

We do need to spend a bit more

Starting today I want to run a series of articles looking at how we could best spend the additional money coming from growth and from the savings in our EU contributions.

The NHS does need more money. There is the need to provide for the rising numbers of patients, partly the result of rapid growth in population. Even after a new migration policy has been put in place there will be some growth of population we need to provide for.

Under new arrangements with the EU after departure we need to make sure that if we continue with state payments for care in each other's territory there is a fairer recharging by the UK to the EU for the care we deliver to EU citizens in the UK. If there is no agreement then we need to require payments or insurance on EU citizens here, and to offer a way of reimbursing UK citizens needing care on the continent.

The government has accepted the case for more money, and even accepted a general level of increased payments. Over the summer it is vital this is turned into a positive programme. The government should not sign off on any extra money unless and until there is a costed proposal that cannot be covered by existing budgets, and which will raise the quality and quantity of care delivered.

Ministers are talking about setting the Chief Executive of NHS England proper targets and requiring performance against them to justify extra cash. These targets need careful choosing and enforcement. It also needs to be clear that failure to hit agreed targets will result in financial penalties for the highly paid top team. If they wish to be paid far more than the PM, more like the private sector, there needs to be genuine performance related risk for them.

I do think we need more money to expand operating theatre capacity, provide extra medical teams for hospital treatments, and expand the numbers of GPs.

Let's thank the Irish PM for showing us how absurd Project Fear has become

There are international agreements allowing overflights. Irish planes will still fly over the UK once we have left, and UK planes will still fly over Ireland. BA is of course part of IAG, an Anglo Spanish company with a headquarters in Madrid, so does the Irish PM anyway not see that as an EU company that will carry on flying?

Improving delivery times

I am delighted so many people have suddenly become interested in the issue of speedy delivery of raw materials, components and finished goods. Some are so interested they think it is the topic which should determine our approach to Brexit. I want to ask the question what actions could we take to cut down delivery times more if people think this is such an issue.

Lets take a complex supply chain. The company concerned needs imported components from India and from Slovakia to meet an automated manufacturing system. The typical delivery time from Slovakia by road transport is four days. The typical delivery time by sea transport from Mumbai is 20 days. Immediately when we look at this issue we see that the short time it takes to get through the port of Dover from Slovakia or through the port of Southampton or London Gateway from India is tiny compared to the lengthy time it takes by sea or road. The sea journey is probably a bit more predictable than the road journey, as it is less open to congestion and delays. The sea journey does also need two road transport journeys to get to and from the ports involved, whilst the road journey from the continent needs a short sea crossing to tackle the English Channel.

The investment needed to cut journey times and unreliability includes investment in the road networks involved. I do not know all the details of the road congestion from Slovakia on the continent, but can vouch for the delays and unreliability the shortage of capacity from Dover or from Southampton to a factory in say Birmingham can cause. This would seem to be a more sensible worry than the idea that after Brexit lorries will face unacceptable delays at our ports.

We need to remember that the bulk of our trade with the EU is imports, not exports. That means the crucial port movements occur in UK controlled ports. It is the UK authorities who will have the task of checking standards and tax liabilities, as they do today whilst we are still in the EU. We have no reason to set up a complex system at the port which will cause more delay or so called friction. We can continue to use Authorised Economic Operators. electronic manifests and on line assessment, tax collection and clearance of most cargoes. Trade within the EU today requires complex calculations of VAT, other transaction taxes, quality and safety checking and other compliance. Most of this occurs away from the port. We have no need to make it too difficult when we are out of the EU.

The EU offers some helpful guidance

Whilst the EU carried on with colourful and misleading language about parts of Brexit, its document issued today also showed it is beginning to want to look after the business interest on the continent and help with sensible business continuity. In particular it confirmed that current contracts which span the exit date will of course remain valid with parties fulfilling them. It thinks the UK should be part of the Common Transit Convention to speed transport crossing borders. It gets close to saying the UK out of the EU will of course have high standards of data handling so there will still be close arrangements for data transfer.

One of the welcome features of the short document was the repeated statements that much of what needs to be done to keep trade flowing is down to individual companies and member states, who are likely to want it to work well. The EU comes close to suggesting member states roll over certain permissions where the UK will still meet the same acceptable standards after exit.

How I represent Remain and Leave voters

I have had a couple of emails telling me I should support staying in the EU or so watering down Brexit that we might as well stay in the EU because a majority of people in Wokingham voted Remain. Let me explain again why I do not agree.

The first thing to understand is my constituency of Wokingham includes wards in West Berkshire, whilst many of the wards in Wokingham Borough are in 3 neighbouring constituencies. We only know the referendum vote for the Borough, not for my constituency. I accept from the canvassing I did in the referendum that around half of my electors voted remain, and I have pledged to take up their worries and make sure their concerns are taken into account as we leave.

The referendum was the one time when an MP had just one voice and one vote like all his or her constituents. Clearly an MP could not be on both sides, and did not have to try to predict where the majority would be and vote with them. Once the referendum was over an MP of course has to do his or her best to represent everyone in the constituency, which is bound to include people of both views.

I support Leave as an MP on the basis of a double mandate to do so from the referendum and a General election. . The government and Parliament made it

clear that the referendum gave the decision to UK voters over whether to leave or stay. I feel bound by the decision.

We held a General election in 2017. I made it very clear in my personal Manifesto that I would support and vote for Brexit in the Commons, both because it is the wish UK voters, and because I think it is a good decision. The Conservative party also promised to implement the referendum decision, and I campaigned as a Conservative candidate. Again I feel bound to seek to honour my promises about this important matter.

The results of the General Election in Wokingham were particularly interesting. Not only did I receive a majority of the votes cast, but Labour leapt ahead of the Liberal Democrats. The Liberal Democrat candidate and his party made clear they did want to water down or overturn Brexit, whilst the Labour Manifesto like the Conservative one said they would implement Brexit. I conclude from the General Election that Wokingham voters either want Brexit or believe they should go along with it. They had every opportunity to signal they wanted to stop Brexit by voting Lib Dem, but the overwhelming majority decided not to do so.