

## More money for Wokingham and West Berkshire schools

I am looking forward to the Spending Statement on Wednesday which should confirm a substantial uplift for local schools. As I and some other MPs have been arguing, there will be an increase in the overall total going to the education budget, and an increased share of the bigger budget for areas like Wokingham and West Berkshire where schools have been at the bottom end of the range of per pupil money. I am wanting them to say there will be a £5000 per pupil minimum for a secondary school , with prospects of further rises in funding in the years ahead. We are promised a decent real terms increase giving the schools more spending power for teaching and other important items.

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## The Chancellor's Autumn Spending Statement – we need a new fiscal framework

We are promised a Statement on Wednesday, and now know some of its contents from pledges made by the Prime Minister and Chancellor. We know that they will ensure every secondary school receives a minimum of £5000 per pupil per year of grant, and every primary school £4000. I have been pressing for this for some time as Wokingham and West Berkshire schools are at the bottom end of the English spending league tables, and need more cash. This was apparent in an unflattering tv account of a Wokingham School this week. The government will increase money for all schools, but see that the lowest funded get a larger increase to take them up to the new higher minimum. This is only fair, as it does not cost less to employ a teacher or buy some books in Wokingham than in a large city.

We know that the government will pay for an extra 20,000 police to be recruited and employed, and will increase money for Further Education Colleges. It has also announced an additional £1.8bn for the NHS, targeted particularly on 20 different hospitals in need of extra investment and revenue.

I assume this will be a prelude to an early budget this autumn which needs also to cut taxes. The UK economy is slowing too much, in line with the slowdowns in the Euro area but more than in the USA. The US economy has enjoyed faster growth thanks to big tax cuts, a spending boost and an easier money policy. The UK needs the same treatment, at a time of Euro slowdown.

Most forecasters expect the UK to grow a bit faster than Germany or Italy, but we need to do better than current forecasts and that requires policy stimulus.

Some worry about the present level of state debt, and wish to follow the EU policy of cutting state debt from its current stated gross level of 85% to the 60% Maastricht target. The actual level of UK state debt is currently 65% of GDP, if you eliminate from the calculation the £435bn of gilts owned by the Bank of England who in turn are owned by the taxpayers. The annual deficit is now well under 2%, which in turn is well below the rate of investment by the state sector. These figures allow scope for some fiscal relaxation. A suitable new rule might be that we keep the idea of a ceiling of 3% on the budget deficit from the current rules, and aim to be at zero or below when the economy is growing at more than 2.5% with more risk of inflation. When the growth rate falls below 1% the government should go closer to a 3% deficit ceiling, with the deficit being borrowing to finance capital investment. This would be compatible with a normal current budget surplus, and with no current deficit in low growth periods. We can of course spend more and cut taxes more once we have stopped making large payments to the EU, which I wish to see from November.

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## Letter to constituents worried by a “No Deal” Brexit

I have received a dozen or so emails from constituents wanting me to oppose a “No Deal” Brexit. I have answered them individually, but as some have used a standard lobby email I thought I would offer my response more widely in case others are thinking of sending the standard one.

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email. The government has said it would prefer a deal and is seeking one. It is however quite possible no good deal will be on offer, so we would then leave with no Withdrawal Agreement. We will of course leave with many other smaller agreements, covering issues like aviation, customs and haulage so we will carry on trading, under the umbrella of WTO rules. We know this works fine as it is how we currently conduct the majority of our trade which is with non EU countries.

I see Brexit as offering the opportunity of boosting our economy and providing more opportunity and prosperity to my constituents. I have proposed a Brexit budget with better funding for our important public services. It should also boost the general economy through tax cuts on working and enterprise. Our economy is being slowed by a needless fiscal squeeze and by the marked slowdown in the Eurozone currently underway. The first part of my wishes will come true with the government's Spending statement offering

substantial increases for Wokingham and West Berkshire schools, Thames Valley Police, FE Colleges and the NHS.

I have investigated thoroughly the scare stories being put out that we will be short of food and drugs owing to difficulties importing from the EU. I am pleased to assure you that the government has confirmed no major EU suppliers have announced cancellation of their contracts to supply us. The UK authorities have confirmed that they will ensure smooth passage of imports through all our ports of entry and will not need to check every consignment at the port as some seem to think. Calais is as keen as Dover to keep their business and see their port operating smoothly after our exit, whilst Antwerp and other Dutch and Belgian ports would dearly love more business if Calais did stumble. As today most trucks will pass through the borders based on their advance filing of a manifest, with any necessary Excise, VAT, tariff and other adjustments usually taking place electronically through the accounts of the principals or the logistics companies involved. Most Just in time supply chains currently handle both EU and non EU components. It is the duty of the supplier to send the items in good time to arrive on time. Just in time chains have regularly had to handle French strikes, bad road congestion and accidents on both sides of the Channel and train and ferry cancellations. The UK government is exempting components for use in UK factories from tariffs. This not only means no new tariff barrier on EU components but takes off the current tariff barrier on non EU components, helping the assemblers and offering them the prospect of some cheaper supplies from non EU sources.

The UK may well sign Free Trade deals with non EU countries after we have left. There is no need to do any damage to the NHS or to our food standards in order to do so, and there will be a vigilant Parliament that would not allow any UK government to do such damage.

If there are other worries you have about our exit from the EU please let me know and I will do my best to reassure you or to get action to deal with the problem.

Yours sincerely

John Redwood

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## [Car park petition](#)

I went into Wokingham Town Centre this morning to thank those who were collecting signatures on a petition to the Car Park owners of the Euro park in Denmark Street to keep the park open. I support the request to keep the car park. There were plenty of people about in the town enjoying the late August sunshine and the new cafes, restaurants and shops. Many were willing to sing, as the car parks are needed close to the centre to make it easy for

shoppers and leisure users of the Town facilities.

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## A sovereign people delegate to a sovereign Parliament

The Brexit vote was based around the proposition that we the people need to take back control from Brussels of our laws, our borders and our money. Brexit voters wish to recreate a strong UK Parliament, answerable to voters, with sovereign powers. The MPs keep their jobs for as long it pleases the voters, who decide at election and by election time if their Parliament is exercising their sovereignty in the way they wish.

The Remain MPs just do not understand this central idea of people's sovereignty. They have done all in their power over many years to remove power after power from the UK Parliament and therefore from UK voters by transfers to the EU through a series of Treaties and through acceptance of all ECJ rulings, Directives and Regulations the EU makes. They misled the country over the extent of the power grab by Brussels, sought to deny Parliament proper debates and votes about much of the law and decisions coming from the EU, and where debate was forced over EU laws rightly had to tell us it did not make any difference what Parliament thought or said as laws, decisions and judgements made by the EU could not be amended or set aside by our Parliament.

Now they are seeking to thwart popular sovereignty by appealing to our law courts. They ironically claim they are seeking to buttress Parliamentary sovereignty by asking judges to set the Parliamentary timetable, and to interfere in the legislative process. This achieves the very opposite. A sovereign Parliament (sovereign because it is derived from the sovereignty of the voters) sets its own timetable, decides what it will debate and legislate or how else it will make and communicate its decisions. If a majority in Parliament disagree strongly with government direction of the timetable then they have many options to overturn the decision or the government.

The Gina Miller judgement created a costly delay in our departure from the EU – around £7bn of extra EU net budget contribution for starters. It required Parliament to legislate a decision it had already taken, the decision to send the Article 50 letter. Parliament did so by a very large majority, showing the demand for a longer legislative means of expressing the decision made no difference to the will of Parliament than that we should leave. Mrs May was wrong not simply to legislate straight away to cut down the loss of time and head off the legal challenge. The legal challenge weakened Parliament by placing the Courts above Parliament in an important matter of political judgement.

It is to be hoped that the courts this coming week understand it is not their

role to tell Parliament when to meet or what to debate. It is for government to lead this. If the Parliament has lost confidence in the government's judgement in these matters then it is for a new Parliamentary majority to emerge to vote the government down. We do not elect the judges. We cannot sack them at an election if they cease to please. The decision on how and when to leave the EU is one that only Parliament can take. It has to take it in the knowledge that it promised to take us out of the EU following the vote. If MPs do not keep their word on this they should expect voters to show their strong disapproval when next they judge the performance of the members of this Parliament in an election. Either Parliament gets us out soon, or the sovereign people will demand a different Parliament.