

## The Queen's speech

We are getting through the traditional Queen's speech debate this week. Normally it sets out what the government will do over the year ahead, specifying which pieces of legislation they will pass. The Speech also highlights any major events of the diplomatic year, telling us about State visits. It does not go into detail about budgets, departmental spending plans or the day to day business of government.

This Queen's speech debate is like no other I have participated in for one very simple reason. The government advancing it has no majority. Every item in it needing Parliamentary approval will require some opposition MPs to vote for it.

In the debate yesterday I asked the representative of the SNP what they would support amongst the list of Bills in the Speech. None seemed to be the answer. Labour has been a bit more helpful, liking the Domestic Abuse Bill.

There is no point in this Parliament continuing unless sufficient Opposition MPs agree to vote for some of the bills in the Speech. Short of any opposition support the legislative programme is a fantasy list, a list of Bills a future Conservative government would like to put through given a majority to do so.

The present Parliament has substantial negative capability, but is unwilling to come together to achieve anything. That is why we need a General election.

---

## Slowing economy

The latest job figures confirm that the UK economy is slowing as the rest of the world does. The combined impact of the UK's home grown fiscal and monetary squeeze, and of the big fall in worldwide car output and manufacturing more generally is being seen. The poor background of trade wars and new tariffs does not help.

Over the last week the USA has threatened Turkey with higher tariffs in steel and suspension of trade talks. The US-China talks stumble on in the hope that they could at least delay or cancel the next round of US tariff rises mid month this month. The disputes in Kashmir, South Korea-Japan, and US- Iran also continue.

We are told the UK government plans a budget for early November, when they need to provide some stimulus. India, France, China and others have made recent cuts to taxation, which the UK also needs to do.

---

## Deal or no deal?

As some of you only want to write about Brexit, here is your chance. I'm sticking with my view of the problems with the Withdrawal Agreement and the need to propose a Free Trade Agreement.

So what deal or agreement if any would you like the UK to propose during these secret talks?

What Agreement do you think the EU would accept, other than the already drafted Withdrawal Agreement?

---

## South East Transport Strategy

I attended the Parliamentary launch today of Transport for the South East's strategy. I stressed to them the road improvements we need on the recently identified strategic local networks, where they now have a role in progressing or lobbying for schemes.

They said their immediate priority was to get the government to back a third river crossing for Reading, where Oxfordshire has been reluctant in the past.

The Executive summary they gave me mainly concerns general principles and a thirty year view. They are consulting on it, so people with ideas and views might like to log onto their site [www.transportforthesoputheast.org.uk](http://www.transportforthesoputheast.org.uk)

---

## The German plan for net zero carbon

A recent German study puts the cost of taking Germany to net zero carbon by 2050 at Euro 7.6 trillion. Much of this will fall on German consumers to pay. They will need to buy different cars, insulate their homes, change the heating systems in their homes, pay more for their travel and the rest.

Some of this cost will be displacement of investment renewal that takes place anyway. Cars, boilers, trucks, planes all have a finite life. The additional cost comes from replacements that are dearer than the originals, and above all from regulators requiring early retirement of the existing investment.

The business world will be at the forefront of this transition. The petrol companies have to move from a big chain of filling stations to a big chain of electric chargers. The airlines have to buy a new generation of jets that burn alternative fuels. The plastics industry has to close capacity whilst the paper and wood industry needs to expand for packaging and other items.

It would be good to see a proper costing for the UK, and more work on what this means by way of transformation of our shops, homes, industrial plants and transport systems. Clearly there need to be plenty of closures of hydrocarbon based ways of working, living and travelling. Car plants making petrol and diesel vehicles , oil and gas companies exploiting natural resources, manufacturers of traditional heating systems, fuel intensive production of many things will all need to adapt or be closed down.

What timetable do you think acceptable for this big change? Or do you think this is a wrong course of action ? How much should an individual be expected to spend on home improvement and transport change?