

More money for school transport for Wokingham and West Berkshire

The government has announced a new £40 m fund to help with the costs of school transport from September for English local government. I look forward to Wokingham Borough and West Berkshire getting some benefit from this, which is in addition to extra funding for walking and cycling policies which the government recommends to pupils where appropriate.

Letter to the Health Secretary

I would like to follow up on my questions to you concerning the search for treatments that help CV 19 patients. You rightly replied that a number were in clinical research under your Recovery Trial, as well as with the WHO's Solidarity trial and elsewhere. It was good news that Dexamethasone was shown to have helpful effects for some serious cases.

How are the trials both in the UK and abroad going for

1. Other immune moderators and Interferons?
2. Anti virals including Remdesivir and Hydroxychloroquine?
3. Anti coagulants?
4. Convalescent plasma?
5. Vitamins C and D? 6. Nitric Oxide, zinc and Ozone?

Some of these treatments some doctors say might be best used in the early stages to prevent the disease taking hold, and some may have beneficial effects in serious cases needing oxygen treatment, as with Dexamethasone. Clearly finding more ways of combatting the different features of the serious versions of the pandemic would be of great help in taming it.

Your stated policy of getting the NHS back to work on everything not related to CV 19 is now crucial. New contracts with the private health Sector should be based solely on buying stated procedures, treatments and operations for patients on the NHS waiting list. Buying capacity with no known patient in mind will be wasteful and will not incentivise the NHS to use the private capacity fully, as we saw during lock down.

It is also important that the policy of handling CV 19 cases in isolation hospitals or in clearly sealed off units in District General hospitals is properly enforced and advertised so patients are not put off attending

surgeries, clinics and hospitals to have other serious conditions treated. With best wishes to you in getting the NHS fully back to work after the heroic efforts made by some to tackle the dangerous and difficult CV 19 surge.

Stopping illegal migration

As there is great support from many writing in for this, why not set out your proposals for the Home Secretary in your postings as she clearly shares this aim.

The new Planning system

Let us welcome the idea of a simple map setting out general uses for land in each designated area of a Local Plan. Let us also agree the government needs to cut inward migration and prevent people trafficking.

The government suggests 3 categories on a map. One is Growth, the second is Renewal and the third is Protection. Growth implies more or less any development is fine in principle, though subject to design and density requirements to be set in the Local Plan. Renewal we are told implies rebuild, change of use or some "gentle densification". Protection implies keeping areas green with little or no building.

Maybe the government should look at three other use categories instead. They could demark land for housing, land for commercial development be it retail or industrial estate, and land for green gaps, farming and outdoor leisure for sports fields and other green spaces. I am all in favour of eroding the current complex uses classes and allowing greater freedom for building owners to flex from retail to homes or to industry. There do need to be special controls on the location of industrial businesses or leisure businesses that create noise or other nuisance, so they do not conflict with housing areas. Adjusting their categories, they could make it clear Growth includes employment sites as well as housing sites, whilst Renewal might like to stay more in keeping with current uses and styles of development.

The big issue to be resolved is the process of forming the Map, and the extent to which local wishes will be fully reflected in the results. The present system is deeply distrusted and disliked for the simple reason that the compromise which is a local Plan is soon broken by appeal decisions, forcing fast growing communities to absorb more housing development than they

wanted. In communities that lack growth and investment the same process fails to lift the area to attract the new people and new investment they need to boost living standards and enterprise.

There is enthusiasm for levelling up both in the fast growth areas suffering from too much building, and in the slow and no growth areas desperate for new investment. How will this new system level up? What does it bring to the areas without investment that will drive a better distribution of building around the country? The government needs to make sure this is not just a new variant of systems to increase the pace of housebuilding in areas that are already relatively well off.

[Support for jobs, incomes, and businesses in Wokingham](#)

I have received this update from the Government:

Dear John,

On 8 July, I set out the government's next step towards economic recovery and securing the UK's long-term prosperity in our Plan for Jobs. As we embark on this next phase, the latest figures demonstrate that we are continuing to support jobs, incomes, and businesses across every corner of the UK.

- As of 02 August, the government has helped 1.2 million employers to furlough 9.6 million workers and as of 19 July has supported over 2.7 million self-employed individuals across the UK.
- As of 30 June, in England more than 7.6 million jobs had been supported under the furlough scheme and 2.2 million self-employment claims had been made; in Scotland, 736,000 jobs had been furloughed and 155,000 self-employment claims had been made; in Wales, 378,000 jobs had been furloughed and 108,000 self-employment claims had been made; and in Northern Ireland, more than 240,000 jobs had been furloughed and 76,000 self-employment claims had been made.
- As of 02 August, Bounce Back Loans have been approved to 1.1 million small businesses, and over 58,000 loan facilities have been approved through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.
- In the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors and via the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, as of 05 July 2020, over an estimated 902,000 business premises in England have received grants worth up to £25,000, and approximately 373,000 ratepayers will pay no business rates for the whole of 2020-21. Nurseries in England will also not pay rates for 2020-21.

In Wokingham, the government has supported:

- 13,500 workers furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (figures up to 30 June);
- 3,600 self-employed people through the Self-employment Income Scheme (figures up to 30 June);
- 1,602 local businesses through offers of government-backed Bounce Back Loans, whilst separately supporting local businesses through offers of 71 government-backed Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme facilities (figures up to 02 August);
- 551 local business hereditament in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector and 24 nurseries that will pay no business rates this year (figures up to 05 July);
- 1,043 local business hereditament that have received cash grants of up to £25,000 (figures up to 05 July).

The government has done the right thing helping people and businesses through the pandemic and we are continuing to support them as we come out of it.

The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP

Chancellor of the Exchequer