



Harriet Harman QC MP

MP for Camberwell & Peckham



Keep Camberwell Leisure Centre

There are three reasons why Camberwell must keep its own leisure centre:

1. Camberwell is a distinct, vibrant and dynamic community – having leisure facilities in the heart of Camberwell is very important in sustaining the community.
2. We need more facilities for young people, not fewer. Young people need somewhere that they can go after school, at week-ends and during school holidays which they can afford and where they can be safe and make good use of their time. No-one wants them hanging around on the street and in the estates - not them, their parents or the local community.
3. Local health services are trying to encourage people of all ages to exercise to improve their health. To close good facilities for exercise would be a step in exactly the wrong direction .

I am dismayed at the Council's disregard of the strength of feeling on this issue.

I will continue to work with Camberwell Councillors Alison McGovern, Sandra Rhule and Ian Wingfield, to keep Camberwell Leisure Centre open and serving the residents of Camberwell.

Childcare

Good quality, affordable childcare transforms families' lives. I look forward to the opening of additional under 2's places, family resources and support at the Ann Bernadt

Nursery School and Children's Centre - which I campaigned for. I have recently undertaken a survey of childcare providers to hear about their views and the future.

Thank you to all those who returned my questionnaire. I will be submitting a report to the Department for Education and Skill's Early Years consultation.

The picture was fairly positive, but it is clear that community-based nurseries are popular and need more support. The Government has helped a lot of families access childcare, but we can always do more.

Government marks anniversary of the abolition of slavery

To mark the 200 year anniversary of the abolition of slavery, the Government gave Parliamentary time to debate.

Dawn Butler MP: "As we mark this year, we must think about our legacy as a Government and as British society. It is important that we teach in context what happened so that we may understand the legacy of slavery today. All aspects of black history must be mainstreamed into the national curriculum. The Government's recent announcement that the story of the slave trade would be taught in schools is a small step forward. I would love an end to be put to Black History Month - I want black history to be amalgamated into the general history of the country, so that it is talked about and celebrated every day."

Diane Abbot MP: "The warning to us, 200 years later, is about what can happen when we dehumanise people and say, "They are not like me; they are not my friends or my family. They are somehow less than human." Occasionally, when I hear some of the rhetoric in our popular press about people who have been trafficked, economic migrants and asylum seekers, I think that people would do well to remember that if we consistently and systematically dehumanise a group of people, society and Parliament become capable of acts against them that we may look back on in shame years later."



Diane Abbott MP



Dawn Butler MP

WEBSITE

I recently launched a new website:

www.harrietharman.org

On my website you can read about the work I have been doing locally and nationally, recent articles, speeches and reports and you can join me on my blog.

My Annual Report 2006 is also available on my website.

Advice Surgery Times April, May & June 2007

Southwark Town Hall, Peckham Road,
London SE5 8UB

Tuesday 3rd April	6pm
Friday 13th April	10am
Friday 20th April	10am
Friday 4th May	10am
Friday 11th May	10am
Tuesday 22nd May	6pm
Friday 1st June	10am
Friday 8th June	10am
Tuesday 19th June	6pm

I hold regular surgeries at the Town Hall. If you've got a problem you can come to see me. Or you can email me on harmanh@parliament.uk or write to me at The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. There are about 60 people at every surgery. They tell me - and my team - what the problem is and we tell them what I am able to do to help. I then write and keep them informed of the progress on their case. I know my surgeries are important for those I can help - with problems on housing, benefits or immigration, but they also help me meet and keep in touch with the concerns of my constituents.

My House of Commons Action team - Dora Dixon-Fyle, Fiona Brenner and Charlotte Montague are well-known in Westminster as really dedicated and hard-working.

Peckham parents and young people say what's needed

Following the recent tragic murders in Peckham, I went to a community meeting in Peckham which was attended by more than 400 parents, concerned about their children and their neighbourhood in the wake of the shootings. I also met with a group of young people. These young people, some who had themselves been in trouble with the police, told me what they think is going wrong and what should be done about it. John Reid MP, the Home Secretary, responded quickly and positively to my request for him to meet me and the other South London MPs following the recent murders. The meeting included representatives of the police, the Mayor of London and Immigration and Education, as well as the MPs. I was able to tell the meeting what people had told me in Peckham and call for action.

Is the problem getting worse?

What is new is that young people are getting involved at a younger age and the seriousness of crime is greater.

What can be done about it?

It's vital that those who commit such crimes are caught, convicted and get severe sentences. We must tackle the "culture of impunity" that gangs try and convey, that they are somehow beyond the reach of the law. They are not and the convictions and long sentences handed down this week by the Old Bailey make that clear.

We need to prevent young people getting involved in gangs in the first place. Local residents always say "we always knew he'd end up like this" when a youth is on trial in the Old Bailey. While parents know where to turn when they have problems with a young child, with the much improved local services for children under 5, they don't know where to go for advice and support with an older child. We need to learn the lessons from children's centres and Sure Start - excellent services with a focus on every child and run by community networks providing mutual support for parents - for children further up the age range. Parents and schools are the first to spot signs of concern when children are still young. Instead of waiting till they are in the dock of the Old Bailey we need to ensure that we are wise before, not after, the event.



Harriet at the Southwark Fairtrade breakfast, with Cllrs Dora Dixon-Fyle, Mary Foulkes and Barrie Hargrove

Southwark Police 1000 Campaign

Summit of the Southwark Police 1000 campaign - 26th March 2007

I called this summit of the Southwark Police 1000 campaign to make sure that we keep up the pressure to reach our goal of 1000 police officers for Southwark.

The campaign, which I chair, includes local councillors, Tessa Jowell MP and Simon Hughes MP, Val Shawcross, our GLA member, the Police Sector working parties and the Southwark Police Consultative Committee.