

View from the House

I held the first of my 'MP on your Street' sessions this month. On Saturday 19th March I visited Bright Street, York Crescent and Joynson Street to find out the residents' opinions and concerns about the proposed development on the former Servis site. All 36 people with whom I spoke felt they had not been consulted adequately. I will be following up their concerns. I intend to run similar sessions around the constituency in the future and will send letters ahead to notify residents.

On 25th March I visited two manufacturing businesses in Darlaston. They told me that they need support for apprentices and a reduction in red tape to enable them to run their businesses effectively. The specialist manufacturing that they do is vital to securing the recovery and long term growth. I will be pressing the Business Secretary Vince Cable to facilitate the necessary support.

In Westminster the Health Select Committee has been busy preparing its second report into Commissioning in the NHS. We have heard evidence from the Health Secretary and the Chief Executive of the NHS among others. I continue to raise concerns about accountability and the legal implications of competition under the new proposed new arrangements. The Government has already backtracked on price competition so I am hoping they will listen to what the patients and healthcare professionals want and avoid chaos and fragmentation in the health service.

George Osborne's budget was announced on 23rd March. Meanwhile, economic growth continues to fall and unemployment is rising. Growth will not be possible without more support for families and businesses alike, but the budget is tough on hardworking families. The Chancellor missed an opportunity to repeat the bank bonus tax and raise money for construction, apprenticeships and affordable housing.

On 14th March 2011 I was delighted to welcome Professor Kit Field and Dr Tehmina Basit from the University of Wolverhampton School of Education to the Houses of Parliament. Dr Basit presented her recent research into 'Intergenerational Dynamics and Education Amongst British Asian Families' to a panel of academics, educators and MPs. Dr Basit's research teaches us valuable lessons about families, young people and the value of learning, and will help us to ensure that future generations can engage effectively with education and society.

Valerie Vaz MP