

Clive Lewis to step down from shadow cabinet

Clive Lewis MP, commenting on stepping down from the shadow cabinet said:

"When I became the MP for Norwich South, I promised my constituents I would be 'Norwich's voice in Westminster, not Westminster's voice in Norwich'. I therefore cannot, in all good conscience, vote for something I believe will ultimately harm the city I have the honour to represent, love and call home.

"It is therefore with a heavy heart that I have decided to resign from the shadow cabinet.

"It has been a privilege to work with Jeremy Corbyn and be part of the shadow cabinet. I will continue to support our party and our leader from the back benches to the very best of my ability."

Jeremy Corbyn MP, commenting on Clive Lewis standing down from the shadow cabinet, said:

"I would like to thank Clive for his work in the shadow cabinet, which has underlined what an asset he is to the Labour Party and our movement.

"I understand the difficulties MPs representing constituencies which voted Remain have in relation to the European Union Withdrawal Bill. MPs have a duty to represent their constituents as well as their party.

"However, the Labour Party respects the outcome of the EU referendum, so we have asked all Labour MPs to vote for the Bill at its third reading tonight.

"We have been clear from the start that Labour will not frustrate the triggering of Article 50, which represents the start of the process for leaving the EU.

"Labour will use every opportunity to hold the government to account and protect jobs, rights and living standards at every stage of the negotiations.

"I wish Clive well and look forward to working with him in the future."

Government is shutting the door on the most vulnerable – Diane Abbott MP

Speaking in response to a ministerial statement, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott said:

"My colleague Lords Alf Dubs is right, this is shutting the door on the most vulnerable. The Government must end these efforts to prevent refugees arriving here. This is not who we are."

"The Minister is wriggling out of the government's obligation to accept child refugees."

"But the internationally agreed principles and the Dubs Amendment were never conceived as a "one-off". They should continue to commit to meeting their international treaty obligations and our own laws."

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Shadow Secretary of Health, has today written to the Prime Minister to ask for...

Jonathan Ashworth MP, Shadow Secretary of Health, has today written to the Prime Minister to ask for clarity regarding funding arrangements for social care at Surrey County Council.

The full text of the letter is below.

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

London SW1A 2AA

Prime Minister,

I am writing to you in light of today's revelations about text messages sent by the leader of Surrey County Council which suggest that

the Government has agreed to funding arrangements for social care that allow the cancellation of a proposed referendum on a council tax increase in this Council.

Given your failure to provide clarity on the issue when asked in the Chamber today, and bearing in mind the great importance of this issue

given the crisis faced by social care in our country, I am hereby requesting for the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to make an urgent statement to the House tomorrow.

This news has caused considerable embarrassment to the Government, in particular the Secretary of State for Health and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To rule out any suggestions of wrongdoing, the Government now needs to confirm that no special deal has been offered or granted to Surrey County Council.

I believe that the British public deserve full transparency on the issue. In the public interest, I therefore ask you to publish immediately and without delay;

1. The memorandum of understanding referenced in the text messages sent by the leader of Surrey County Council;
2. All text message correspondence between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum;
3. All written or electronic correspondence between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum;
4. Details and minutes of all meetings held between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum.

Additionally, as the Prime Minister knows the Ministerial Code requires holders of public office to “act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner” and that “information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so”. I am therefore asking you to confirm that any misconduct by Ministers related to this matter will be investigated and treated as a breach of the Ministerial Code.

Given the questions these news raise about proper conduct and transparency of Government policy-making, I am sending a copy of this letter to the Director General of the Propriety and Ethics Team. I will also

be
publishing this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Ashworth MP

cc. Sue Gray, Director General, Propriety and Ethics Team
and Head of Private Offices Group

Commenting on the news that Surrey County Council is not going to hold a referendum on 15 percent council tax rise – Pearce

Teresa

Pearce, Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government,
commenting on the news that Surrey

County Council is not going to hold a referendum on 15 percent council tax
rise, said:

“The

Government should not be trying to deal with the national social care crisis
through backroom deals with sympathetic Tory council leaders in an attempt to
avoid negative publicity.

“Across

the country, people are facing steep rises in their council tax bills, whilst
the provision and quality of social care is declining. Council tax rises
are nothing more than a short-term sticking plaster for a problem that
needs long-term solutions. And they create a postcode lottery in social care,
because they raise the least money in areas with the greatest
need.

“There is

an unprecedented crisis in social care, with care providers handing contracts
back to councils, 1.2 million elderly people living without the care they
need

and delayed discharges causing huge pressure on the NHS. The Government must
come forward with a long-term strategic rethink of social care funding, as
well as urgent funding to stem the crisis which is hurting elderly and
disabled people right now.”

Ends

This is a significant victory for Parliament, and follows months of concerted pressure from Labour – Starmer

Commenting

on the Government's concession regarding a meaningful vote in Parliament on a final deal to leave the EU, **Keir Starmer, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union** said:

"This is a significant victory for Parliament, and follows months of concerted pressure from Labour.

"Labour has repeatedly said that Parliament must have a meaningful vote on any final Brexit deal – that means MPs are able to vote on the final deal before it is concluded; that the Commons has a debate and vote before the European Parliament does; and that the vote will cover withdrawal from the EU as well as our future relationship with the EU.

"This eleventh hour concession is therefore welcome, but it needs to be firmed up as the Bill progresses through both Houses."