



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

May 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about council investment decisions.

There are strong views on this issue, and I appreciate that my position will not please everyone. The UK is a close friend of Israel, and we enjoy an excellent bilateral relationship, built on decades of cooperation between our two countries across a range of fields.

The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. The UK regularly raises its concerns on this issue with the Israeli authorities and urges them to reverse their policy of settlement expansion. However, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is deeply complex: settlements are not the only obstacle to peace. The people of Israel deserve to live free from the scourge of terrorism and antisemitic incitement, which gravely undermine the prospects for a two-state solution.

While the UK should not hesitate to express disagreement with Israel wherever necessary, I know ministers believe that imposing sanctions on Israel or supporting anti-Israeli boycotts would not support efforts to progress the peace process and achieve a negotiated solution. I agree. Imposing local level boycotts can damage integration and community cohesion within the United Kingdom, hinder Britain's export trade, and harm foreign relations to the detriment of Britain's economic and international security.

I am aware that a Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill will be brought forward to ban universities and local councils from organising boycotts, sanctions and disinvestment against other countries. Foreign policy is rightly the reserve of national government. I believe that councils should prioritise securing long-term returns from their investment rather than dividing communities and making political statements. It cannot be right for councils to have the power to make divisive decisions which set different parts of the community against each other.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY