

Mark achieves ban on Khat

Mark has expressed his delight at a historic vote in Parliament to classify the plant known as Khat as a class C drug.

The vote came despite opposition from Liberal Democrats on the committee who voted against a ban. Mark, who has been campaigning to reclassify the drug after requests from his constituents, was a member of the Committee on Monday when the House of Commons voted to endorse the Home Secretary's decision last July to ban the drug.

Khat is a plant grown in Kenya and chewed mainly by the East African Community in the UK. It contains the banned substances Cathine and Cathinone. The UK is the only Western Europe country not to have banned the plant to date.

Mark started his campaign to ban the drug after being approached by his Somali constituents. They were concerned at the impact the drug was having on social cohesion and family breakdown in Milton Keynes. Police enforcement will take the form of an initial caution followed by a £60 fine for drug users with stronger fines and risk of imprisonment for dealers.

After the vote Mark said;

"I am pleased that the Committee, with the exception of the Liberal Democrats, supported the Home Secretary's decision to ban Khat. I know that this will be welcomed by many in the Somali community across the UK. We need to be sensitive as the ban is brought in and I look forward to engaging with the community and police as to how this can be best achieved."