

High Street day

I made my way to Wokingham town centre on Saturday to participate in High Street day. Parking was easy and I found a good choice of food for the weekend meals. It is encouraging to see the growing range of shops emerging from the big redevelopment.

I see no reason for a delay in Brexit

The Prime Minister gave her word many times that we would leave the EU on 29 March. The Conservative Manifesto said we would either leave with a good deal or with no deal. The government has had 2 years eight months to negotiate a deal, and to put in place everything needed to leave with a series of mini deals without a Withdrawal Agreement. I do not see why we should now change this approach and ask for a delay.

The EU has said it will not re open negotiations on the Withdrawal Agreement. Unless the UK can take the money back off the table and insist on leaving free to make its own trade deals and settle its own laws and borders as part of a new negotiation there is no point at all in a delay. Such a delay proposal would never be accepted in the EU.

Some people argue that the UK needs a longer time for Parliament to hammer out a consensus. There is no sign that Parliament will be able to do that. It could have done it at any time over the last couple of years but chose not too. The minor parties oppose Brexit outright and Labour has moved to a position of effective hostility to a proper Brexit. Labour has always seen Brexit more as an opportunity to damage the Conservatives and press for an election by playing up differences rather than looking for a national consensus, which is the normal attitude of an opposition in the UK. There is no reason this is about to change so the main opposition parties will suddenly want to work co-operatively to find the elusive compromise most people can accept.

The EU has always said we cannot negotiate a trade deal with them until we have left. That is why the best course of action for both sides from here is for the UK to leave on 29 March, but both sides to immediately enter serious talks about a free trade deal. This would allow both sides to carry on without imposing tariffs and new barriers to trade whilst we negotiated the details of the Free Trade Agreement. A long delay with us still in the EU would put off any negotiation of our future trading relationship, adding to business uncertainty and putting off investment.

The government and the private sector have prepared for a March 29 exit, and have spent money on stocks and other arrangements. There would be

understandable anger by many if all that has been wasted.

The “long delay” idea needs whole hearted Labour support, EU consent, and is still in search of a sensible purpose for it. With 188 Conservative MPs voting against any delay Mrs May has no government majority for delay! Those who threaten us with a delay have to explain how and why.

Visit to Cobbs at Englefield

On Friday I visited the new Cobbs at Englefield food shop and restaurant. I was most impressed by the modern facilities, the positive and friendly approach of the staff and the enthusiasm of Tom Newey who runs the overall business that has made this investment.

The shop offers a butchers, a delicatessen with a good selection of UK cheeses, a wine merchant, and a cafe and restaurant for coffee , tea or a meal. There is good quality produce, including a lot of locally and UK sourced product.

The business employs 25 local people, and adds a new shop to a growing network of Cobbs outlets. I wish all involved every success.

Remain appeals to democracy whilst disagreeing with its findings

Remain loses the EU referendum so demands a second one.

Remain loses the vote in the Commons to hold a second referendum, so proposes to demand another vote in the Commons on it sometime and carry on campaigning for it.

Remain lose various votes in the Commons to keep us in the single market and customs union, so demand more votes on the same thing

Remain loves democracy only when the vote goes their way.

Letter from the Home Secretary on measures to tackle serious violence

I have received an update from the Home Secretary on the measures the Government is taking to tackle serious violence:

Dear Colleague,

Tackling serious violence is a top priority for the Government. We must do whatever we can to stop the terrible murders and stabbings we have seen on our streets. The Government's Serious Violence Strategy, published in April 2018, set out a very significant programme of work, however, it has become clear that we must go further in view of the continuing level of violence, especially after the fatal stabbings of teenagers we have seen in recent weeks. That is why the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Spring Statement today that there will be £100 million additional funding in 2019/20 to tackle serious violence, including £80m of new funding from the Treasury. This builds on the roundtable I had with senior police officers last week, where I asked them about the resources they needed to fight violent crime.

That is why the majority of the investment will largely go towards supporting police forces, especially where violent crime is impacting the most. These forces will take immediate steps to make our streets safer through an increased operational presence and patrolling supported with better intelligence.

It is also important that we recognise that greater law enforcement on its own will not reduce serious violence. We must continue to focus on prevention. That is why this funding will also support multi-agency Violence Reduction Units. In crime hotspot areas, and elsewhere, the new units will bring all the necessary interests and sectors together locally to focus on the effective measures that must be taken. We will prioritise investment in targeted police capacity to tackle serious violence and support for Violence Reduction Units in our Spending Review discussions.

The announcement today follows the largest annual increase in police funding in England and Wales since 2010 through the 2019/20 police settlement. It represents an increase in total police funding of up to £970 million if all Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) use the full precept flexibility we have provided. I am very pleased to see that the vast majority of PCCs are making use of their full precept flexibility. Many are proposing to use this increase in funding to support additional recruitment, including almost 3000 new police officers.

The first role of Government is to protect the public and that is why I will always be on the side of the police and why we are taking determined action to stop serious violence.

Rt Hon. Sajid Javid MP