

EU law repeals and deregulation

The government has sent out its latest update of progress in repealing, amending and incorporating EU law into UK law. It gives us the apparent good news that 2000 laws have now been repealed or reformed in total. This leaves another 4500 to deal with.

The latest list of laws repealed or amended continues with the official approach of doing many repeals to items that are already time expired or did not apply to us in the first place. The first 3 on the list that I checked out from the latest report were:

Commission decision of 29 June 2005 (2005/477/EC) This was a temporary permission for plants *Vitis L* to be allowed into the Community from Croatia between January and March 2006. This was requested by Italy.

Commission decision of 9 March 2001 (2001/199/EC) This was a temporary permission for New Zealand potatoes to enter the EC from 1 March to 31 August 2001.

Commission decision of 29 January 2004 (2004/110/EC) was measures to handle the risk of BSE at a time when the UK had BSE in the cattle herd. This no longer applies with the end of BSE.

It is difficult to assess progress when lumping in so many items that never applied, applied temporarily or apply only in circumstances no longer applying to the UK.

Many of the other items recorded in the list show how industrious the civil service has been to transfer many EU requirements into new SIs or Acts of Parliament, sometimes reinforcing their regulatory impact. The Aviation(Consumers) Amendment Regulations 2023 may well be important “restatements of EU case law related to compensation and assistance for passengers” but they are not repeals or deregulations. They keep us close to EU ways of doing this.

The Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme Amendment Regulations 2023 “amended the EU 2014 regulations ...to report additional information concerning ESOS assessments/energy performance data and provide an action plan with annual progress updates”. In other words this one strengthens and extends the requirements of the EU regulation.

There is plenty more scope to do some good by repealing the unnecessary and simplifying the important. I have set out many examples in previous blogs of what can be done.

EU wins

I have tweeted today to remind people of the big win from Brexit. The EU has gone on a 800bn euro borrowing binge. If we had still been a member we would have had to stand behind that and paid a big bill to help meet the interest on all that debt.

Facts4EU doing a good job

https://facts4eu.org/news/2024_jan_brexit_is_working

Wokingham funding grants

I have now obtained more of the details of some of the many grants Wokingham Borough gets from the government. The Councillors seem unaware of all this money or want to keep quiet about it.

Funding Segment	Total Spend (£) 2022-23
Council Tax Requirement excluding parish precepts	129,957,000
Settlement Funding Assessment	16,068,000
Help to Buy	10,802,000
New Homes Bonus	4,765,000
Homes for Ukraine	4,478,000
Social Care Grant	3,140,000
Compensation for under- indexing the business rates multiplier	1,578,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,076,000
2022/23 Services Grant	1,064,000
Local Authority Housing Fund	932,000
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	808,000
Improved Better Care Fund	472,000
Adjustment for rolled in grants	387,000
Supporting Families Programme	379,000
Lower Tier Service Grant	338,000
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund	271,000

Domestic Abuse	248,000	
Planning Inspectorate	186,000	
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	104,000	
Reopening High Streets Safely	102,000	
Local Government Digital Transformation	100,000	
Changing Places	80,000	
European Regional Development Fund	45,000	
Local Government Finance Family Annexes	40,000	
Grenfell Site	39,000	
Constitution, Union and Elections	27,000	
Mandating Data Transparency	14,000	
Resilience Team	12,000	
Affordable Housing	9,000	
Planning Delivery Fund	6,000	
HCA Land Assembly Fund	2,000	
Integration	1,000	
Markets, Partners and Places		—
Local Growth Fund		—
LA Land Release Fund		—
Shielding		—

[More money for Wokingham Borough](#)

One of the many pots of cash for local government that Wokingham Borough is keen to raid is the Active travel fund. This is money for cycling and walking that government gives for plans and priorities of the Council's own choosing. The Lib Dem Council choose badly, favouring schemes which make driving to work, school and the shops increasingly difficult.

In 2022-3 the Council spent £636,000 from these grants, and is negotiating for much more again this year and next. To make better use of these funds they should come up with helpful and popular schemes instead of using the money to attack drivers. It is yet more evidence too that they are in denial about how much the government sends them, always pleading poverty.

A better energy policy

If we left energy policy to the Opposition we would be closing down our oil and gas fields more quickly, refusing to get more out of the ground, and urging the construction of more windfarms. This requires a big increase in the grid which will take years to plan, agree and build. Meanwhile we would be even more dependent on imports. We would be in more danger of rationing or interruptions to supply. Prices would rise to provide sufficient incentive to put in the extra wind and solar capacity.

These parties have energy policies based on the imperative of getting to net zero. They never seem to worry about security of supply or affordability. These two aims should be more central to energy policy.

The government has now accepted that getting more of our own oil and gas out makes sense. It did with some persuasion keep open a couple of coal stations for longer which has been helpful in the last two years.

We still do not have good ways of storing renewable power when it is available for times when there is no wind and sun. It may be possible to do this with battery stores and or making green hydrogen. Until that happens we need more back up power. As government and Opposition press on with wanting more things to run on electricity we need more reliable power, it would be good to put extra gas fired stations in to meet need.

There is no point in urging more people to switch cars and heating systems to electricity if there is insufficient renewable power on a reliable basis and insufficient grid space to carry the power from a distant offshore wind farm to a customer. There needs to be greater clarity about costs and charges and more consideration of affordability. The UK is suffering from too little domestic output at too high a price.