



News from Westminster

6th July 2007 Phil Hope MP

Strengthening British Security



Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown has announced a number of steps that will be taken to bolster security across Britain.

In the House of Commons chamber on Wednesday at Prime Minister's Questions, Gordon told us that the Labour Government was looking into a number of ways to tighten security following the attempted terrorist attacks in London and Glasgow.

The proposals include expanding the watchlist

of potential terrorist organisations, signing new international agreements to increase co-operation, establishing the practice of deportation and conducting background checks of highly-skilled migrant workers.

The Government, said Mr Brown, would "ensure that the security of the British people will be protected".

The Prime Minister also announced that he will go ahead with a Privy Council review of the use of intercept evidence in terror-related court cases and that he would commissioned Home Office Minister Lord West to investigate recruitment into the NHS.

Asked about the possibility of establishing a national border police, Mr Brown said that he would look into this measure along with the "complementary" task of introducing identity cards for British citizens, a policy the Conservatives oppose.

Retreat reshuffle is a sign of Cameron's weakness

Tory leader hands the party right wing the scalps they were looking for

This week David Cameron's "retreat reshuffle" was a sign of his weakness.

Cameron has handed the reactionary wing of his party the scalps they were looking for in demoting David Willetts and Francis Maude. Meanwhile, those on the right of his cabinet - William Hague, David Davis, Liam Fox and George Osborne - keep their plum places at Cameron's right hand.

Willetts has been moved from the schools portfolio because he was prepared to take

on the Tory right wing on Grammar Schools but lost that battle after Cameron caved in. Maude, the original moderniser, has been demoted in the face of growing hostility from the grassroots of his reforms to the party.

While Labour is breaking ground with the first ever female home secretary and the youngest foreign secretary in a generation, Cameron's panicky reshuffle is only interested in staving off the threat from right wing within his party.

Increased support for students in higher education



Labour have announced major changes to the higher education student support system which will ensure that all

people with the potential and qualifications, no matter what their background, will have the opportunity to participate and succeed in higher education.

Full-time students from families with incomes of up to £25,000 will be entitled to the maximum grant and students from families with incomes of up to £60,000 will

also be entitled to a partial grant - meaning a third of students from 2008/09 onwards will now receive a full grant (worth £2,825 a year) and a further third of students will receive a partial grant.

For a student from a household on £25,000 a year earnings, this will mean an extra £1,100 a year in maintenance grant. For a student from a family on £40,000 a year, it will mean an extra £1,000 a year.

In total, two thirds of students will receive some grant each year - compared to just over a half now.

Smokefree Corby and East Northants



Labour achieved a big step towards a healthier population on 1 July 2007, when England went smokefree. Virtually all enclosed public places are now smokefree; this includes offices, warehouses, factories, pubs, cafes, train stations and leisure centres.

Surveys have shown that the public support the smoking ban, 78 per cent of people believe going smokefree will have a positive effect on health. The majority of smokers who wish to quit smoking also welcome the ban. But what do you think?

Smoking can have devastating consequences on a person's health, as a smoker or passive-smoker. Over 100,000 people die from smoking each year. Second-hand smoke contains 4,000 toxic chemicals, 85 per cent of secondhand smoke cannot be detected by

smell or sight. It increases the chances of getting lung and heart disease and has negative effects on children's health. That's why, Labour has taken action to protect people from smoke in their workplace, pubs and cafes. Only by tackling the causes of illnesses will we be able to improve health inequalities and outcomes for all.

A smokefree country will improve the health of thousands of people, reduce the temptation to smoke and encourage smokers to quit.

A healthier workforce that is smoking less will be more productive and contribute to our strong economy. It's estimated that £2.7 billion annually will be saved by the smoking ban. So get involved and let us know what you think about a smokefree England.

If you'd like to help a friend to quit visit

www.labour.org.uk/smokefree

Join the discussion - let us know what you think of a smokefree England.