

Policies needed so when we leave we are better off

The government has already carried out two of the essential policy changes for us to be better off. The first is to switch the aim of policy to the promotion of prosperity and growth. The second is to make selective increases in public sector employment with teachers, police and doctors, and to expand worthwhile public investment.

The third must be to cut taxes in a Brexit budget. In a fast moving global economy capital and talent moves to the places with the more attractive tax rates. The UK government has been correct to lower our Corporation Tax rates at a time when the USA, India and others are doing the same. It is also necessary to have competitive personal Income Tax and transaction tax rates. The planned cuts in National Insurance will boost personal incomes and provide a stimulus to consumption.

The UK needs to lower Stamp Duties and CGT on property transactions. Lower rates will also bring in more revenue by encouraging more capital into the UK and fostering more transactions.

The UK needs to reduce the top rate of Income Tax to the 40% that prevailed during most of Labour's time in office. That would help resolve the issue of doctors' pay.

The government should implement its planned cuts to tariffs on imports from non EU sources. All components needed for UK manufacture should be tariff free. All foodstuffs that we are unable to grow for ourselves should also be tariff free.

The UK should expand its freeport strategy and ally them to enterprise zones where it is easy to get permissions and support to base a new or expanding business.

Election candidates debate for Wokingham

I was asked by Churches Together in Wokingham if I would join a debate with the other candidates for the General Election. I replied promptly, offering dates and encouraging the initiative.

I am now told that only half the other candidates have agreed to such an event. I would urge all candidates to take up the Churches offer. I cannot

see the point of going ahead with candidates missing. That seems unfair and means any audience would not see the full picture of the election. I am happy to find a different date if that helps.

Animal welfare

I have pressed for higher standards of animal welfare and am glad to see proposals in the Conservative Manifesto.

These include

1. Ending excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening
 2. New law on animal sentience
 3. Banning primates as pets
 4. Crack down on puppy and dog smuggling
 5. Tougher sentences for animal cruelty
-

Better off out

I have always believed and argued that we can be better off economically once we leave the EU. As long as we have the right budget and follow pro growth policies on exit, the UK economy can speed up a bit from its current levels.

Whenever I argue this case the Remain establishment point to past official forecasts saying we will grow more slowly when we leave and ask who am I to gainsay such work. Let me remind you that I have disagreed with official forecasts on three main occasions in the past, and in each case have been right.

The first was the UK joining the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. The official forecasts said it would deliver lower inflation and steady growth. They dared call it a "golden scenario"! I said it would be destabilising, causing boom and bust. So it proved, bringing about a nasty recession.

The second was the banking crash. I with many others including the Opposition parties in Parliament warned against the excessive debts built up in both the private and public sectors in the UK under Labour from 2005-7. I went on to warn against the actions of government and Central Bank to tighten conditions too drastically in 2008-9 which were bound to undermine the banks and cause a recession. The official forecasts denied there would be a recession until its onset and said the banks had to be taught a lesson. We ended up with a big recession.

The third was during the UK referendum when the government issued official short term forecasts for the impact of a vote to leave. These said that in the two years after a Leave vote there would be a recession. unemployment would go up sharply and house prices would tumble. I said none of these things would happen. None of them did happen. Employment continued to grow, house prices showed small gains and the economy continued to grow.

Tomorrow I will examine why and how I think we can speed up our growth a bit once we leave the EU. We will have the policy flexibility to promote growth by monetary and fiscal action.

Doorsteps in Wokingham and Earley

In recent days when canvassing with teams in Earley and Wokingham I have been asked about a number of issues related to social care. Much of our local provision is excellent, but there are problems for some in getting access to all the care and support they need locally.

The Conservative Manifesto rightly acknowledges that more money needs to be made available to improve and strengthen social care. I want to see Wokingham and West Berkshire get their fair share of the increases and spend the money well to deal with people who currently want more or better support.

The Manifesto also says a Conservative government would work to find a cross party consensus on reform of social care funding for the elderly, as any changes need to be agreed beyond party so they are likely to remain for several Parliaments. The big issue is what care should be made available free at the point of need under the NHS pledges, and what if any should continue to be paid for by the individual themselves as part of their living costs for food and shelter. All parties in government in the past three decades have kept the same policy toward care home costs. There is a sense of injustice about that policy over payments. If an elderly person goes into a care home their home or other assets have to be sold to pay the bills, whereas an elderly person who has no home to sell and no savings is rightly given a free care home place. All parties now say they wish to change the current policy, so it should be possible to work towards some improved consensus.