

Better healthcare

I am taking an interest in how the extra money for the NHS will be spent. It is most important that NHS England comes up with a proper plan of what they are trying to achieve by way of expansion and service improvements, so they can then test out how many extra staff they may need and what new contracts they should sign to deliver the better healthcare.

I understand that the Health Secretary is engaged on just such an exercise. I would be interested to hear from people, especially constituents, on what would be sensible requests for spending this additional cash. My priorities include wanting a well staffed GP service locally so that patients can get appointments that are timely and GPs feel they have manageable workloads so they can provide the best possible service. I think we do need some more hospital capacity for the most common procedures to reduce waiting times and provide some choice and flexibility for patients over when and where they receive treatment.

Local services need to be expanded to reflect the additional homes and increase in population. I share the government's wish to see better mental health provision where there are proven protocols and treatments that can make a difference to people in need of help.

The government is considering the role of technology in future medical services and care. How far do patients want to go with digital booking, or even remote consultations? I am keen that this should be based on patient preference rather than a mandatory conversion, as healthcare is a private and individual matter where if the patient needs to feel happy with the system and trust the doctor for it stand most chance of working.

The Brady amendment does not allow Brexit

The Brady amendment says MPs should vote for the Withdrawal Agreement if the backstop is amended or withdrawn. It is vague over how to fix the backstop and fails to mention the other many failings of the Withdrawal Agreement. I will not be supporting it. The Conservative Manifesto made clear that the government needed to keep negotiation over the Withdrawal Agreement in line with negotiation of the future partnership to have any bargaining power. The Withdrawal Agreement would lock us in for 21 to 45 more months of talks, placing us back under EU laws and taxes for that period, with no guarantee of a good exit.

Possible development sites in Wokingham Borough

In the long run up to the next local plan for Wokingham various landowners and developers will try to promote certain areas where they have an interest as future development sites. The Council has the job of identifying sites that are compatible with their environmental, transport, planning and public service policies, and including the appropriate ones in the draft local plan. This draft document will then be subject to consultation and assessment before it can become a finalised local plan.

I understand the wish of some in the local community to set out opposition to particular sites being pushed by landowners or builders at an early stage in the process. The best thing to do is to write in with objections to the use of such sites to the Council planning department or to the local Councillors in the affected ward, so these can be taken into account during the early process of sifting possible sites for inclusion. Any site for housebuilding needs to take into account a range of factors including the impact on local road network, access to public transport, impact on land drainage, danger of erosion of green gaps between settlements or areas of special landscape interest or good quality farmland, strains placed on local health and education services and general environmental impact.

Parliament and the people

Tomorrow Parliament has to decide whether it wishes to serve the people or defy them.

Parliament promised the electorate a referendum. It enacted one. It promised to enact the decision of the UK people. After much huffing and puffing it sent the Article 50 letter to leave the EU. After even more regrets and Parliamentary objections it passed the EU Withdrawal Act to confirm in UK law our departure on the 29 March 2019. If it wishes to serve the people it will now concentrate on making a success of our departure and do everything it can to use the new freedoms, money and controls we gain by exit.

Instead there are determined factions within Parliament who want to stop Brexit altogether, or who seek to delay or undermine it in the name of a having a so called soft Brexit, partial Brexit, late Brexit or half in half out Brexit. They have tried before to persuade the Parliament that we should stay in the Customs Union we voted to leave, and lost the votes. They have

tried before to say we should stay in the single market or closely aligned to it though we voted to leave it, and again lost the votes. Both Remain and Leave made crystal clear in the referendum leaving the EU meant leaving both single market and customs union. The UK government sent a leaflet to every household telling us just that. The EU has always said that. The EU says you cannot cherry pick, you can't stay in the bits some like about the EU without accepting lots of rules, costs and laws you may not like.

The forces of Remain in the Commons now dare to say they are the defenders of Parliamentary democracy, by wanting further debate and more votes. The irony is crushing, as they only want more debates and more votes to stop us regaining control of our laws, our borders and and our money. They refuse to accept that their view has been given more than three years of air time in the referendum and in the endless repetitious debates they have required us to hold. It dominates the airwaves of the conventional media, where the Just Leave cause is given little time, always interrupted, and always bookended by "experts" saying we are wrong. A group of Remain MPs who spent our years in the EU telling us no one was interested in details of EU policy and did their best to stop Parliament talking about it now want to talk about nothing else. MPs who told us the EU had no significant powers over us now tell us what the EU does is wide ranging and crucial.

The public think it is time Parliament got on with it. The majority do not want Parliament to reverse its Brexit legislation and keep us in. The public have spoken. Parliament promised. Parliament must now let us leave. To do otherwise is to go to war with the people.

Fox Hill

This afternoon there was a meeting by worried residents about the possible naming of Fox Hill as a future development site. I checked that a local Councillor would be present to explain the long process the Council goes through before identifying possible new development locations as well as writing myself to one of the organisers about it.

The Council has a duty to consider sites proposed by landowners, developers and others, but it also has a duty to listen to the local community and to assess which of the possible sites are the best to meet housing targets that do least damage to the countryside, drainage system and environment. Any final decision on a site for inclusion needs to show how the development would fit in with local infrastructure and public service provision.

Anyone with views on this or any other piece of land should send their views to the Planning Department at Wokingham Borough Council. As MP I do not get a formal say or vote in these decisions, which are a matter within the power of the Council.