

AMANDA SOLLOWAY MP

Maiden Speech

17th June 2015

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Speaker,

I would like to thank the House for allowing me the opportunity of delivering my maiden speech during this important debate, it really is an honour and a privilege to be able to speak in this House as the Member of Parliament for Derby North.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of my predecessor, Chris Williamson. Chris has a long history of being involved in the Derby community as a councillor, council leader and, latterly, the MP. None who met Chris can deny the passion and knowledge that he had for Derby North.

Mr Speaker, for me, winning on May 7th was a tremendous victory. With a very respectable majority of 41 votes and I am honoured to be elected to serve the people of Derby North, the only seat to change hands in the East Midlands.

One of the first notes of congratulations I had was from the honourable member for East Yorkshire.

His note read:

“Well done, an excellent result! Congratulations on becoming only the second Conservative MP to represent Derby North since the seat was created. Yours ever, Greg. The first Conservative MP ever to be elected in Derby North”

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to be the second Conservative MP for Derby North, the first female MP for Derby North, and the first Conservative MP for Derby North in 18 years in what has otherwise been a Labour held seat.

Winning by 41 was a little bit tense, I admit, but the House can rest assured that I plan to at least **double** this in 2020.

I want to note the amazing work that my team did.

Throughout the campaign, and the years of hard work leading up to it.

Throughout the day, when they came back exhausted and I asked them to go out one more time, and they did.

And then throughout the very long night and morning, standing firm in their resolve at all of the 4 counts, to secure a Conservative win.

I'd like especially, to thank my Campaign Manager, Miles Pattison for his immense effort, companionship and his sense of humour that kept me going even in the hardest times.

Whist victory was hoped for it certainly wasn't a given, but increasingly we were getting a consistent positive message on the doorstep. People believed that we needed to have a Conservative Government to ensure that the country continued to thrive, it was a genuine concern that we would take a step back if Labour won.

As has been said many times, we are a nation of aspiration and nowhere has that been shown more than in Derby North

Mr Speaker, I have always had a keen interest in politics, but it's only recently that I had the courage to pursue my dream of serving the Derby community in Parliament.

Now, as I stand here amongst so many people who I have admired of all political persuasion for so long, I feel very humbled.

I am also a little scared as I know that my brother will be having me streamed live into his office, delighted by my success.

I don't have a degree, I don't really have A Levels to talk about, but I do have common sense and a business background.

For me the economy has always been of paramount importance, with regeneration and production growth central to this and my background in retail and manufacturing has given me the opportunity to experience, first-hand, the impact that good management can make. I believe that we are the only party who can truly manage this country's economy and growth.

Derby is a thriving city, built on its long standing engineering and manufacturing pedigree and it was with great delight that we received the Chancellor two weeks ago in stunning Darley Abbey as he visited one of our rail engineering firms. He announced that the Midlands was Britain's *engine for growth* and I can tell you that Derby North is the heart of the Midlands

Derby North has long been the unsung hero of Industry, we house the first ever silk mill which dates back to the Industrial revolution, and is now a successful museum, showcasing the Eagle Engine, which was the first aero engine built by Rolls Royce 100 years ago during WW1.

We also have a whole host of SME's that continue to grow as a result of their hard work and ambition and I plan to support these opportunities to grow and encourage apprenticeships.

Mr Speaker, Derby is known for many things such as Joseph Wright the artist, our ever growing microbreweries, one of the most haunted pubs in England (probably haunted by my husband trying out those ever growing micro-breweries), and pyclets (a small oat cake), which I would recommend to all members of the house. It's also noted for its straight talking and I hope to bring some good Derbyshire straight talking to this House.

We have the tremendous football team of Derby County and recently we have a new Chairman - Mel Morris. Mel, as Members may know, is a local business man from Littleover in Derby North, he is one of our great innovators, and the creator of Candy Crush, a game (and the Honourable Member for Amber Valley will confirm this fact) that we are very fond of in Derbyshire.

Mr Speaker I also know how important community is and, having worked for Help the Aged, now Age uk, I am even more convinced that we must be supporting elderly people across the country to live with dignity,

Having been involved with the Princes Trust and latterly the YMCA, I recognise that there are times when some young vulnerable people just slip through the net and I'll be working to provide some real solutions to these issues.

When I was 17 I was unable to stay in the family home for a while and thankfully I had friends who helped and housed me, but sometimes all doors seemed closed and we cannot simply return vulnerable young people back to the family home.

Mental health is also a personal issue to me, my mum suffered from depression, prescription drug addiction and alcohol abuse throughout her life and it was tragic to watch this beautiful vibrant women succumb to her illness.

I have also experienced first-hand the tragic loss of my gorgeous and fun loving cousin to suicide, a young man who at the age of 36 took his own life as he thought he had no other option available.

This cannot go on, and we need to do something serious about it and I am fully committed to helping us tackle mental health issues head on as it's a subject we must not ignore.

So, there is much to do in Derby North with business at the heart and so much that needs doing in the community with compassion of the heart, I made a promise on my election night that I would do my utmost for the people of Derby North and I look forward to many years fulfilling that promise.