

Another pro Leave Minister resigns

We heard a lot about the need to keep three dissident pro Remain Cabinet members in the government to justify the change on possible delay. Meanwhile yet another good Minister from the Leave side understandably felt he had to resign given the continued drift of policy away from our Manifesto. This repeats the pattern so far.

Not a single pro Remain Cabinet Minister has resigned. The PM has instead lost from the pro Leave side a Foreign Secretary, two Brexit Secretaries, and a Work and Pensions Secretary from the Cabinet because they did not see the Chequers proposals and the Withdrawal Agreement as compatible with the Manifesto pledge to leave. The government has also lost two Brexit department Ministers, a Northern Ireland Minister and now a Fishing and Farming Minister from the Leave side. There have been 15 resignations from PPS and Vice Chairmen of the party roles as well from the Leave side. 23 resignations over the same policy is trying to tell the government something, and shows how important this matter is that so many will give up interesting jobs they wanted to keep to make their point. I doubt there has ever been a policy in British history that has caused so many people to resign, without generating the necessary change of policy being sought.

The latest loss of George Eustice is a serious blow to the government. George is well versed in agricultural and fishing matters and was piloting through important changes for those industries so they can do better once out of the EU. He has been both patient and willing to compromise to help the government, but now rightly feels there has been too much drift away from the Brexit we set out in the 2017 election. He will be a welcome addition to the backbench campaign to secure a proper Brexit, but is a further shift of expertise and talent from the government to the backbenches.

Reply from Heathrow Airport about the impact of excessive aircraft noise

I have been in correspondence with Heathrow Airport about the impact of excessive aircraft noise on behalf of constituents. I enclose a copy of the reply I received from them:

Dear John,

Thank you for your email. As you will be aware, Wokingham is mainly overflowed by arrivals when the airport is on easterly operations (i.e. when the wind blows from the east) when making their way from Heathrow's holding stacks before joining the final approach to the airport. After experiencing a

prolonged period of westerly winds last weekend's change to easterlies may explain why you and your constituents have noticed more aircraft. I wish to assure your constituents that the overall pattern and heights of Heathrow's air traffic have not changed for many years.

There are currently no defined routes from Heathrow's holding stacks to the final approach, although flights follow a similar broad swathe. However, your constituents may be interested to know that as part of Heathrow's expansion proposals we are seeking feedback on our plans for 'airspace alternation'. By alternating our airspace, we will be able to provide respite for communities further away from the airport as well as those closer in. In January we launched our Airspace and Future Operations public consultation which gives residents the chance to have their say on this topic, along with other topics, so I would encourage your constituents to respond. The consultation is open until 4 March 2019. More information can be found on our dedicated Heathrow consultation website here: <https://www.heathrowconsultation.com/>.

I hope that this is helpful. Should your constituents have further questions then they are very welcome to contact our Community Relations team directly on 0800 344 844 or by email noise@heathrow.com.

Kind regards,

Connor
Community Relations Manager

[Delay and the European Parliamentary elections.](#)

I see no point in delaying our exit from the EU. I have never understood why we would be able to strike a good deal after March 29 if we were unable to strike a good deal in the 2 years 9 months of delay so far in implementing the decision of UK voters. Leave voters expect Parliament to implement the decision, not to seek out ways to undermine , delay or cancel it.

Yesterday the President of France and the Prime Minister of Spain both seemed opposed to the idea of delay in Brexit. France might consider it if the UK had changed her mind about leaving and now wanted a second referendum. Mrs May rightly continues to rule that out. Neither favoured a delay or further negotiations about the draft Withdrawal Agreement. Spain like Ireland strongly believes the Irish backstop has to stay in place unless and until both the EU and the UK agree it can be removed.

There is a general briefing line coming out of Brussels that any delay could not be longer than two to three months anyway. They argue that the UK will cease to be represented in the European Parliament from 2 July when the newly

elected Parliament takes over. The UK is not planning to field candidates, and the EU has decided to redistribute some of the UK seats to other countries and to abolish the remainder. If the UK is not in the Parliament it cannot legally be a member of the EU as it is no longer represented in the body that is an important co legislator with the Council, responding to the agenda and draft laws of the Commission.

Mrs May has always made clear the UK will not be contesting the next European election. It is a good fortune that the old Parliament expires shortly after the official date for Brexit. There have been no moves from rebel MPs in Parliament to seek to reinstate UK candidates or UK seats, which would of course require the consent of the EU. Whilst nomination papers do not have to be in before April, some party campaigns have already begun on the continent and parties are preparing for the new distribution of seats resulting from the UK's departure. The longer the UK leaves wanting to fight the election the more unreasonable it would be to other EU members to seek to join in when others have planned their election campaigns around the configuration of the Parliament without the UK.

I assume neither the Labour nor the Conservative parties will be wanting us to contest the EU elections. Were they to do so it would create great anger amongst the Brexit supporters in the country who would see it as breaking promises to leave. It would create ideal conditions for pro Brexit parties to do very well at the expense of traditional parties.

Delay would make the UK look weak. It would increase and prolong uncertainties. It would invite the EU to demand even more concessions. The UK always said No deal is better than a bad deal. If you issue such a statement you have to be prepared to carry it out.

Apology from South Western Rail for poor train service this week

I am very sorry for the disruption on parts of the South Western Railway network on Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 February, which was caused by one of our mainline train services suffering a major air leak at Berrylands shortly after the driver reported hitting something, and a points problem in the Vauxhall area during the morning peak.

Despite taking technical advice over the phone from our engineering staff based in the joint Network Rail / South Western Railway Control Centre, it was not possible to immediately move the train yesterday. This meant that all trains heading out of London had to use the one remaining track, causing a considerable backlog and congestion in the area.

Given the relative position of the lines through Berrylands, it was necessary

to block the remaining country-bound track (as well as the London-bound line used by fast services) at various times to enable response staff to access the stricken train which further exacerbated the delays.

It was only eventually possible for the train to move at slow speed to Surbiton after engineering staff attended the site and undertook temporary repairs.

The train was then moved to our Wimbledon depot overnight where a thorough inspection, supported by CCTV footage, took place to try and ascertain what caused the damage.

Unfortunately, disruption continued this morning (Tuesday 26 February) following a points problem at Vauxhall in south London. Network Rail engineers worked to fix this problem as soon as it was reported and lines reopened shortly after the morning peak. However, many customers will have had delays and crowded journeys as a result of this incident.

We know that both of these incidents caused considerable disruption and discomfort for customers travelling in peak times and that's why we are working very closely with Network Rail to prevent these issues from reoccurring.

South Western Railway

The collapse of Labour

Mr Corbyn must have been forced into a corner over a second referendum. He had wisely held out against it and sort of kept his party together and his poll ratings up. He then gave in just after 8 MPs left mainly over deselection, unpleasant treatment from their party and anti-Semitism. We read his advisers thought a second referendum would be the way to stop more dissenters. That is not necessarily the case, as MPs leaving seems to have more to do with the style of the party, the threat of deselection and a wider range of issues than the EU. It does mean, however, he will lose a lot of Leave voters who stuck with the party in 2017 in the belief that Labour now supported exit.

I have not met or heard from any Leave voters who think we need a second referendum. The campaign to hold one is of course a movement of Remain voters who cannot accept the verdict of the People's vote. The Remain MPs spend their time slanging off Leave voters by saying we were too stupid to vote properly or patronising us by saying we were misled or not given the true facts. Allying himself to this group drives a new wedge into his party, alienating Leave voters and putting many MPs in a difficult position having promised their Leave voters Labour backed leaving. Given the way they treat us Leave voters it is difficult to see why any of us would want to change

sides and join them. A second referendum looks like a hopeless mission. Even this Parliament should vote it down. Were one to be held why wouldn't Leave win by a bigger margin, given all that Remain has said about us, and all the false forecasts they have come out with? The hardline Remain MPs are remorselessly negative, run down our country, think the UK can do nothing for itself, and take the EU's side in any negotiation. These are not becoming characteristics for those who wish to represent most UK voters.

Labour has not defined the question for its referendum, but have said it will include Remain, so it is a re run of what we have already voted on. The only question to be resolved is do they want a proper WTO exit as an option, or would they seek to deny Leave voters even that? The last thing Leave voters could accept is a referendum between staying in as a full member and staying in some limbo land with a pretend Brexit under the cosh of a Withdrawal Agreement and in due course an Association Agreement.

The immediate polling is dire for Labour as a result of all this. It looks as if they have plunged well below 30%, with a worse result if the so called Independent group becomes a party that contests elections. That group could poll into double figures, damaging Labour and the Lib Dems but not polling enough to hold the seats of those MPs who have decamped to it. Any party which ignores the wishes and views of 17.4 million voters will struggle for support.