

Drugs dealing and schools

I recently attended a meeting with local Councillors, the Deputy Head of a local secondary school and the police to discuss drug dealing by pupils.

I was pleased to see the efforts being made to discover and tackle this problem. In this case with the help of the local Council, CCTV was revealing who was involved, with a good chance of taking follow up action to punish and deter. Often the drug dealing takes place outside the school grounds in public places when pupils are going to or from school.

I am aware that this is an issue for several local schools. Senior teachers responsible for behaviour and discipline and local police are rightly concerned and engaged. Anyone with evidence or intelligence about this should send it in to the school or police, who have powers to deal with it. Seeing it and exposing it is the best way to tackle it. The authorities can best deal with it where there is reliable evidence from witnesses. Drugs can ruin young lives.

Local authorities and school budgets can stretch to CCTV and other ways of exposing danger.

Health spending, tax and that Brexit dividend

There has been a long running argument within government over health spending and how to pay for future increases. That is why I wrote about efficiency and quality last week, and set out the case against a hypothecated health tax sometime ago on this site.

I am pleased to report that the idea for a hypothecated new Health Tax seems to have been dropped. I explained how such a tax would not be enough on its own, how there would still be plenty of arguments about how much extra money the NHS needed as well as the hypothecated tax, and how you cannot throttle back health care simply because one particular tax has fallen short.

I am also pleased to report that those of us who argued a substantial part of the Brexit dividend should be used to meet increased future health costs have also been persuasive. There will be an extra £12bn a year available for spending and tax cuts once we have terminated our payments., I am in favour of doing this immediately after March 29 next year, unless the EU suddenly comes up with a good deal which is worth letting them have a bit more of our money after we have left.

There is still work to be done on whether there is any need for extra borrowing. That will depend on how fast the economy grows and how quickly the revenue increases. Lowering tax rates would help raise more revenue in several cases, which would be a welcome boost to the economy with beneficial consequences for future spending. When the US is going for a top Income Tax rate of 37% and Italy for a top rate of 20% the UK needs to stay competitive to ensure enough well paid and successful business people stay here and pay their taxes here to help our public services. The UK economy needs a fiscal boost to offset the monetary tightening administered by the authorities since March 2017.

It is also important to grant increased spending for the NHS on the basis of something for something for something. Just granting a blanket increase could result in wasteful spending, as we saw in the big increases in the middle Labour years before they had to slash public spending generally after the crash.

[Congestion, traffic jams and roadworks](#)

Wokingham has suffered a long run of road works, closures and partial closures. The work on the town centre has removed main road capacity around the town hall and blocked neighbouring roads. Meanwhile utility works, road works and new building works have led to many blocked lanes and temporary lights.

I have stressed to the senior officials at the Borough Council the need to avoid parallel closures where the alternative route is blocked at the same time. I have urged more new or replacement utility cables and pipes to be put in away from roads. I have requested speeding up road works by any disrupting the highway. Councillors, like me, are keen on changes that cut congestion.

I am also working with the Council on an improved strategic local network with more capacity and safer junctions, as we need more capacity to cope with expanding numbers. I have proposed a junction review to optimise layouts and ensure good traffic sensing technology to help move traffic through light sets more quickly.

[The nature of this site](#)

Some of you have written in suggesting I post less on this site in order to have more time to moderate. Some of you have written in with your own views

on what this site is or should be . Maybe it would help you if I told you what I think this site is.

This site is not a conventional MP website. Such sites are paid for by the taxpayer and present the MPs work in a favourable light. They are not allowed to be party political. This site is paid for by me and ranges beyond my work as an MP, though it does cover the ways I am seeking to influence the national debate in the interests of my constituents, and has local pages for constituents.

This site is not a Conservative party site. It does not reproduce the party line as this is readily available on official party sites. If I disagree with the party line or am trying to amend it I will say so here. The pieces are often about things where there is no party lines, or are about controversies raging prior to the formation of a party or government line. It is of course a site written by someone who does support the Conservative party and takes the whip.

This is not a Brexit website, though all the time press and Parliament are preoccupied by the Brexit process this site will provide commentary on that.

This is not a business website. It refuses adverts or sponsorship and does not promote any individual company interest.

The idea of the site is to provide insight, commentary and a contribution to the national debate, laced with pieces about topics I am interested in that may be of interest to others. I have, for example, run pieces about historical events and anniversaries, about cultural events, pieces about continental politics , and insights into the global economy.

I am still happy to post the views of others who want to extend the debate or add their own facts and perceptions. I will, however, simply delete pieces which may offend others, are potentially libellous or repetitiously unpleasant. Two people who try to contribute have all their pieces binned as their descriptors could give offence. I am going to bin more submissions from the one or two who disagree with anything I write and seek to undermine any positive idea or action. I also do sometimes bin long and potentially worthwhile submissions if they come from someone who has already published more than I have written that day on my site and has laced the comment with references that need checking. If the workload gets too high on busy days I will post fewer incoming messages but will not stop my own postings as I need to keep people informed.

I do not knowingly post false allegations about anyone, including about myself. Those who have tried to post false allegations about me will be able to find the true position in what I have written here.

The EU needs a new migration policy

The recent refusal of the new Italian government to accept a boat carrying many migrants has thrown into sharp contrast varying attitudes on the continent to this vexed issue. Mrs Merkel who used to speak for Germany and the EU still thinks the EU should welcome in all who want to come. The newly constrained Mrs Merkel trying to keep together a coalition of opposites on this as so much else after her bad defeat in the election is having to compromise and toughen her position. Her one time allies, the CSU, are in open disagreement from inside government.

The Italian government and the German AFD Opposition, along with the CSU, challenge the idea behind the EU humanitarian policy of picking up anyone from the Med who is seeking to come to the EU and delivering them safely to Italy or Greece. Doesn't this, they ask, just encourage more nasty get rich quick people smugglers to take their money and embark migrants on unsafe boats in the knowledge they will soon be picked up by EU naval vessels? Why are economic migrants brought to the EU if they do not have permits rather than be returned to the last safe country they left? On the other side Mrs Merkel points out that the EU is a group of decent nations who come to the humanitarian aid of those in peril on the sea, however this has come about. Indeed at the peak of the recent migration Mrs Merkel went further and saw the migrants as a plus for a strong German economy in need of extra labour.

The large number of migrants places demands on housing, infrastructure and public services. Electors in Eastern Europe, Germany, Italy and elsewhere are voting in larger numbers for restrictions on migrant numbers. The EU has allowed countries to build big walls and border fences to arrest the flows, and has helped finance a very long Turkish border defence now there is free movement between Turkey and the EU. Mr Salvini in Italy and the CSU in Germany are now in a position to demand change. Meanwhile the UK can get on with designing a new border system which is generous to asylum seekers, helpful to business needing skilled people, but capable of delivering the controlled migration Mrs May has always promised us.