

[By-Election Summary, 1st February](#)

There was just the one council by-election last night (plus one to the non-partisan City of London Corporation). **Charles Lister** stood for the Lib Dems in **Warlingham ward, Surrey County Council** and secured a solid result – closing the gap between us and the Conservatives from 27% to less than 10:

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[11 things that happened slower than the EU shooting down Theresa May – Liberal Democrats](#)

MPs passed an amendment last night that required Theresa May to go back to the EU and try to renegotiate the backstop.

The EU didn't mess around – the vote result came out at 8:41pm, and by 8:47pm they'd said the backstop was there to stay. Here's 11 things that Theresa May could have done to pass the time:

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Brexit latest

In Parliament last night there were **lots of heads shaking in bemusement**. The Commons gave the government diametrically contradictory instructions to the Prime Minister: no to 'no deal'; then yes to a proposal that will in all likelihood lead to 'no deal'. As we milled around central lobby afterwards, queuing to speak to the TV cameras, I saw MPs claiming victory for two opposite positions. Someone is going to be disappointed.

Corbyn's speech was the culmination of two years of procrastination

If there is a big loser from yesterday it is Jeremy Corbyn; his speech was beyond abysmal, embarrassing to his own side. It was the culmination of two years of procrastination: sitting on the fence over Brexit. A Labour rebellion last night helped the government snuff out a whole series of constructive amendments which would have probably opened a way forward, perhaps to a People's Vote.

So where do we go next? The Prime Minister has been sent to Brussels to renegotiate, reopening the Withdrawal Agreement on the 'Irish Backstop' which she has been told repeatedly is not negotiable. There is a possibility that, in search of a quiet life, the EU Heads of Government and the Commission give in and abandon Ireland. I think not.

So after two weeks pursuing her **backbenchers' fantasies** (more time wasting), Theresa May then comes back without a new agreement and we finally reach a dead end: the deal which she originally negotiated versus 'no deal'. No Deal then becomes a live possibility – no longer just bluff in a dangerous game of chicken. I believe that if we reach that choice, sanity will prevail. Theresa May will see the logic in taking her deal to the country in a **People's Vote against the option of remain.**

I had TV interviews this morning telling me that the People's Vote campaign is flagging. It isn't. It is a question of timing. **The Lib Dems have been at the forefront of this campaign and we are certainly not giving up.** Our time will come

World view

This morning I was invited to give a video conference speech to a gathering of 90 Japanese companies in Tokyo trying to make sense of events in the UK. Having worked with and encouraged Nissan, Fujitsu, Honda, Toyota and Hitachi to invest heavily in the UK when I was Business Secretary I was painfully aware that they have invested here primarily because the **UK was seen as a 'gateway' to the EU single market.**

They are already shifting operations out of the UK. They won't walk out dramatically: they have too much invested here and Japanese businesses don't do drama. But – **hard or soft Brexit – there will be a steady, quiet, draining away of activity.** In 5 to 10 years' time we will miss them.

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Author:

[Being homeless is not a crime.](#)

The title of this article should be common sense, shouldn't it?

And yet, between 2014 and 2016 alone, over 3000 people were dragged before the court. **Not for doing anything wrong, but for falling foul of a 195-year-old law.**

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[Time for Brexiter MPs to get real.](#)

Last night, MPs passed an amendment to the Prime Minister's motion – the Brady amendment. It actioned Theresa May to go back to the EU and ask them to take the Northern Ireland backstop out of the deal.

It took the EU six minutes to say no.

There's only one compromise Theresa May should accept – a people's vote

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