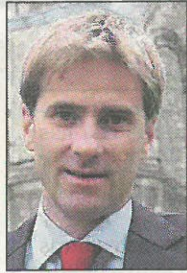


## Letter from Westminster



**Steve Brine:**  
Winchester MP

I FOUND myself in Manchester earlier this month and one thing I remember from Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party Conference speech was her announcement that a new generation of council houses will be built, with

an extra £2billion of funding going into the affordable housing budget.

The move will also allow more homes to be built for social rent.

Happily, the news follows Winchester's lead as the council here has been building council homes for years through its New Homes Programme.

I've been fortunate to open many over the years, including Barron Close in Micheldever and The Dell in Kings Worthy, and the timing couldn't have been better as Winchester City Council announced a few days later it will double the amount of council homes built by 2020.

Well done to them.

Site selection will be crucial in the planning, and we must protect our rural gaps as much as we respect our Local Plan, but this is an excellent example of local and national Government working together.

While in Manchester, I took the chance to visit the largest single site cancer centre in Europe at The Christie Hospital while wearing my ministerial hat.

The proton beam cancer treatment it will offer is a first for the UK (currently children with certain forms of cancer have to visit the US) and I was struck by the engineering miracle taking place.

It's a mini hadron collider and not only will it save lives, it will dramatically reduce the long-term impact that this kind of radiation treatment can cause.

We should remember, when listening to the BBC (and especially when watching Channel 4 news) that there is good news out there and so much hope.

Finally this month, and while we're on the subject of hope, I think Winchester gains a great deal from being a university town and we should be particularly proud of our university.

Yes, we must work on a managed plan as numbers increase and we should want the vast majority of new arrivals to live in halls of residence, but we should remember that also requires us to support the university's plan for growth.

Students are a key part of the vibrant city we enjoy and let's not forget they support our local economy by providing a key workforce and spending their money.

A survey carried out among Winchester businesses last year found some 85 per cent of respondents consider students a beneficial customer group to them.

What we can do without on this subject is grand-standing that grabs a headline, but actually lets us all down in the long-run.

Steve Brine  
MP for Winchester & Chandler's  
Ford

26.10.17