

Questions on cars for Greg Clark

I share the Business Secretary's concern for the health of the UK car production industry. I do not share his view that without an enhanced Customs partnership with the EU complex supply chains will slow down too much. Complex supply chains work just fine today into the UK from outside the EU, demonstrating you do not need to be in the Customs Union to run them successfully. We will control access to our markets once we leave the EU so why would we want to slow down important components coming in?

What I want Mr Clark to do is to stand up for the UK car industry today. Over the last year there has been a sharp decline in sales and output, led by a big fall in diesel cars. This followed a nine month period of great growth after the Referendum vote, and dates from the March 2017 budget. So will Mr Clark now intervene, as he likes to do, to stop the output fall and job losses?

Will he challenge the Chancellor about the impact of the higher rates of VED introduced in 2017?

Will he seek some easing of policies which have been restricting car loans on new vehicles?

Will he reduce the attacks on diesel cars? Surely if he wants to see big switch away from diesel cars over the next twenty years or so he needs to pace the change so it does not damage existing investments and output. Modern diesel cars are about as clean as petrol vehicles and meet much higher standards on emissions than previous generations of cars. The UK worked hard to attract inward investment into car diesel engine production, only now to turn round against the products.

Mr Clark says he is running an industrial policy to promote more business. He needs to revisit the government's policies towards cars where output has been hit. As we are still in the EU this fall has nothing to do with Brexit.