On the 18th February, I joined local campaigners, local Councillors and concerned residents at what was to be the first day of the appeal inquiry into plans for a gasification plant to be built in Hillthorn Park. Due to sustained pressure, a decision was taken by the Planning Inspector to adjourn the appeal inquiry until June. This decision is great news for the many constituents of mine who do not want this gasification plant built. Over the last three years, a huge number of people have contacted me to highlight their concerns about the possible negative impacts on public health, climate change, road congestion and the local landscape that the proposed plant could have. This significant step marks progress towards ensuring that ultimately, the gasification plant is not built. Leading up to the inquiry, I took several opportunities to raise this issue in Parliament. I spoke in two Westminster Hall Debates, one of which I organised specifically on the proposed gasification plant at Hillthorn Park. You can see those speeches here: https://bit.ly/2PN9gj1 and here: https://bit.ly/2T1Nwq3

I also used Prime Minister Questions (PMQs) to ask the Prime Minister directly whether, as a now frequent visitor to Sunderland, if he would look into this issue in more detail – something he said he would do. You can see my question and his answer here: https://bit.ly/3cqWsRV

Once again I want to thank everyone who has been involved in the anti-gasification plant campaign, so far.

Roving Street Surgeries and Public Meetings
I am holding a series of public meetings and roving street surgeries throughout the constituency. The first public meeting focussed on the proposed gasification plant at Hillthorn Park. It was attended by over 100 people and I was delighted that the Leader of Sunderland Council, Cllr Graeme Miller, was also able to address the meeting and take questions from residents.

The next public meeting will be taking place on Saturday 7th March from 1.30pm to 3pm at the Oxclose and District Young People's Project, Dunlin Drive, Ayton, Washington NE38 0EB. All the details of upcoming meetings will be available on my website, and if you have an issue you would like a meeting to focus on, then please email me on: info@sharonhodgson.org

I’m also holding a number of roving street surgeries in order to meet with constituents at home, at a time that better suits them. The first one took place in Redhouse and has led to action being taken by the police in response to issues raised. If you’d like me and my team to come to your area, then please let me know on: info@sharonhodgson.org

Coronavirus Update (6/3/20)
I know that many people will understandably be worried about coronavirus and the potential impacts of a more widespread outbreak across the UK. At the moment, UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the public from low to moderate. Clear advice on what to do if you think you have coronavirus, and further information about the issue can be found here: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

As Shadow Minister for Public Health, I am monitoring the Government’s response to this issue closely and keeping constituents updated where possible.
APPG on Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties
The first meeting of the year of the APPG on Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties was a great success, and I know that those who attended greatly enjoyed hearing from Janet Daby MP and Peter Kyle MP about their personal experiences of Dyslexia and how it has affected their journey into Parliament. This year, the group will be continuing our work from last year in producing reports on the cost of undiagnosed or poorly supported dyslexia. Our first two reports on the Human Cost of Dyslexia and Educational Cost of Dyslexia can be found here: https://bit.ly/3auJ0e3

APPG on Art, Craft & Design in Education
I was delighted to chair the first meeting in this Parliament of the APPG on Art, Craft and Design in Education. The meeting featured some incredible speakers, including Kate Noble & Sheila Ceccarelli from the Inspire project at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. The “Take one Picture” project inspired primary school teachers, to use the Museum Collection to support their pupils’ learning and creative development and culminated in an exhibition of work by the pupils themselves. More information about the project can be found here: https://bit.ly/2TjwQ1E

Restoring Your Railways Fund
This Conservative Government has finally realised the extent of just how poor many rail networks and services are across the country, and particularly in our region. It has taken almost 6 decades for them to realise the extent of the damage that the Beeching Report closures have had on our communities. As a result, the Department of Transport has recently announced a £500 million “Restoring Your Railway Fund” where MPs, Local Councils and community groups across England and Wales are able to propose how they could use funding to reinstate axed local services and restore stations.

I recently submitted a registration form, the first stage of the process, which included proposals to re-open the Leamside Line, amongst other suggestions. I will ensure to keep constituents updated as this process moves forward.

Sharon Hodgson, Washington & Sunderland West Constituency
Units 1 & 1A, Vermont House, Concord, Washington,
Tyne & Wear NE37 2SQ
Tel. 417 2000
W: www.sharhonhodgson.org E: info(a)sharhonhodgson.org Twitter: https://twitter.com/@SharonHodgsonMP