

Speech: PM: We can deliver the change you voted for

In the Summer of 2016, people in Grimsby voted for change.

You voted to leave the European Union and take back control of our borders, laws, money and trade.

You voted to leave the Common Fisheries Policy which has failed this famous fishing town, like so many of Britain's coastal communities. And you voted for real improvements in your local area, as part of a country that truly works for everyone.

Almost three years on, I know many of you are fed up that instead of delivering this mandate for change, Parliament remains deadlocked debating it. I share that frustration. It is profoundly wrong that having given the decision to you, and having been elected to Parliament in 2017 on manifestos overwhelmingly committed to leaving with a deal, the question of whether your MPs will deliver on that referendum is still hanging in the balance.

That is why the Meaningful Vote next Tuesday is such a critical moment. MPs will have to decide whether to back the Brexit deal – or to reject it.

Back it, and the UK will leave the European Union. Reject it and we do not know what the consequences will be. We may not leave the EU for many months; we may leave without the protections that the deal provides; or we may never leave at all.

The deal before Parliament next week ends free movement, ends our vast payments to the EU and ends the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice in the UK.

It enables a harbour like Grimsby, the largest by tonnage in the UK, to expand its operation as we strike free trade deals with countries all over the world. It frees our farmers from the Common Agricultural Policy and means restoring full sovereign control of our waters so we can decide as an independent coastal state who fishes in them.

Backing the deal on Tuesday also helps address many of the concerns held by those who voted to remain. A close economic partnership will be good for our economy, protecting jobs and investment. A close security partnership will help keep us safe from crime and terrorism.

While leaving with a deal will help keep our United Kingdom together, whereas polling shows that support for both Scottish independence and a united Ireland would increase if we leave without a deal.

Last month, MPs made clear they could get behind the deal provided there were legally binding changes to the Northern Ireland backstop. Since then we have been working around the clock to secure an improved deal. We have also

created further protections for workers' rights, including proposals for a single labour market enforcement body.

If MPs reject the deal on Tuesday, then on Wednesday they will have to decide whether to leave with no deal on 29 March.

If, as previous votes suggest, Parliament rejects that, the second choice will be to delay Brexit. The prolonged uncertainty would threaten jobs and investment and it would mean months more arguing about Brexit when we should be focusing on the other issues people in Grimsby care about like our NHS, schools, policing and housing.

I want us to move on and build a better more prosperous future in a way that I believe can unite "leave" and "remain" voters alike.

I want us to build on Greater Grimsby's Town Deal – the first of its kind in the UK and an inspiration for the £1.6 billion Stronger Towns Fund we launched this week – delivering a stronger and more diverse local economy, with improved housing and education.

And I want us to build on yesterday's Offshore Wind Sector Deal, which will help Grimsby continue to develop as one of Europe's leading centres for off-shore wind.

To achieve this will require the support of those who, like me, voted to remain but believe in honouring the decision the British people took and believe leaving with a good deal is much better than leaving with no deal.

And it will require the support of those who voted to leave, but who accept that compromise is necessary if we are to bring our country back together.

By coming together and backing the deal next week, we can deliver the change you voted for. We can build the stronger communities which must be the real legacy of the vote to leave. We can stand as one united country ready to face the future together and we can make a success of it.

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