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# Anna Soubry MP

working hard for Broxtowe

[www.annasoubry.org.uk](http://www.annasoubry.org.uk)

E-newsletter | September 17 2014

Hello again,

Apologies, if they are needed, this is a rather long and wordy email newsletter in contrast to my normal offering, but there are a number of important matters I would like to deal with.

### **Tonight's meeting of Broxtowe Borough Council to discuss the future plans for our area**

It's called, rather unhelpfully, the Core Strategy; it's a meaningless title to a very lengthy document that details the future development of Broxtowe, as determined by our Borough Council. It should be an exciting vision of a better Broxtowe for everyone but I am sorry to report it is not.

For many years now I have opposed Broxtowe's plans for a number of reasons which I appreciate you may be well familiar with! Here's why:

#### ***1. Green Belt land is put forward as priority sites for housing development whilst brown field sites lie fallow.***

What that means is hundreds of houses are set to be built on Field Farm in Stapleford, and a minimum of 500 on the fields at Toton - both sites are Green Belt land. Meanwhile, an application for over 280 homes in Beeston Rylands is not even in the plan and almost 700 hundred houses at Boots are not a priority site - even though both developments are brown field land.

#### ***2. The plan says little if anything about jobs and economic growth.***

The most significant opportunity we have is if HS2 sites the East Midland's hub/station at Toton Sidings. A fabulous opportunity for economic development is nothing more than hundreds of houses and second rate business units in our Council's plans. I greatly fear that Broxtowe's plans will deter HS2 from bringing the hub to Toton and deprive us of jobs and better transport links.

#### ***3. There are no plans to improve and assist our town centres of Kimberley, Beeston and Stapleford.***

In relation to Kimberley the Core Strategy is all about building hundreds of houses on Green Belt land near the town.

**4. There is no vision for a Broxtowe of the future; no plans of any significance to improve our transport system and our environment.**

**5. There's been a woeful lack of proper consultation and involvement with the people of Broxtowe so you can truly shape the future of the Borough.**

Neighbourhood plans are only now being put forward - after the plan has been written.

There seems little doubt that the controlling Labour and Lib Dem coalition will approve the Core Strategy but I know that a number of Lib Dem Councillors share my concerns and I very much hope that even if they cannot bring themselves to vote against the Core Strategy then they will at least abstain.

As you may recall from my last email newsletter I have asked the Secretary of State to intervene following a meeting last week with Planning and Housing Minister, Brandon Lewis. Today, Brandon has explained that the Government is not able to intervene as this is very much a local matter but that new guidance is about to be issued. Perhaps Broxtowe could wait to see that new guidance?

Broxtowe's ruling coalition will no doubt make much of the fact that the Planning Inspector has approved their plans - but the ultimate decision rests with them. Government policy and indeed Labour Party policy is quite clear - brown field sites should be developed before Green Belt land and the national guidance states "Green belt land should not be built on save for exceptional circumstances."

In the event Broxtowe approves their Core Strategy there will be a legal challenge.

Tonight's meeting begins at 7.00pm and for reasons I don't understand, the most important item is last on the agenda and may not be reached until rather late in the evening.

## **E mails**

Can I thank everyone who has emailed me in the last few months. As you may know from the automated reply we have to prioritise emails so people in need of urgent attention get it. My team and I have accordingly been prioritising people with passport problems, benefit and CSA payments and various other very personal problems and concerns, not to mention a large number of emails about the adverse affect of the tram works. However, some recipients of this email will also know that when I can, I reply to emails in a couple of hours, sometimes minutes!

I have spoken to fellow MPs from all parties and we are all experiencing an extremely large number of emails at the moment. This is in part due to a number of web based campaign groups whose supporters send out automated emails. Such is the volume some of my colleagues now don't reply individually to people who send these impersonal "round robin" emails, instead they post a response on their web site. I have decided not to adopt this system but it does mean those types of emails will take some time to reply to as I have so many.

In the meantime I would like to comment on a number of issues people have raised in the last few weeks.

## **Tomorrow's referendum on Scottish Independence**

As you might imagine I very much hope the people of Scotland vote NO tomorrow. I spent a number of years in Scotland, firstly as Honorary President of Stirling University which led me to my first job as a trainee reporter on the Alloa Advertiser, a small weekly newspaper. I then moved to Grampian TV in Aberdeen where I worked for a couple of years before returning home to Nottingham and the newly formed Central TV. Scotland has certainly enriched my life and the thought of them becoming a separate country is dreadful.

However, whatever the outcome of tomorrow's vote the matter will not be over. In the event of a "no vote" all three parties have pledged to give Scotland even greater powers which will, I believe, create controversy in Wales and England.

But for the moment it is to be hoped that the Union, which has benefitted us all, remains intact.

## **Iraq, Syria and the threat of ISIL**

To be honest the referendum has somewhat consumed most politicians though the Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, has met his equivalents in Paris, as part of the international response to ISIL. I believe there is a growing belief that we should be part of an armed response but limiting any action to air strikes. I would be grateful for your own views.

Like everyone I was appalled and sickened to learn that David Haines, a British aid worker had been brutally murdered by ISIL and our thoughts and prayers are also with the family of Alan Henning. Like David Haines, Alan Henning was in Syria to do good.

Britain has provided considerable humanitarian aid in Iraq to people fleeing from ISIL - some £23 million thus far. There is more detail on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office [web site](#) which has links through to the Department of International Development.

We have also supplied military aid notably to the Kurdish Peshmerga. Again, the FCO [web site](#) provides good detail and updates.

I have had a number of emails from constituents concerned in particular about the treatment of Christians by ISIL. I hope that the combination of both humanitarian and military aid, plus our support for USA airstrikes has reassured everyone that we have substantially helped all displaced people in Iraq.

As I know you will appreciate, the situation in the Middle East changes on almost a daily basis and there is little if any difference between the Coalition Government and Labour Opposition on this most concerning of matters.

## **Affordable Homes Bill**

I have had a large number of emails about this Private Members' Bill which passed its second reading on September 5th. It has now passed to the Committee Stage though no date has been fixed. I did not support the Bill which in my view is not needed. It would change the rules relating to the spare room subsidy which opponents wrongly call the "bedroom tax". Introducing the planned changes would apparently cost tax payers £1 billion and as yet none of the Bill's supporters have said how they would find the money.

I supported changing the rules on housing benefit for a number of reasons. There were people living in social housing (eg. council owned or housing association accommodation) who had spare bedrooms, usually because their children had grown up and moved out, and who were receiving housing benefit. Meanwhile waiting lists for families have grown.

People in privately rented accommodation or who own their own home with one or more spare bedrooms make a choice. If your accommodation is privately rented you lose part of your housing benefit, meaning you in effect pay for that spare bedroom. Home owners often "down size" moving to a smaller property as their needs change. It makes sense that people on housing benefit, living in council houses or housing associations, should have the same rules as everyone else.

The other consideration in changing the housing benefit rules was the cost of housing benefit, which had rocketed to £21 billion a year by 2010.

However, when the rules were changed, councils like Broxtowe were given £130 million to help people who couldn't down size, with special provision for disabled people who had adapted their spare room. Pensioners and disabled children are exempt from the rule changes.

The Affordable Homes Bill, in effect removes the much needed changes in housing benefit and goes even further with changes that have been estimated to cost the tax payer £1 billion a year. Given all MP's voted to cap annual benefit payments supporters of the Bill have failed to say which other benefits they will cut or which taxes they will raise to pay for the changes. I hope you will see why I voted against the Bill.

As ever,  
Anna

## *What's on in Broxtowe this week and Saturday's surgery*

### **Thursday 18 September**

#### **Chilwell's Creative Corner**

5pm till 9pm

Where: 178 High Road, Chilwell, NG9 5DW.

What's on: Open invitation to come to the first official event showcasing; Attik, Created By Hand, Fusion Café, Mish Mash Gallery and Tranquillity. There will be arts and crafts demonstrations, music and special offers.

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### **Friday 19 September - Sunday 21 September** **Beeston Food and Drink Weekend**

What's on: A weekend celebrating all of Beeston's food and drink establishments, street food market, farmers market, street entertainment and much more. Please click [here](#) for more details.

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### **Vintage Tea Parlour**

10am till 4pm

Where: Oban House, 8 Chilwell Road, Beeston.

What's on: Homemade cakes, afternoon tea, toasties and much more.

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### **Saturday 20 September**

#### **Surgery**

10am -12pm

Beeston Library

Please call the office for an appointment

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### **Readers Network Event**

1:30 till 3:30pm

Where: Beeston Library.

**And finally .....**

I am very pleased that I have bought a home in Bramcote.