



News
from
Westminster
Nov/Dec 2018



No. 110



Report from Sharon Hodgson MP



Sharon asking questions in PMQs about fire & rescue service funding, which Theresa May doesn't answer – 2 weeks running.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) is carrying out a consultation on three proposals as part of their new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). I will be contributing to this consultation, which will close on the 14th Jan 2018. More information about how to engage with this process can be found here:
www.twfire.gov.uk/about-us/contact/consultation

In recent weeks, a number of constituents have been in touch with me to raise concerns about these proposed changes, and cuts to fire and rescue services more widely. As a result, I have taken a number of steps to raise these matters both locally and in Parliament. On Friday 16th Nov 2018, I met with the Chief Fire Officer of TWFRS, Chris Lowther and Councillor Barry Curran, Fire Authority Chair to discuss the proposed changes, the wider funding challenges that the service faces as a result of funding shortages, and some of the specific concerns that constituents had raised with me prior to that meeting. I know that he is doing everything within his power to manage the resources

currently available to him in a way that guarantees the safety of my constituents, and all residents of Tyne and Wear.

Following on from this meeting, I spoke in a debate focussing on this specific matter in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 28th Nov 2018, in which I made it clear that I hold the Conservative Government solely responsible for its failure to provide sufficient and sustainable funding for our Fire and Rescue Service. You can read my full speech here:
www.theyworkforyou.com/whall/?id=2018-11-28a.131.0

On the same day, I also used PMQs to raise this issue again, and then by some good fortune was given another Prime Minister's Question a week later, where I raised the matter once more. You can see the first exchange here:
<https://bit.ly/2Po4iyM>
and the second here: <https://bit.ly/2BTJsUp>

Brexit Survey & Meaningful Vote

The survey that I ran between August and November of this year for my constituents on Brexit has now closed, and the full results can be found here:
www.twitter.com/SharonHodgsonMP/status/1069983816096382981

The results show that there continues to be a strong variety of opinion in our constituency when it comes to Brexit, and how the process has unfolded. It is clear however, that very few people are happy with the way in which the Government has handled the negotiations, and that there is little appetite for a "No-Deal" Brexit scenario which would be disastrous for our region. Of all those who took part in my survey, just under 60% believe that for any exit deal with the EU to be ratified, voters, as well as Parliament, should approve it. I do not believe that the Prime Minister's deal is in the national interest, and therefore intend to vote against the Prime Minister's deal in Parliament on 11th December, and support an Opposition amendment calling on Parliament to use all options to ensure we do not crash out without a deal. If the deal is voted down next week, all options must be kept on the table and I will keep constituents updated as the process moves forward.

Some highlights (No. 110 - Nov/Dec 2018)

In Parliament

National School Meals Week in Parliament



This year is the 25th anniversary of National School Meals Week, and as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food I was delighted to host a celebration event in Parliament. Politicians, stakeholders from the school catering world, and school children came together to sample some of the delicious school food on offer. I am hugely passionate about the benefits of school meals, and I'm proud to be able to say that a Labour Government would provide Free School Meals to all primary school children, and all children on Universal Credit. Thanks to the Lead Association for Catering in Education (LACA) for their help in organising the day.

In and around the constituency

Christmas Card Competition, 2018



This year, Grace Bowman from Hylton Castle Primary School has scooped the top prize in my annual Christmas Card Competition. The panel of judges,

including myself, Deputy Mayor, Cllr David Snowdon, Deputy Mayoress Cllr Dianne Snowdon and Posy Jowett, Participation Co-Ordinator at the Washington Arts Centre, judged dozens of entries in a variety of categories from local primary school children. The winning design will now be printed on the front of my Christmas card and will be sent to top politicians and public figures across the country, as well as local groups, organisations and community leaders. Winning designs from other categories will also be printed on the inside of the cards. The Christmas card competition is always one of my favourite events of the year, and I would like to thank teachers, school staff and the parents for their support in making the day such a success. A special mention must go to the Arts Centre and local businesses who help make the day happen.

Leasehold Campaign

I have launched an appeal for constituents to come forward with their experiences of leasehold homes. This arrangement, which is most common for flats, means homes are bought but then leased rather than entirely owned, with leaseholders often paying a 'ground rent' as well as service charges to the property freeholder, or to a managing agent acting on their behalf. Homeowners who purchased their property as leasehold are often locked into contracts which force them to seek permission to make basic alterations, or to build extensions such as conservatories, even where no planning permission may be required. The problems surrounding leasehold properties have come to my attention time and time again over the years, and now I would like to hear from as many people affected as possible. If you would like to send me any information on this matter then you can do so either Via Post (Westminster postal address): Office of Sharon Hodgson MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, or via email: hodgsons@parliament.uk

Litter Pick in Blackfell, Washington



I recently spent a morning in Washington litter picking with Councillor Scapelhorn and volunteers from both Washington Rotary Club and Washington Clean and Green group. We were able to collect plenty of rubbish, including some fly tipping and even return some trolleys from Aldi that had been taken and dumped.

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