



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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As the MP for Hendon South I have naturally taken a deep interest in the proposed Eruv. As you can imagine this has generated much heat - on both sides. It would have been easier for me to 'sit on the fence'. This I have not done - primarily for two reasons.

The first is that I know of many individuals whose lives would be eased by the proposed Eruv. I, unlike others, do not believe that I am qualified to question the rules of the United Synagogue. What I do know is that many of my constituents wish to abide by these long established rules and that the only way they can both do this and attend shul is to create an eruv. Often those in the evening of their lives are particularly anxious to attend church or synagogue. The creation of an eruv would help them to do so. It would also help the disabled and would allow mothers with very young children not to be housebound on Shabbat. The benefits would of course be wider than just these groups - grandparents would benefit too from being able to see their young grandchildren.

The second is that I am a former Member of the European Parliament. As such I frequently visited Strasbourg (where there has been an Eruv for many years). I was impressed by the fact that the Jewish Community in Strasbourg was fully integrated with the wider community. On this basis I do not believe that the fears of opponents of the Eruv are justified.

I am not a qualified town planner unlike the officers of Barnet Council and am therefore not qualified to comment on the detailed planning matters. However I do hope that my observations are regarded as relevant.

MP for Hendon South