

Preparing an Autumn Statement

Time was when a Chancellor prepared an Autumn Statement or budget in secret. He would of course listen to many representations and show interest in the many ideas that come into the Treasury without giving any hint as to which if any he favoured. MPs would be offered chances to voice their favourite requests to an inscrutable Minister. Indeed, Chancellors took seriously the need for confidentiality, knowing that were they to let slip a Budget secret they would be expected to resign.

In the run up to the Autumn Statement on 17th November we have been bombarded by a series of stories in papers and on the media claiming the Chancellor is considering a wide range of specific tax rises and spending reductions. We have heard of moves against benefit recipients to increase benefits by less than inflation, tinkering with the triple lock to lower the pensions uprating, eliminating the Enterprise zones, raising CGT rates, reducing pension saving allowances, freezing income tax thresholds for longer, bringing more people into higher tax bands, taxing electric car use, taxing dividends more, worsening the terms for Non Doms, increasing windfall taxes on energy, cutting grant to Councils and others I may have missed.

I assume none of these stories came from the Chancellor and I have no idea if any of them are true. I have not seen or heard the Chancellor give any indication of what he might do beyond the very general public statements we have seen.. I do not however think they were made up, so it does look as if someone inside government who claims to know what the Chancellor is working on is talking too much. They may simply be reporting an unappetising list of options drawn up by officials. Most of these ideas seem to me to be most unlikely to make it to the announcement, given the obvious political difficulties many of them pose. It would be helpful if whoever is putting all this out was told not to do so, as it does not make for good government and it is worrying to the successive groups of people who feel threatened by these proposals.

There is never any briefing that they might cut out needless or wasteful public spending. So far this government far from cutting spending has announced a very undesirable £11 bn extra for the Bank of England to allow it to take losses on bonds it owns which it need not sell. Surely that should be a first target for the axe. It has announced extra support for emerging economies with the costs of net zero programmes. It is apparently negotiating to offer more cash to the French to assist with border control across the Channel. We would want more proof of value for money before committing any extra cash to help them police their border. Where are the plans to help more people into work and off benefits, so both the individual and the state will be better off? Why not drive for more revenue from oil and gas by switching more of our demand from imports to domestic production? Where are the plans to build more of our own ships, to make a series of small nuclear reactors using UK factories and technology, to grow more of our own food diverting subsidies from wilding schemes to investment in larger scale market gardening? There have been many more such ideas to grow our revenues and

control our costs on this blog.

[My Visit to the Royal British Legion's Poppy Shop](#)

I visited the Royal British Legion shop in Wokingham to thank the organisers for helping the charity. They have a good range of items that can help us remember the great wars and sacrifices made. The money raised goes to such a good cause. I bought some historical items for my family to help them understand and remember what their grandparents and great parents went through.



Just control our borders

Yesterday I joined a call with the Head of Border Force to discuss the extensive use of hotel accommodation and the large numbers of asylum seekers and economic migrants crossing the Channel. I raised various issues in this call and with Ministers :

My constituents want to see some sense of urgency to transform this totally unacceptable situation.

Unacceptable to taxpayers having to pay £7m a day for hotel bills

Unacceptable to genuine asylum seekers caught in a long queue unable to get their case resolved so they can live and work here

Unacceptable that we allow tens of thousands of people at our expense to stay here not working because we do not get around to making decisions on their cases

Unacceptable that we do not change the law to prevent clever lawyers helping economic migrants pursue false asylum and trafficking cases for too long and with too many appeals

Unacceptable to burden our hotels with people who should either be helped to find appropriate accommodation here or sent back to where they came from. We need the hotels for their intended purposes.

1. When are we going to legislate to close the loopholes?
2. When are we going to determine claims for people coming from a range of other countries in a timely way, especially those coming from safe countries like Albania?
3. When are we going to do more to safeguard our communities from any criminal element that may be trying to use asylum cover to come here to commit crimes?
4. When are we going to arrest more of the people traffickers? Why is it so difficult to trace them given the open way they advertise their services? Can't we follow the money?

My Interview with Talk TV

Please see below my recent interview with Mike Graham, Talk TV:

My Letter to the Chief Executive at NatWest regarding the closure of their bank branch in Wokingham

Please see below my letter to Alison Rose, Chief Executive at NatWest:

Dear Ms Rose

Some of my constituents have expressed concerns about the closure of the Wokingham branch of NatWest.

The closure will disproportionately affect older customers who do not use online banking and who do not have access to transport to Bracknell.

While telephone services may be a suitable option for some there is the matter of long waits before speaking to a customer service representative.

Customers who are visually or hearing impaired will also be impacted by the closure of the Wokingham branch.

I should be grateful for your comments which I can forward to my constituents.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP, DPhil FCSI