

Stop interfering in industry

The government is running up huge bills on industrial interventions that fail to deliver good results. Its ill judged price control on domestic fuel led to the bankruptcy of a large number of suppliers without preventing a subsequent huge surge in the prices consumers have to pay. taxpayers are now going to be sent a big bill to make good the losses at Bulb, now under state ownership.

Many industries which need to burn a lot of gas and or use a lot electricity have faced 20% VAT, carbon taxes and the Emissions trading scheme. this has made energy a lot dearer to U.K. industry than in many foreign competitor countries. this has led to the need for some offsetting* energy subsidy to U.K. industry. this is normally less than is needed to allow the U.K. to be properly competitive but an effective reduction is some of the penal taxation.

I read that the government is now concerned about U.K. steel's lack of competitive prices. Why doesn't it simply remove the special taxes on manufacture? It is a nonsense to impose carbon taxes here to price us out of the market, only to import energy intensive products from elsewhere with added CO2 from all the transport.

Wokingham Conservative AGM

At the Earley AGMs on Thursday 14th June and at the Wokingham Conservative AGM on Friday 25th June I spoke about the work I have been doing in a number of important areas.

1. Housing numbers and a new local Plan
2. The need for an economic policy to fight recession
3. Measures to be taken to ease the cost of living squeeze, including some incorporated in the recent government package
4. A new energy policy for the UK to reduce import dependence
5. Home grown food and the countryside
6. Social care needs
7. Tackling health waiting lists

Recent posts on the main website give more the background to my remarks for those interested.

More productivity, higher pay

Most governments want higher productivity, or say they do. most grasp that if you get people to produce more goods or services in a working week you collect more revenue and can share that with employees.

Seeing that is not the same as selling it to those who need to deliver. Understanding it does not mean you can do it. Selling it requires explaining to people that the country can only afford more real pay if it produces more for people to buy with it. If you pay more money but there is no increase in goods you get inflation.

You then need to reassure people that you not saying they have to work harder or longer hours to raise their output. You want to help them work smarter. They may need training to add more value, or need more automation to speed their tasks.

Government Ministers can urge this but they need to show they can do it in those parts of the public sector they directly manage. The truth is the public sector has been particularly disappointing for productivity growth. Ministers now tell us they can slim the civil service. They should have a comprehensive ban on external recruitment to allow natural waste age to cut numbers. This gives employees more promotion opportunities. ministers could authorise external appointment where there was no suitably skilled person in the current civil service.

GP appointments and waiting times

On Friday I joined a regular local health review meeting to hear from management where the NHS has reached in restoring services post covid and tackling waiting lists. I was told that activity levels are up on pre 2020 figures and all waits of over 2 years have been eliminated. A and E , GP appointments and 111 calls are all well up on past levels as the NHS seeks to tackle the backlogs.

If you vote Conservative you want

Conservative policies

It was a strange idea that in the Red Wall seats Labour voters had lent their votes to the Conservatives in 2019. It was an even stranger idea that that meant those voters wanted a Conservative government to behave more like a Labour one.

A vote is a vote. People mean it at the time. They will change at a later election if the party or person they voted for lets them down. In 2019 Conservative voters voted for Conservative ideas and abilities. They wanted levelling up tory style, where government gives people more chances to earn a good living, keep more of their own money, buy a home, get training and education to help them get on in the world. They look for a hand up not a hand out. They did not vote Conservative to have a bigger bureaucracy, more government or higher taxes.

Today in the aftermath of a couple of bad by election results the soul searching by Conservative Ministers should be easy. They should ask why haven't they yet delivered the lower taxes, the greater freedoms, the better opportunities to start a business, grow a company, own a home and all the other features of a successful growth and prosperity strategy. Why are taxes going up and why is the economy slowing down?

The way to recover is not to double down with Treasury austerity, new taxes and higher taxes. The way to recover is to live the dream, restore the brand – being a Conservative is all about backing people to succeed, getting out of the way of those who can do well and offering appropriate help to those who want to follow them.