

View from the House – 27 January 2014

The recent reports that 280,000 jobs have been created is welcome. The burgeoning growth area appears to be with estate agents, up 76,000. Rising house prices on the back of the help to buy scheme has also helped to stimulate consumption and those businesses associated with the housing market.

But a fifth of the new jobs are part time and nearly half of all the jobs growth was by people becoming self-employed. How long this will last is not clear. But many have not seen any wage increase.

In Parliament there was a Lobby by the Sikh community. The Committee Room packed with members of the community from many constituencies and many MPs to hear the concerns about events that took place at the Golden Temple in Amritsar in 1984. There have been concerns raised at the involvement of the Government of the day. The Prime Minister has instigated an Inquiry. I have written to the Foreign Secretary for the report of the Inquiry to be made public and for the documents to be released. I also asked the Leader of the House at business questions if all the documents that were in the custody and control of the Government to be released for full transparency.

I spoke at a meeting about Judicial Review. With cuts in Legal Aid, there are concerns among the legal profession that the legal system will benefit those who can afford it and is not accessible for most of us. JR is a means of holding a public body to account for decisions. It is in the public interest that decisions are transparent and there are full reasons for the decisions.

At the Health Select Committee we heard evidence about the Urgent and Emergency Care review. I was concerned that there is contradictory evidence about emergency care centres and Major Emergency care centres. There was no commitment to halt hospital reconfigurations while this discussion was ongoing. The public will be confused by the two proposals.

It was a delight to organise and accompany the pupils of Blue Coat Infants School to present a petition to the Prime Minister at Number 10 Downing Street. The life size model of a teacher calls on world leaders to ensure that children around the world have access to a teacher. The pupils were worthy representatives of their school and gives great hope for future leadership in Walsall.

Valerie Vaz MP