



**Craig Whittaker MP**

**CALDER VALLEY**

[www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk](http://www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk)

## **Brexit, Northern Ireland and the Border**

Thank you for contacting me about the impact of leaving the EU on Northern Ireland.

While Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU, the UK as a whole voted to leave. Northern Ireland will leave the EU single market and customs union with the rest of the UK.

The Government has proposed that the negotiations with regard to Northern Ireland focus on upholding the Belfast Agreement in all its parts; avoiding a physical border for the movement of goods and; preserving North-South and East-West cooperation. Support for the Belfast Agreement should also be written into the withdrawal agreement and the right of people in Northern Ireland to hold Irish citizenship and benefit from its associated EU citizenship rights should be protected. The UK and the EU have already agreed that the Common Travel Area will be maintained.

The Government and the EU have said explicitly that there must not be any physical border infrastructure or a hard border on the island of Ireland. This will be avoided by discussion of the future trading relationship between the UK and the EU in phase 2 of the negotiations. If agreement is not reached the Government will seek specific solutions for the Northern Irish border.

If either of these outcomes is not achieved the UK will maintain full alignment with the rules that support north-south cooperation under the Belfast Agreement. This means sharing the same policy goals even if they are achieved by different means. I am confident, however, that it will not come to this. At any rate, Northern Ireland's place in the internal market of the United Kingdom will be protected and full access for Northern Ireland's businesses will remain.

The Prime Minister has been clear that the Government will not agree to any proposal in the European Commission's draft legal text that would undermine the UK common market and the constitutional integrity of the UK by creating a customs and regulatory border in the Irish Sea.

Along with all political parties in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government, the UK Government will continue to work for peace, stability and prosperity in Northern Ireland. I am confident that with this Government and Theresa May as our Prime Minister, there is no one better to provide the strong leadership that Britain needs for this serious and complex task.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP