MP's UPDATE FOR RESIDENTS - JUNE 2021

You can find previous reports of my work on my web site: www.ruthcadbury.co.uk. I also report regularly on my Facebook page and via Twitter and Instagram @RuthCadbury. You can see full details of my questions and speeches in Parliament, and get Regular updates about my Parliamentary activities on TheyWorkForYou in Hansard and on YouTube.

See my special Coronavirus Web-page for information on local and national services, help-lines and volunteering; and to sign up for Hounslow Council's daily updates.

COMMONS UPDATE

Dear

COVID AND THE BORDERS: The UK's defences against incoming Covid infections and variants are only as strong as the weakest point.

Staff and travellers at Heathrow have been raising concerns about weaknesses in the arrivals process since more flights were permitted. These include long queueis in crowded arrival halls with red-list country passengers close to those coming from Greeen and Amber countries, and too few Border Force channels. So many constituents work at Heathrow and could be at risk so I raised these points with the Aviation Minister, Robert Courts, when he came to a session of the Transport Committee. It is good that a red-list country only arrival terminal is finally being opened – but yet again for our country, it's too late.

Hounslow's Director of Public Health (DPH) and her team have discovered inconsistent and poor infection control at both quarantine and non-quarantine hotels. She was also informed several days after they arrived, that Covid-infected seafarers were being transported to other Hounslow hotels by the shipping companies, with no quarantine, no prompt notification to her or to London's Director of Public Health. I have written to Health Secretary Matt Hancock about this and raised it in Parliament, but am still awaiting a reply.

It was not surprising that local health teams saw a worrying uptick in the B1.617.2 Covid variant (that orginated in India) in parts of the borough and in parts of Hillingdon and Ealing through their intense local track and trace systems (not to be confused with the failed national "NHS" system which has been an abject waste of money). They were already ramping up community hubs for testing and vaccinations, increasing community communications and door-to-door visits, before the Health Secretary announced in the Chamber that Hounslow, along with 7 other council areas in England, had been designated a surge area. The following Monday (24th May) it emerged that these 8 council areas had been subject to restricted travel guidance for four days, yet no-one knew!

Health Secretary Matt Hancock came to the House three times over those ten days, but I only got drawn in the ballot of MPs once to be able to challenge him over this shambles. During these sessions he had the nerve to say his department had been in close touch with the local councils – yet our experience is that this was clearly not true. There has still been no communication from the Department of Health and the affected local authorities, to MPs and more importantly, to local people. Following the emergence of the travel advice we had 24 hours of complete confusion, and cancelled events, until the Councils met Dr Jenny Harries and it emerged there were to be no travel restrictions. And now, because of the failure to properly manage our national borders, lack of communication between Government and local council and health leaders, coupled with further mixed messages from Government, it appears we could be heading for yet another Covid wave.

MY NEW ROLE: As part of the post-election reshuffle, I have joined Labour's Housing Communities and Local Government front bench team. I am now **the Shadow Planning Minister,** working to Shadow CLG Secretary Jim Reed and Shadow Housing Secretary, Lucy Powell. My main focus will be the expected Planning Bill, as well as the Government's other changes to Planning rules. The Government want to further erode community, and even local authority, influence in decisions around new developments. In the pursuit of more (private sale) housing they are winding back requirements for new developments to provide for adequate community services, good quality building, and commitment to zero carbon and the environment. Furthermore, the implications of their proposals expose the Government's complete lack of interest in providing genuinely affordable housing. I expect to have my work cut out! Being a front-bencher with a specific and busy portfolio means I will speak less often in other Parliamentary debates and question sessions.

OTHER PARLIAMENTARY WORK:

- I co-signed a letter organised by UNITE which called on the Government to outlaw the practice of fire & rehire
- I wrote to the FCDO regarding the attacks on protesters at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque, the evictions at Sheikh Jarrah and called on the UK Government to condemn these actions
- On behalf of our MHCLG team I spoke in a debate on a statutory instrument (these are regulations that don't need full legislative scrutiny) on the draft Mobile Homes regulations. I suggested the Government could expand the fit and proper person the Government introduced to cover mobile home site managers, to include private housing landlords.
- I continued as co-chair of what was the Heathrow Airport All Party Group which until now had focussed on opposing expansion. However, as we had increasingly been working with other airport communities, and because aviation's future will look very different post-Covid, our focus will broaden out to scrutinising government approach to aviation communities.
- With Swansea MPs, I wrote to Culture Media and Sport Committee, to increase the ticket allocation for the Championship Play-off final at Wembley – after which another 1,000 tickets were released.

I'm remaining on the **Transport Committee** for the time being. We are carrying out an Inquiry into the roll-out of the electric vehicle infrastructure and visited on of the providers of charging facilities in Reading. What is apparent is that the UK is behind other European countries in the roll-out of a consistent, unified network of charging infrastructure – particularly in 3-phase charging points which fleet vehicles and longer distance users need for fast charging

NATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL AND BIKE WEEKS:

I have cycled locally for years, not because I'm a "keen cyclist", but because it's quicker than driving, always cheaper and I get some exercise into the bargain too.

The more of us who walk, cycle (and use public transport) the less we are adding to over-congested and polluted roads and free up the road space for those who need it. Although I don't feel unsafe cycling on London's roads, I know that the reason many people don't cycle is because they don't feel safe in traffic, and I do what I can in Parliament and locally to address that challenge.

I celebrated Walk to School week with the children of St Paul's School in Brentford, where they challenged themselves to walk or cycle to and from school every day that week. Thirty Hounslow Schools have "School Streets" around them where there is restricted vehicle access twice a day during term time. Head teachers of schools with these restrictions tell me that many more families now walk or cycle to school, and the area around the school gates is now cleaner and safer.

I'm really pleased to see the work that Hounslow Council is doing, supported by Transport for London, to provide safe quiet roads for cycling, along with a number of activities to encourage different groups of people to cycle. These include adult cycle training and "buddying", group rides, and Pedal My Wheels (where you can try before you buy). They also have a range of cycles for people with disabilities and host All Ability Cycling sessions every week, and it was a pleasure to attend their session in Inwood Park Hounslow with Cllrs Hanif Khan and Samia Chaudhary. More information about these and other activities here

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Brentford FC promoted to the Premiership! After 74 years away from the top flight of English football, Brentford's promotion is so well deserved; both for the brilliant playing of the team under Thomas Frank's leadership (I'm proud to be his kit sponsor) but also because Brentford FC is such a great community club. Going up will be a fantastic boost for Brentford and Hounslow borough.

I am proud to have been associated with, and supporter of, the club for many years as a Councillor and MP, from persuading my colleagues on Hounslow Council to lend the supporters trust £500m to help them buy out Ron Noades, through to persuading the Government to release another thousand Wembley tickets last week (I wish it had been more though). I am also so pleased that we were able to ensure that moving to a modern stadium could be done while remaining in Brentford. The foundation of the successful Community Sports Trust goes back to the late 80s when I got together the local police, youth workers and a rep from the club and we organised summer activities for the young people on the Haverfield and Tower blocks estates in Brentford.

West Middlesex Hospital are recruiting volunteers to help support patients, visitors and nursing staff. They're looking for volunteers to help as responders or ward helpers.

I know from volunteering at West Mid that you can make a huge difference. **Click on the link** to sign find out more information

Fullers, now a pub/restaurant company since they sold the brewery to Asahi, remains a major employer locally. I visited them at their new HQ at Strand on the Green. The biggest challenge for Fullers and across the hospitality sector is recruitment. Covid masked the impact of Brexit which saw most EU workers stripped of their right to work in the UK.

Fullers therefore asked me to lobby Government to extend the list of categories in the "shortage skill" list so that EU citizens can get work visas in a wider list of occupations.

I joined outgoing Mayor Cllr Tony Louki at a minute's silence, when on Firefighters **Memorial Day** UK firefighters honoured the 2,300 colleagues who have died in the line of duty

All EU Citizens, without dual UK nationality, who are permanently resident in the UK are urged to apply for settlement status before the June 30th deadline. You can get help from Hounslow council for this. Please let those you know about the need to apply!

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