

Cutting public spending

It is hard work persuading government to cut out waste and remove marginal or undesirable programmes.

There is a vocal group of MPs who want the rest of HS2 cancelled. The business case was always poor, relying on diverting a lot of passengers from the existing network. The sharp fall in commuting and business travel thanks to lockdowns followed by more home working further undermines the case. The government does not seem to want to save £100 bn.

This week saw the foolish decision to bankroll the Bank of England to lose £11 bn this year to let them take losses on bonds they do not need to sell. I was the only MP to say this was wrong.

There is substantial agreement we should not be adding perhaps £3bn more this year to bills for hotel accommodation for illegal migrants, but still the system resists any Minister and proposals to end the dangerous trade in people.

We continue to spend more than £1 bn a year on free smart meters and their promotion when anyone who wants one now presumably has one.

We spend large sums on maintaining, heating and lighting huge office blocks in expensive city centres when many civil servants now work from home. The estate should be streamlined.

Councils build large commercial property portfolios in their areas on borrowed money in time to lose a lot in a falling property market. Why let them borrow this money?

We spend large sums on benefits for people born and legally settled here whilst inviting in hundreds of thousands of migrants to take the jobs. The state incurs large bills to provide the new arrivals with homes, school places, health facilities etc Let's get people already here into work.

We still send overseas aid to thug states and countries with expensive weapons programmes. We should confine aid to humanitarian relief in crises and the very poor countries. Trade is often better than aid.

We are now subsidising well off people to burn more energy by price capping power for their heated swimming pools, garden lighting, saunas and the rest instead of limiting the amount of price capped power each can have to the needs of an average family. Let's rejig the energy scheme.