



Tessa's July Update

It was lovely to welcome 11 young adults to Westminster in July for my 'Parliamentary Insight Day'. They toured Parliament, watched a debate and took part in a workshop. Do let me know if you'd like to come to my next Insight Day in September.



I hosted a meeting locally for Headteachers with James McNeillie, Head of Ofsted South West. Feedback reveals that the opportunity to talk to and about Ofsted face-to-face was greatly appreciated. I look forward to following up with a repeat event next Spring.

I was pleased to see the Hillsborough Bill finally make its way into law in July. The Hillsborough families were lied to by public officials again and again. That experience isn't unique to families in Liverpool. People here in Somerset have told me about dishonesty and cover ups by public officials, and the injustice and unfairness drives me wild.

It's crazy that we need to pass a law to insist officials tell the truth, but the victims of scandals like Hillsborough, the Chinook helicopter crash, the Post Office Horizon software, infected blood, Primodos, mesh, undercover policing, Covid-19, grooming gangs, Grenfell, Windrush, the Manchester Arena attack and many more tell us that honesty and transparency would have changed their lives and saved years, sometimes decades, of heartache.

I was on the Bill Committee, suggesting improvements, raising objections – and the Minister listened. The Bill isn't perfect, but it's here - well past time, and now it'll be the law.

In Parliament, I led a debate on changes to the 'National Planning Policy Framework' and how it currently prioritises building homes over protection from flooding. The High Court's 'Yatton decision' highlighted that the NPPF allows building on land, even in Flood Zone 3a, when there is 'housing need', on the basis that residents will have at least 42 hours' warning to vacate their properties before they flood. I believe this misses the point – even existing homes may well become uninsurable and unmortgageable, therefore unsaleable. I asked the Minister to amend the NPPF so it protects properties from flooding as well as people, and after the debate, accepted his invitation to meet him and discuss my concerns in detail. I look forward to sharing further updates with you once I have met the Minister.

I look forward to speaking with many of you during the summer at events and surgeries.

Thank you.

Tessa