



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Felicity Buchan MP

Minister for Housing and Homelessness

**Department for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities**

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To: All Members of the House of Commons

www.gov.uk/dluhc

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Dear Colleague,

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL BILL: INTRODUCTION

Members on all sides of the House have repeatedly shown a deep commitment to the importance of commemorating the Holocaust. January's debate on Holocaust Memorial Day, jointly sponsored by Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP and Rt Hon Dame Margaret Hodge MP, provided the opportunity for Members to express their views, with many offering deeply personal insights and memories of relatives or friends who were personally affected. We share a determination never to forget the murder of 6 million Jewish men, women and children alongside many Roma, Sinti and other victims of the Nazi persecution.

Establishing a new, permanent national Memorial to the Holocaust, with an integrated Learning Centre, has also benefitted from support on all sides of the House. I am pleased that we are now bringing forward legislation that will unblock progress towards completion of the Memorial. Our proposed Memorial at Victoria Tower Gardens will stand as a reminder to the whole nation of the depths to which humanity can sink. By giving the Memorial such prominence, as proposed by the cross-party Commission in 2015, we will be making a bold statement about the importance that Britain places on preserving the memory of the Holocaust.

As you may know, planning consent for the Memorial and Learning Centre was granted in July 2021, then lost as a consequence of a High Court judgment the following year. The Court found that Section 8 of the London County Council (Improvements) Act 1900 was an obstacle to construction of the Memorial at Victoria Tower Gardens. Our Bill seeks to remove that obstacle. We remain fully committed to the aim in the 1900 Act that Victoria Tower Gardens should be a garden open to the public; our proposals will see improvements to landscaping and accessibility of the gardens, while the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre (which will require about 7.5% of the current open space) will also be open to the public at no charge. Subject to approval of the Bill, and to obtaining planning consent when the designated Minister re-takes the decision, we aim to commence construction as soon as possible after Royal Assent and to open in 2027.

Further information on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre project is in the pamphlet accompanying this letter. A drop-in session has been arranged for MPs on 7 March, 1-2pm in Committee Room 2A. Baroness Scott and I will both attend, and officials will give a presentation about the project. Officials and I will be happy to discuss the Bill and the project with you.

There is a pressing need to complete this important national project as soon as possible; not only because it will re-affirm our commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education, but also, sadly, because further delay will mean that many more Holocaust survivors will not live long enough to witness the opening of the Memorial and Learning Centre. I look forward to your support for this Bill.

Yours ever,

Felicity Buchan MP

Minister for Housing and Homelessness