

## [My Intervention in the Prison Capacity Ministerial Statement](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

I strongly welcome the proposal to deport more foreign criminals, and I also support the idea of finding something better than prison for non-violent offenders. Will that include, wherever possible, their need to have a job legally and to pay compensation to those against whom they have committed fraud, theft and other financial crimes?

Alex Chalk, Secretary of State for Justice:

My right hon. Friend makes two excellent points. It is worth reflecting on the fact that since 2019, we have deported around 15,000 foreign national offenders. A huge amount of work has taken place, and that will continue, albeit at an even greater pace.

The second point he makes is fundamental. Judges already have the power to impose a compensation order in the event that someone is convicted of a crime, but their ability to do so is determined by the funds that are available to that individual. How much better it is if the individual can go out and do an honest day's work to generate more income, so that they can, in a small way, put right the crime they have committed and the damage they have done.

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## [My Intervention on the Zero-emission vehicles, drivers and HS2 Ministerial Statement](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

Many councils apply for grants in order to make changes to their local roads. When considering these applications, will Ministers ensure that they do not end up paying for schemes that cut local capacity on crucial roads and make drivers' lives a misery?

Mr Harper, Secretary of State for Transport:

My right hon. Friend makes a very good point about what we should prioritise when funding roads. He should know that one of the important changes I have made is to make sure that our active travel team is focused on delivering cycling and walking schemes that increase choice, rather than focusing on driving people out of their cars. I hope he will welcome that important change.

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## My Intervention on the Net Zero by 2050 Ministerial Statement

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

The Secretary of State is right that, in order for this to work, green products need to be affordable and attractive. What study has her Department made of the attractions of synthetic and sustainable fuels as another option, compared with batteries? They may be easier for many of these users.

Claire Coutinho, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero:

I thank my right hon. Friend for that question—we have spoken about this issue before. We will be consulting on synthetic fuels, in particular for aviation, and we are looking at alternative fuels more widely, for example for rural homes. I would be happy to keep up the conversation with him about our progress.

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## Too many prisoners or too few prisons?

The prison population has soared this century in the UK. Some of that is the result of longer sentences for serious offenders. Some of it is currently too many remand prisoners awaiting trial, where queues have lengthened in courts. Some of it is more foreign prisoners.

Yesterday the Justice secretary told Parliament of his plans to bring supply and demand for prison places into better balance. There is a large building programme underway. He is going to speed up expelling foreign prisoners. He proposes different punishments to prison for non violent offenders. He has been taken by the fact that 55% of all those convicted of a lesser offence who spend a short time in jail reoffend after the experience, whereas only 22% of those who are given a non custodial sentence for lesser offences reoffend.

Prison loses prisoners their jobs, maybe loses them their families and their homes. Prison can put them under the influence of hardened serious criminals who groom them for a life of crime, telling them of the problems for ex offenders once released. It is difficult we were told getting bank accounts, insurance and credit fresh from prison.

With electronic tags, probation, community work, curfews and requirements to attend interviews, classes or work the offender can be punished and given the chance of rehabilitation. I think there is much in this, and added the

importance of getting thieves and fraudsters to pay some compensation to victims out of what legal earnings they can achieve.

Of course the government was right to require longer custodial sentences for those who are a physical threat to the rest of us. It needs to help the courts get over their backlogs. It needs to be ambitious to say good bye to foreign criminals and make sure through Border Force they cannot return.

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## Destroying our roads

There are so many places now making it difficult or impossible to drive on main roads. Councils who plead poverty and claim increases in grants from Whitehall do not count or are in effect cuts seem to have endless money for reducing the roadspace for vans, delivery Lorries and cars.

With more of their officers working from home there is more scorn for those of us who need a car to get to work or to come to their homes to provide a service or a delivery.

There is money for line painting, money for new aggressive kerbs, money to pave over parts of the carriageway, money for more sets of traffic lights, money for more bollards, money to block one entire lane of a two lane road, money to put street furniture and plant tubs in to restrict the roadspace, money to keep changing the speed limit in the same urban area from 20 to 30 to 20, money to block side roads altogether, money to invent local traffic areas, money to install cameras and money to put up a multitude of signs. The more complex the arrangement the better. Doubtless there has been a fortune spent on consultants to design the fiendish ways of restricting vehicles.

There is little thought for ambulances, fire engines and other emergency vehicles. There is no thought for the army of small businesses that come to do work in people's homes that need to bring their tools and supplies in a van. There are usually very restrictive and expensive parking policies designed to stop anyone coming by vehicle to do a days work.

Why do these Councils hate us so much? Why do they send taxpayers huge bills for making life more difficult? Why do they want the UK to be less competitive? Why are they so anti work?