

Focusing on the environment



Political climate change?

I have always told anyone who asked, from the moment that I was first nominated to be the Parliamentary Candidate for Southampton Test that sustaining our environment and combating climate change were two of the key issues facing us, and that effective action would need to be taken by government over the next ten years or so. Since being elected I have made this area of policy one of my priorities – and a very substantial area it is, involving energy, waste, housing, land use and transport.

Low carbon economy

I have spent much time in Parliament promoting the development of renewable energy sources – not only wind, but also biomass, solar, photovoltaic and tide/wave power. I was therefore very pleased to see that the recent **Energy White Paper** has committed the UK to move towards a low carbon economy, aiming to emissions of carbon dioxide from energy use by 60% in 2050. This means that we will have to reach some important 'milestone' targets on the way – such as the aim to produce 10% of our electricity from renewable energy by 2010 and 20% by 2020.

One result of this has been the **Energy Bill**, presently going through Parliament. I have sat on the committee for this Bill, and have moved amendments supporting Combined Heat and Power, and securing a 'renewable fuel obligation' option for government. I have also supported moves to make the development of offshore wind power faster and more secure.

I am also the Chair of **PRASEG**, the **Parliamentary Renewable and Sustainable Energy Group**. This is a cross party group for UK politicians and senior industry stakeholders that promotes sustainable energy issues in Parliament and to the wider political community. PRASEG holds a number of seminars discussing policy barriers and opportunities to the development of sustainable energy technologies. Other environmental groups I am involved in include the **Parliamentary Sustainable Waste Group**.

Closer to home I am a director of the **Environment Centre** in Southampton, which locally administers many of the government grants available for energy efficiency. I myself have taken up offers available to the public and have recently installed solar panels on my roof!

Promoting biofuel

I have campaigned in Parliament over a number of years for better recognition of the potential of alternative fuels for vehicles. This has taken the form of a number of adjournment debates, questions, and deputations to ministers.

Bioethanol can be made from almost any vegetable or woody source and can substitute for petrol. Biodiesel can be grown from plants such as oilseed rape and substitutes for diesel. In a world where oil supplies are insecure and expensive it is worth developing these sources in the UK, as well as saving some 60% of CO2 emissions in the process because the fuel comes from plants and not from mineral sources.

More recently, I have suggested that a safe and inexpensive way to promote these fuels is simply to add small amounts of them to conventional fuel supplies, increasing by - say 1% per year until the amount reaches 6%. Cars work as well with these proportions of biofuel, and there is no need to install expensive new fuel pumps or bring new engines onto the market. I am pleased that the government has now accepted the principle of doing this with the introduction of powers to introduce a 'renewable fuel obligation' in the Energy Bill.





Bright ideas to make your home energy efficient


One of the best ways to save CO2 emissions is by simply using less energy and there is a huge area of saving to be made in our own homes. Southampton City Council and the Environment Centre have been active in promoting these changes which are 'win-win' - you save carbon emissions and save money on your bills!


Here are some ways to save energy and money in the home. Against each of them I've put a 'money where my mouth is' symbol, indicating if I've done this in my own home or if not.

Consider installing Cavity Wall Insulation (CWI). If your home is suitable, about three hours of a professional's time will save you up to £100 a year. CWI costs around £300 and discounts are available through energy companies and government schemes. For more details visit www.saveenergy.co.uk/grants *But doing it soon!*


 **Choose a high efficiency condensing boiler.** If your boiler needs to be replaced, then make sure you replace it with a high efficiency condensing boiler. This could save you around a third on your bills. Discounts on condensing boilers of around 30% are available to anyone through the Thames Valley EEAC's Big Green Boiler Scheme. They can be reached on 0800 028 2855.

 **Buy energy efficient appliances.** When replacing appliances, consider their energy efficiency rating. Look for the Energy Efficiency Recommended logo as a guide to help you choose the most suitable product. Alternatively, if you are receiving state benefit you can exchange your old energy-inefficient appliance for a new fridge for £50 or fridge-freezer for £75. Phone 0845 604 0045 for details.

 **Use energy efficient light bulbs.** The newest ones are a lot better and are the same size as a standard light bulb. They last up to 12 times longer and for each bulb you can save up to £7 on your annual electricity bill. Discounts are available from British Gas where a pack of six costs £12. Call 0800 028 2855

 There are plenty of ways to **conserve energy** which don't cost a penny. For example, 85% of the electricity used by a video recorder is consumed when it is not actually on. Try to get into the habit of switching appliances off at the plug.

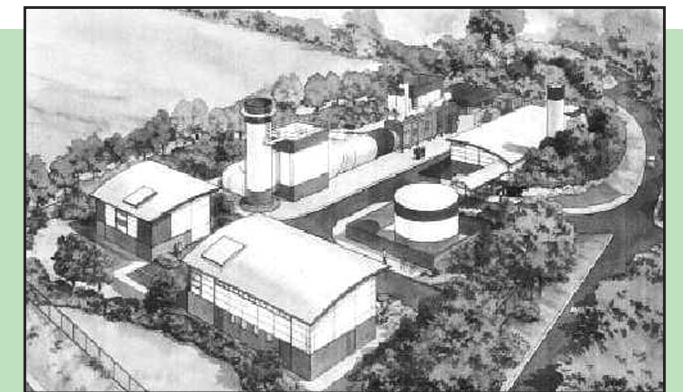
Not as good as I should be!

 **Installing photovoltaic or solar water heating panels** on your roof (if it is suitable) can produce fuel free hot water forever, and save large amounts on fuel bills over time. Contact the Environment Centre on 8033 6172 for advice and forms.



Warm Front is a government funded scheme which provides grants to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient. Warm Front Grants for heating and insulation are available to people who are 60 and over, have children under 16, are pregnant, are disabled, or have a long-term illness. Grants will normally cover all necessary work and for further information call 0800 716 846.

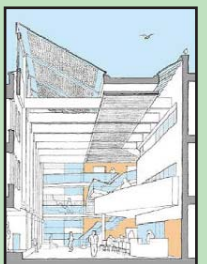
For general enquiries on energy efficiency contact the very helpful Solent Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC) on FREEPHONE 0800 512 012



Southampton leads the way in sustainable energy

Planning permission for the £40 million **Millbrook Community Heating Scheme** has now been agreed (above). This will be the UK's largest district heating project and will deliver low cost heating to businesses, schools and over 3000 homes. The scheme could meet almost a third of the city's target for CO2 reductions.

Plans for the new Academic Student Services Building at Southampton University have also been unveiled. Right is an artist's impression of the view from the gallery of the photovoltaic (PV) roof of the atrium.



Alan Whitehead MP

Summer Newsletter

Southampton Test Constituency: Bevois (part of), Coxford, Freemantle, Millbrook, Portswood and Swaythling, Redbridge and Shirley.



Alan Whitehead MP

Summer Newsletter to constituents in Southampton Test

Southampton Test Constituency: Bevois (part of), Coxford, Freemantle, Millbrook, Portswood and Swaythling, Redbridge and Shirley.



Keeping the deposit

Much of my time in Parliament involves committee work. This year one of my roles has been as a member of a committee which oversaw the passing of the **Housing Bill**, soon to become law. MPs do not often get the chance to move successful amendments to Bills but through my role on the Housing Bill committee I was able to press for changes concerning housing and in particular **tenancy deposits**.

Southampton has high numbers of tenants, many of whom will have had to pay a deposit to their landlord or agent when moving in. Research

shows that tenants can have problems getting deposits back when moving out. A solution to this is to place the deposit with a regulated third party during the tenancy. If there are any problems when its time to move out the third party can help resolve the matter. I am glad to say that a tenancy deposit scheme has been included in the Housing Bill so with luck this problem will become a thing of the past.

"It goes without saying that your lobbying - both publicly and privately was absolutely crucial in convincing Ministers to include this measure." Letter to Alan from Adam Sampson, Director of Shelter

Advice Surgeries

I now have four surgeries a month to give constituents the opportunity to meet with me on a one to one basis. Here you can discuss issues that you want to raise with me, or any problems you might have. Initial appointments last for ten minutes after which I may make representations on your behalf. To book an appointment please phone my office on 8023 1942 or e-mail alan@alan-whitehead.org.uk

Sure Start to summer

One of the many ground breaking schemes now flourishing in our city, **Sure Start Millbrook, Redbridge and Maybush** is Southampton's third and newest Sure Start Programme. The overall aim of the government initiative is to give children from birth to 4 years a 'sure start' in life through improved education, health and family support.

Recently I joined staff, parents and children to launch the scheme's mobile toy library. This will take to the streets this summer providing young children and their parents with free toys, play equipment, expert advice and information. Other services already provided by Sure Start include community based midwifery services, family support workers, a Play Team, family link librarian and oral health worker.



Launching the Sure Start mobile toy library

Part of my job is to ensure that Southampton gets the best deal from government so schemes like this can continue to flourish.

This summer newsletter outlines some of the activities I have been involved in this year as your Member of Parliament. Because one of my interests is the environment I have taken the opportunity to focus on 'green issues', setting them in the context of what is happening nationally, in the city and what we can do to make a difference in our everyday lives.

On the back you will find my contact details and a reply slip. Please feel free to keep me informed of any issues you think are important and I will try to help where I can.

Out and about this year...



Supporting residents to save the Civil Service Sports Ground in Freemantle



Young Carers Week in Mayflower Park



Shaking hands with Olympian Steve Cram having completed the Westminster Mile for Sport Relief

Behind the scenes at Southampton's new state-of-the-art CCTV control centre



Five ways to contact Alan Whitehead MP

- ◆ Write to Alan at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
- ◆ Ring Alan's Constituency Office on 8023 1942
- ◆ Email alan@alan-whitehead.org.uk
- ◆ Visit www.alan-whitehead.org.uk
- ◆ See Alan at one of his surgeries

At the opening of the new Freightliner terminal



Promoting our Port

In June I attended a special ceremony to open a new multi-million pound freight terminal in the Port of Southampton. New machinery will set in motion a faster and more efficient method of transferring containers between the container terminals and rail services. This in turn will help reduce the impact of port traffic on our roads and ensure Southampton's future as a UK hub port.

Let me know your views
My problem /comment is:

Name _____ Address _____ Postcode _____

Return this slip to: Alan Whitehead MP, FREEPOST NAT 12871, Southampton, SO15 2RD