the major works, to relay large parts of the line itself. I now have a much better appreciation of the difficulties the maintenance workers face, not just in terms of the physical conditions of extreme heat and hardly breathable air due to dust from the work, but also the technical demands of the job, too.

I also had my regular meeting with the **Director of Planning and Environment** at Barnet, to discuss a whole series of issues. I produced my environment and planning report partly to reflect the issues that we discussed. My full report is [here](#).

I also met with **Chief Superintendent Kavanagh**, the Metropolitan Police Borough Commander, for the first of what will be a regular series of meetings, as I had with his predecessor. We discussed crime and disorder issues generally in the Borough and of equal importance, community safety and development, with particular reference to the role of the Safer Neighbourhood teams.

I also had a very full meeting with the Chief Executive and Chair of **Barnet Primary Care Trust**, to discuss developments at the local health service and the particular difficulties they are facing over funding. These are issues I shall be taking up in Parliament.

I also hosted a meeting at my constituency office, to my 'supporters club' network for a **report back on environmental issues**, which was well attended and in which a large number of important points were raised, particularly concerning future energy policy, the poor standard of recycling in Barnet, and the general protection of the environment from over development.

I was very pleased to host a meeting for local pensioners, with James Purnell MP, the **Minister for Pensions Reform**. Held at my constituency office, over fifty local pensioners had the opportunity to hear from the Minister over the future of pensions policy.

As I do every summer, I conducted a full programme of calling on residents, to listen to views and get feedback on my work, the work of the Government and to take up any issues constituents wanted to raise with me. I also had a programme of street stalls.

As part of this work, I launched my campaign against the menace of the **'minimotos'**, the small motorcycles which cause so much annoyance to local

residents, which are usually driven illegally, and are very dangerous. My petition has almost 1000 signatures, which is the figure I hope to reach before Parliament resumes in the Autumn, prior to presenting the petition to the Home Secretary, calling for tougher action to deal with this problem. Join the campaign [here](#).

Over the summer I also met with the property company, St. Georges, who are developing the **Beaufort Park Site**, formally know as RAF East Camp, where the major fire occurred. I met with them to discuss their future intentions for the site, and to get early feedback on what is known about the fire. I am presently waiting for the detailed fire report from the London Fire Brigade, which clearly takes some time to compile.

I visited the **Bhaktivedanta Manor Janmashtami** celebrations, which were very enjoyable, and attracted great crowds. I also attended **Shrimad Bhagwat Cathar 2006**, organised at Whitchurch School.

I was very pleased to see the **ITV 'Big Clean Up' day** organised for Burnt Oak, and lots of volunteers descended on the area from all over London, to help clear up Silkstream and the Watling Avenue market and car park areas, amongst others. David Miliband MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs was also in attendance.

I am very keen on supporting former service veterans, and I was pleased to have the opportunity to visit the **Royal British Legion**, Edgware, to present the veterans badge to one of their longstanding members, a national serviceman who served with the Irish Guards, in amongst other places, the Suez Canal Zone. Any former service man or woman who served prior to the 31st December 1959 is entitled to one of the veterans badges, and I hope that this will be extended to all veterans before too long.

I visited **Middlesex University** twice, once to hear about their future plans for the area, as Middlesex University wish to concentrate their main campus activities in Hendon, taking over, in large part, Hendon Town Hall.

I also attended the opening ceremony for their new buildings on the **Hendon Campus** which have been magnificently restored and designed.

I took the opportunity of visiting **Wingfield Children's Centre** on Grahame Park.

I also visited **Matilda Marks Kennedy Primary School**, for the opening of their new computer library, the **Edgware Almshouse charity** to commemorate the restoration of the Almshouses on Stonegrove, and met with the London Jewish Forum.

I was invited as guest speaker to two **JACS** branches, at Mill Hill and Hendon.

I attended the **Hendon Area Forum**. I would like to be able to get to more of the area forums, but unfortunately they usually take place on evenings when Parliament is sitting, which has made my attendance rather less frequent than I would otherwise like, but I always make sure that I am represented by one of my helpers, if I am not able to come myself personally.

Last, but by no means least, I attended the presentation of the **Honorary Freedom of the Borough** to the Chief Rabbi, and the local Borough celebrations of the 350th anniversary of the resettlement of the Jews in England.

Media

I featured widely in the media over the summer. I mentioned at the start of this report, my Select Committee's report on counter-terrorism policy, and in this connection I was interviewed on the **Radio 4 Today** programme, **Radio 5 Live**, **GM Scotland**, **Breakfast TV**, **Channel 4**, **British Forces Broadcasting**, **ITN**, **IRN**, **LBC**, **Three Valleys** and **BBC 24** television.

I also appeared on **Five Live**, on the issue of the Middle East. **LBC** interviewed me over the return to London of Dame Shirley Porter (going back to my days as leader of the opposition at Westminster City Council); so did **BBC London News**, **Drive Time**, and the **Daily Telegraph**.

I participated in the major debate organised by **Radio 4** on the Middle East. As Parliament had not been recalled to discuss this subject, Radio 4 held a 'mock' recall of Parliament and I was asked to wind up the debate on behalf of the Government. You will be able to hear the debate on the forthcoming 'Podcast' section of my website [here](#), if you would like to suggest a topic for a podcast please let me know [here](#).

I also appeared on **ITN** to discuss UK and United States Foreign Policy; the **Jeremy Vine** show on Radio 2, to talk about the internet and terrorism; I was quoted in the **Observer** and **Sunday Times** over the possible release of the convicted extremist Al Faisal, whose activities I had previously been instrumental in exposing; and last but by no means least, I was quoted in the **Evening Standard** over the issue of the Labour Party leadership.

The full range of press releases I have issued to the local and specialist press can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

I would be very interested to hear any feedback on the issues raised in this report. I have now started a series of occasional meetings for constituents, on Sunday afternoons, to receive feedback, both from these reports and more generally on what is going on in and around the constituency. Please let me know if you would like to have invitations to such events, which will be held at my constituency office next to the Town Hall in Hendon. To register your interest, email me with your name and address; just [click here](#).

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.

If you have any friends or neighbours in Hendon who might be interested in this report, please feel free to send it to them. If they would like to be added to my

email list please ask them to email updates@hendonlabourparty.com.

I hope from this report you will see that, like most MPs, I had a pretty busy summer, and did not spend more than the “statutory couple of weeks” away from my duties!

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Dismore
Member of Parliament for Hendon

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