

A green energy policy

I welcome moves to improve energy efficiency and to ensure our energy generation and use avoids pollution.

The UK along with other advanced nations has done a good job in using law and guidance to cut the output of particulates and dangerous gases substantially. Power station and factory chimneys have ways of cutting out dangerous material. Petrol and diesel exhausts have been transformed by technology to remove harmful particles. Vehicles today cause much more of a problem from tyre wear and brake dust than from exhausts. Those smoke filled scenes of the Industrial revolution have gone, steam trains have been consigned to the museums, and London smog is only in the history books.

More needs to be done. It is best to tighten the requirements progressively at a pace technology and the market can absorb, as we have been doing. We need to look at how we can improve standards on domestic heating systems, start to cut tyre and brake wear residues, and be tough and vigilant on industrial plant. We need to encourage a much better approach to litter, where we see the results of worldwide bad behaviour in the state of our seas and what washes up on our beaches. We also see it in our countryside and by the edge of many of our roads and pathways, where a minority UK citizens have decided to burden the rest of us with their fast food containers and other detritus.

The win win is the promotion of fuel efficiency. I am keen on government initiatives to help people insulate their homes and improve the efficiency of their domestic installations. Business and government can work with people, offering them popular products because they are better. Why not use a scheme if it means you can be warmer at home and save money on the fuel bills?

The U.K. needs to pay more attention to reliable capacity and price. We have become too dependent on imports through the inter connectors, and need sufficient back up power given the amount of intermittent renewables now on the system. Rebuilding our industry and expanding our horticulture will require more cheaper power.

A Conservative green policy

As a particular view of what is a green policy rests at the core of the globalists position, let us begin our exploration of the policy agenda with green matters.

I am a green enthusiast. I wish to live in a country with plenty of beautiful countryside, with clean water and air, where we fish and farm in a

sustainable manner and pass on our soils and seas in good order to our children. As a Conservative I take the longer view, see our individual lives as leases , and our own presence here as part of a continuum from ancestors to successors. Families and nations act to sustain memories of what has happened and to support the hopes of the young for the future. We all have a stake in a common past and plans for a better general future.

The immediate task of alleviating undue human pressures on the natural world must rest with less population growth. I have no wish for government to try to limit family size. Rising prosperity and improving chances of survival are the main ways families and nations come to adopt self limitation on the numbers of children voluntarily. Here in the UK the birth rate is below the level of 2 children per woman to keep the population constant, which is a good outcome. Where in the world the birth rate is higher it usually accompanies poverty, disease and shorter life expectancy. We need to help low income nations rise from these tribulations , which we can do by promoting free trade, offering them help with fresh water supplies, medicines and emergency assistance, and ensuring the great technologies of the west are available for them to conquer the problems which hold them back.

Our UK green policy must start with proper control of net migration. We should aim for far fewer economic migrants than have come since Labour first changed our policies following their 1997 election win. The UK needs to train and retain our own skilled personnel, and to mechanise or pay more for the unskilled jobs where governments and business have too readily reached for cheap labour from abroad.

Once we have control of numbers, we can protect more of our countryside from development, and abate our growing appetite for various finite natural resources. Many of the troublesome issues which have arisen, from where to build thousands of extra homes to how to deal with overcrowding on our public transport systems fall away completely or are eased.

Build back better

Build back better is a common phrase in modern politics, used by some on the centre right as well as by the many on the left. It is Biden's campaign phrase that binds his left wing programme. The UK Build back better campaign is anti the rich and big companies, and shares a lot in common with the Biden platform. Presumably those on the centre right who use the phrase define it differently to these mainstream versions.

There are those who think there is a global conspiracy led by a billionaire or two who they think set the agenda. I do not post such work, as it is silly. The views and actions many of you dislike are far more widespread and complex than a simple case of undue influence by one individual or think tank. It is a systematic agenda and way of thinking that infuses most global

institutions and many governments or main Oppositions in leading countries. What Joe Biden says is similar to the EU programme which is reflected in the IMF's statements, the views of the World Economic Forum, the World Health Organisation, the UN, the G7 and many others. The members of a numerous well paid and much travelled global elite reinforce the same consensus everywhere they go. Some are senior elected politicians leading governments who need not accept this way of thinking if they did not agree with it.

The centre left version of the consensus sees CV 19 as a crisis full of opportunity. They usually agree that economic recovery should build back a different world. Their number one enemy is carbon dioxide, so the recovery will be led by massive public investment and subsidy for green power and green travel, partly paid for during transition by higher carbon taxes on those who do not embrace the revolution quickly enough.

It also welcomes the large expansion of state spending and intervention following WHO policies to combat the virus, and wishes to continue with policies of expanding the state workforce and spending more on state services. The IMF sees the NHS as a great model which others should adopt. Mr Biden wants to enrol a Public Health Corps and to extend Union rights to all public service employees, as well as expanding again public sector involvement in the affordable health care system pioneered by President Obama.

The politicians and political movements who disagree with some or all of this consensus are treated roughly by conventional media who by and large back the general view and protect it. So Mr Trump who went for cheap oil and gas and a big expansion of the energy sector to onshore oil and energy based industry was strongly attacked for his anti environment stance. He was then pilloried for his scepticism about long lock downs as a way of fighting the virus. Mr Bolsonaro in Brazil was slated for his casual approach to the pandemic . Even Sweden, once a poster country for the centre left, was criticised for being softer on lock down than the consensus.

In future blogs I will look at various policies that emerge from the Build Back better approach to see which ones could help and which will do harm.

[Another bad algorithm](#)

On Wednesday the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local government listened to concerns from MPs in private at a meeting. Yesterday he listened in public to more of those concerns in a Parliamentary debate.

I have put my issues with his Planning proposals to him on several occasions now. I think planning needs to have three principles at its heart. The first is planning solutions should allow local communities and their Councils to shape the built landscape they live in and preside over. The second is

levelling up is an important and popular policy. That means diverting more of the large investment in new housing to the parts of the country that welcome more investment and need to attract more talented people to their communities who may well want to be buy a new home as part of the attraction. The third is the promotion of home ownership, which is going to be easier to do in parts of the country with lower house prices and most difficult in affluent communities with highly priced land.

The government proposal genuflects to the first principle and says it wants local communities and Councils to have their say, but that is overridden by the algorithm which decides in advance how many extra homes a place will have whether they want them or not.

The second principle and policy aim is not only overridden but overturned by the algorithm. By making high prices of homes the main determinant of where to put new ones it guarantees increasing the build of homes and the investment and jobs that goes with it in the most affluent places, and starves the places that want more jobs and investment by actually reducing the numbers of homes built there to below the current level.

The third principle is also thwarted by the algorithm, ensuring new homes will remain expensive.

Instead if there is to be the other reforms of planning the government wants, we need an algorithm or a way of calculating how many homes based on the reverse principles. It should offer more new home investment where house prices are low, where there is a shortage of good new family and executive homes, and should be linked to a community and Council which it says it buys into levelling up and welcomes new talent to come to the new homes.

Areas like Wokingham have attracted disproportionate amounts of the talent and well qualified people through the building of large new estates of executive and family homes. It is time to share this growth and prosperity more widely. We should not reinforce the growth by the planning system in the most successful areas, but copy the success elsewhere. This rogue algorithm will do the opposite of levelling up.

Lock down rules

I was working with a group of MPs led by Sir Graham Brady to secure debates and votes on the Rule of 6 and the 10pm curfew, which the government conceded. Both votes were to be held this week.

Following my consultation on the Rule of 6, and following discussions with other MPs, it seemed best to vote against the Curfew measures. These do more economic damage than the rule of 6, and are opposed by the Opposition giving us a real opportunity to win the vote. The Rule of 6 was not opposed by the

Opposition.

The consultation showed a predictable split of opinion, with some favouring laws and strong guidance over conduct to try to control the spread of the virus, and some wanting the controls removed to allow people to make their own decisions.

I did not vote for the Rule of 6, wanting to see more evidence of how it would reduce the spread. Many people think, for example, that it should be amended to exclude young children. Yesterday we did not get a vote on the curfew which I wished to oppose. The government is presumably thinking again about the wisdom of this measure. It needs to bring this for ratification or defeat soon. Many think forcing people out onto the streets all at the same time at 10pm, with knock on effects on pavements and public transport in busy locations, is not a good idea. It can also transfer drinking from pubs to private homes which may not be as well set up to limit the spread of any airborne disease.

The Rule of 6 passed by 287 to 17 with most of the Opposition abstaining but not against the measure in principle. If all the Opposition join Conservative opponents of the curfew it should be defeated. It is interesting that the Rule of 6 did not command a majority of the possible votes in the Commons.