



Constituency REPORT

An update from **Helen Goodman MP** to constituents
OCTOBER 2008



WORKING HARD FOR ALL IN BISHOP AUCKLAND



This is my fourth annual report, and 2008 has been the most challenging year since I was elected as your MP. Rising fuel and food prices have been felt across the constituency, and factory closures at Electrolux and Black & Decker and have cast a shadow over the recent success of the local economy.

But despite these setbacks, the constituency remains attractive to inward investment, as I saw when I attended the opening of the new Berco factory in Spennymoor, and when I visited the £28 million Thorns lighting factory. The proposed £45 million Tindale Crescent leisure and shopping complex, and the Durham Gateway also promise to create new jobs locally.

This newsletter is to tell you about the work I have been doing over the last year, including a number of campaigns I have been involved in, ranging from road safety and child poverty to anti-racism.

My contact details are on the back of this newsletter, so I look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,

Helen Goodman MP
Member of Parliament for Bishop Auckland



Helen attends the opening of the Berco factory in Spennymoor.

CHAMPIONING REMPLOY

In September 2007 it was announced that the Remploy factory in Spennymoor would be kept open, and over the last year Helen has chaired a 'Champions Group' with Remploy management and a number of local public and private sector bodies to help increase procurement and thereby ensure the long term future of the factory.

Helen said:

“I am thrilled with the progress that Remploy Spennymoor has made over the last year, and I have really enjoyed working with them. Remploy have a skilled, flexible workforce who produce high quality products, and that is why I had no hesitation in hiring them to print this newsletter.”



To keep up with all Helen's news, visit:

www.helengoodman.co.uk

It was shortlisted for Best MP's Website in the 2007 British Computer Society Website Awards.

WHAT'S INSIDE?



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PLAYING FOR DURHAM

Helen is working as a 'Play Champion' for Play Durham. Play Durham are improving play opportunities for young people across the County, and have welcomed recent investment of £1.5 million in local play areas. This will bring a range of exciting new play facilities, and will also

allow Teesdale District Council to appoint a dedicated Play team.

Having worked for Children's charities prior to becoming an MP, Helen has a wealth of experience in children's issues and is delighted to be working with Play Durham.



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Michelle Deans, North East Regional Manager for Play England said:

"It's great that Helen has agreed to become Play Champion for Play Durham. We are all excited about working with her to raise the profile of play in the county."

VICTORY FOR ROAD SAFETY

Helen supported local residents' campaign to improve safety on the A688 through Evenwood Gate, and welcomed Durham County Council's decision to reduce the speed limit on this notoriously dangerous road. A local resident said: **"Very well done! This is the best present I have had. Very many thanks for your help."**



Zak the Zebra joins Helen to campaign for road safety.

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A number of new, affordable housing developments have recently opened in the constituency.

complete a new affordable housing project that has been nominated for a County Durham design award (pictured below left).

Helen said:

"Inadequate and unaffordable housing prolongs and worsens inequality, and I am delighted that locally we have new high quality affordable social housing."

Helen opened the new £935,000 housing development at Tannery Lane, Barnard Castle, and in nearby Mickleton, Teesdale District Council have worked with the Three Rivers Housing Association to

Helen also opened the new social housing development at Coney Avenue, Bishop Auckland, which offers a range of support, training and advice services for young parents.



Helen meets young mothers at the new Coney Avenue housing development.



LOCAL ECONOMY REMAINS STRONG

The local economy is continuing to attract investment, including the Berco and Thorn Lighting factories in Spennymoor, and the proposed Durham Gateway and Tindale Crescent developments.

In July Helen visited the new state-of-the-art Berco factory at Green Lane (pictured below).



Helen said:

“The opening of this factory is really good news, and shows that Spennymoor has got all the attributes to attract high quality inward investment. Berco are a very good company with a high level of engineering expertise, and the fact that they want to come here is a real tribute to Spennymoor.”

Helen also recently saw the progress that has been made at the new £28 million Thorns Lighting factory (pictured right), which is set to be completed shortly.

And with ambitious planning proposals also being made for the Durham Gateway and a £45 million development at Tindale Crescent – which could include a six-screen cinema, a 60,000 sq ft Sainsbury’s, a bowling alley, and a new stadium for Bishop Auckland FC – the local economy is set to continue growing.



The new Thorns lighting factory in Spennymoor.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS IN THE NORTH EAST

After almost four years of drafts, consultations and public examinations, the North East Regional Plan has finally been published, and it has been broadly welcomed by Helen. Helen said:

“I am delighted that the Regional Plan has finally been published, and that it reflects many of the concerns I raised during the consultation process: in particular the need to build more houses, and to expand key employment sites.”



Helen with Minister for the North East, Nick Brown.

HOPE NOT HATE

Helen has worked with local trade unions, Churches and sports clubs to support the anti-racism campaign Hope Not Hate.

“I believe our local community is at its strongest when we celebrate our diversity, tolerance and equality rather than focusing on superficial racial or cultural differences.”



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FIGHTING POVERTY

Helen continues to campaign against poverty both at home and abroad.

She recently spoke at a Make Poverty History North East meeting, and following a request by year 9 pupils, she visited Tudhoe Grange School to talk about the importance of eradicating global poverty.

Helen has also championed the fight against child poverty, and has welcomed recent increases in Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit. Helen said:



Helen with members of Make Poverty History North East.

“Ending poverty – and particularly child poverty – was one of the major reasons I became an MP. The commitment made in 1999 to eradicate child poverty was ambitious, but there are now 600,000 fewer children living in poverty, and we should be proud of that.”



Campaigning to end Child Poverty.

COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Helen has established a Climate Change Action Group to look at how to reduce local carbon emissions. Helen said:

“I receive more e-mails, letters and postcards about climate change than any other issue, and I have been delighted at the enthusiasm local people have shown about forming a climate change action group. Climate change has to be tackled locally as well as nationally and internationally, and I am sure that, together, we can make a real difference to the local environment.”



Helen joins children at Startforth Memorial School to campaign for greener schools.

CONTACT HELEN

If you would like to contact Helen, you can do so in a number of ways:

By e-mail:

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By post:

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SW1A 0AA

By telephone:

Westminster office:
02072 194 346
Constituency office:
01388 777 175

By Fax:

020 7219 0444

Website Contact Form:

<http://www.helengoodman.co.uk/contact/>

Surgeries:

You do not need an appointment to attend these surgeries, which will be held on the following dates:

Friday 10 October, 17:00, Tudhoe Community Centre, St David's Close

Friday 7 November, 17:00, Montieth Community Centre, West Auckland.

Friday 5 December, 17:00, Shildon Centre, Main Street