

What should an election be about?

The government wants an election because it wants to end the impasse of this Parliament. It rightly sees that it is kept in office but not allowed to govern. There is no alternative government on offer in this Parliament that would have a majority to govern. The election should be about who is best suited to form that government.

Elections are the ultimate democratic act. The government may wish to define the debate its way. The Leader of the Opposition may wish to define it in a different way. In practice it will be defined as a result of a jostle of forces and voices trying to shift or dominate the agenda of the debate.

On this occasion it may well be that there is some shared interest between Conservative and Labour over what they want to talk about. Both want to pose the same choice of a majority government led by one or other of the main parties of the outgoing Parliament. Both will look beyond Brexit to issues of tax and spend, their approach to public service quality and reform, nationalisation and privatisation. There will be a genuine choice between a more socialist government than has been on offer for many years, and a Conservative government.

The Lib Dems and SNP will wish to make it an argument about Brexit, peddling their view that the public got it wrong in 2016. They will advance various ways of overturning or cancelling the Brexit vote and will seek to bring the conversation back to this single question that has consumed the last two Parliaments.

What do you want the election to be about , as it your election too?

The Draft of the Transport Strategy for South East England

My comments to the Chairman of Transport for the South East on the Draft of the Transport Strategy for South East England and how it will affect my constituents.



THE RT HON SIR JOHN REDWOOD MP, D.Phil, FCSI

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Keith Glazier
Chairman
Transport for the South East
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29 October 2019

Dear Chairman

I am writing to comment on the draft of the Transport Strategy for South East England.

Your consultation document on transport for the South East correctly stresses the current problems of congestion, lack of transport capacity and lack of investment in our economically successful part of the UK. Your forecasts rightly assume substantial increases in demand for rail and road capacity in the years ahead, given the outlook for business growth and new housing. I accept there needs to be substantial investment in many parts of the region, though of course my main preoccupation is with Central Berkshire where my own constituency and home are found.

I support the intention to introduce digital signalling throughout the rail network, as this will enable us to run more trains per hour safely on the same track. The Reading Waterloo line needs more capacity now, as you remark. Gatwick-Reading is an infrequent service which could also benefit from more trains. There are also capacity issues on Reading-Paddington to the north of the area of your study which may be intensified with the link up to Crossrail.

I was disappointed to see not a single scheme submitted for Berkshire in the ten schemes you bid for this summer. You identify the need for more capacity on the Bracknell-Wokingham-Reading road corridor without specifying how this might be achieved. You also suggest a new major link between the M3 and M4 which looks from your sketch as if it runs through my area. What is the status of this and how have local Councils responded to the identification of this line? What impact would it have on local settlements and countryside?

Wokingham Borough Council has identified a strategic local road network as requested by the Government. This needs to be considered in conjunction



with Highways England major routes as it will add more traffic to key routes like the M3, M4 and A34 when they currently lack capacity for present traffic volumes at peak times.

One of the vexed issues for local transport is that of a possible additional river crossing of the Thames to the east of Reading. Sonning has a historic bridge with a single way traffic flow at any given time, which attracts too much traffic through the village adversely affecting the environment and causing delays. Henley has a small two-way bridge with blocking traffic lights immediately on the Henley side which also causes major delays. It means people trying to go to work or for other visits to South Oxfordshire from my constituency suffer major delays at peak, as do Oxfordshire resident travelling to jobs or other activities in my area. A new bridge as part of a strategic local route or a newly adopted national route would help a lot but has so far for many years proved contentious in Oxfordshire. What is your approach to this matter?

Central Berkshire has taken a lot of additional development in recent years without proper transport provision to match. Your draft plan does not seem to begin to tackle this. I would be willing to have a further meeting to discuss more.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'V. R.' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

[My intervention during the debate on the Environment Bill, 28 October 2019](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Planting more trees would make a great contribution to a more beautiful environment and have other good consequences. Will my right hon. Friend say a little about how that can be done, and can some of them come to Wokingham, please?

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Theresa Villiers): The Government have been involved in planting about 15 million trees, but we are determined to expand the programme because trees are crucial storage mechanisms for carbon and we will never get to net zero unless we plant a lot more.

[My question during the statement on the Shared Rural Network, 28 October 2019](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): How and when will my constituents in west Berkshire and Wokingham be able to get an advantage out of this excellent initiative? Will they need to do anything?

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Nicky Morgan): No, they will not need to do anything. They will see the roll-out. Near, if not in, his constituency is, of course, a significant office of Vodafone, and we are grateful that it is part of these arrangements.

[My speech during the debate on an Early Parliamentary General Election, 28 October 2019](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): This Parliament is once again misjudging the

mood of the public. We were elected here to do serious things on behalf of our public. Conservative and Labour MPs alike were elected to see Brexit through. Three years and four months later, there is no sign of that. Instead, we have this discordant, argumentative Parliament that will do nothing. It will not throw the Government out of office and it will not allow the Government to govern. We owe it to the British people either to allow our Government to govern or to let the British people decide on a better group of MPs who can form a Government and do positive things for our country.

Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole) (Con): Every constituency in my region voted at the 2016 referendum by a huge margin to leave the European Union. At that time, lots of my constituents, in some of the most deprived communities of this country, told me that they did not trust this Parliament to deliver it. They said, "We won't get it. They'll never let us leave." The five Conservatives out of the 10 MPs in my region might have voted to deliver Brexit, but is not the truth of it that the Labour MPs across my region, bar one or two examples, are never going to vote to leave the European Union, sadly proving right my constituents who said, "They'll never let us leave"?

John Redwood: My hon. Friend is right, but it is now about more than Brexit. It is about confidence in our parliamentary system to deliver orderly government that can do things for the people or to allow the public to decide who should be a better Government, because the House has no confidence in the Government.

This Parliament needs to put through a Budget quite soon. Our economy needs a boost, and we need to know whether we can have the tax cuts as well as the spending increases, but I suspect that the Government fear bringing a Budget to the House because they think there will be no co-operation as they do not have a majority and this Parliament will not allow a majority to be formed.

This Government have recently brought a Queen's Speech to the House. It contains a number of good measures that I do not think were ideological or Conservative provocations to socialists and those of a more left-wing nature. They were chosen to build some consensus and address the issues that worry people. But again, I think the Government rightly fear that any one of those measures, if introduced, would probably meet with resistance and a lack of co-operation, in exactly the way that we have been experiencing with all these other measures.

But above all, this House needs to think what message it is sending to all our partners, friends and allies—countries around the world; the businesses that our businesses do business with; all those contacts we have around the globe. They see this country as a great beacon of democracy—a country of great experience in the art of democratic government; a country that has often led the world in putting forward and fighting for those freedoms and showing how they can improve the lives of those governed by them. But instead we are sending a message that we do not know what we are doing and can never agree about anything—that all we can do is have endless rows in this place, for the entertainment of people here perhaps, but to the denigration of our country and the undermining of its position.

How can a Government conduct international negotiations when everything they propose is undermined or voted against by the Opposition, because we do not have a majority? Above all, how can we get to the point where this House decides that it is good legislation to say that the Prime Minister has to break his promises—where it has turned the demand that he break his promises into something that this House calls an Act of Parliament? No wonder we look ridiculous. No wonder we cannot resolve Brexit. No wonder we cannot have a Budget to promote our economy. No wonder we cannot govern with aplomb in the interests of the British people.

The Prime Minister is right that if this House cannot do better, it must dissolve and ask the people to choose a better Parliament. Either we need to be a better Parliament or they need to choose a better Parliament as soon as possible.