

A new approach to the public sector

The low level of turnout at many of the elections and the low level of support for all the main parties with Labour topping the polls with just 35% on the national calculation displays a big gap between what the public want and will support and what the parties are offering.

Councils spend huge sums of money. They have extensive powers over our roads, schools, social services, planning, trading standards, the public estate, sport and leisure. Many of them claim poverty and blame the government for their excesses and mistakes.

The more Councils claim to be incapable of marshalling their resources to serve us better, the less interest there is by many in voting or engaging with them. Instead of building a strong local democracy their incompetence and denials of responsibility encourage people if they do wish to engage to gravitate their complaints or opinions to government or Parliament. Many people assume their Council will continue to ignore their needs and wishes as it has so often in the past.

The Liberal Democrat Wokingham Council is a good example of what is wrong. They spend money on consultations, only to ignore the results. They waste millions on road projects that make our roads worse, impede people living their lives and damage local businesses. They have amnesia about their decisions when people complain about what they are doing.

Lecture on climate science

I went to the GWF lecture given this year by Professor Judith Curry. As a non climate scientist I do not campaign against the establishment scientific view on global warming. I have asked various questions in speeches and writings about the data, models and predictions. Professor Curry's book and lecture argues that the fundamental proposition adopted by the UN and most governments that the world is warming caused by man made CO₂ is not proven and subject to major uncertainties.

She confirmed that most of the climate models ignore changes in solar intensity and in volcanic activity and struggle with winds and clouds. She said there is no good agreed explanation for warming periods in earth history prior to man made CO₂. She did not rate the chances of current models being right that highly. This blog gives those of you who do argue the establishment science is wrong to briefly make your case.

I will stick to making 3 main arguments about current policy.

1, It is absurd for the UK to close down energy using activities and to keep our oil and gas in the ground if we replace them with imports that increase world CO₂

2. The Green transition cannot work without widespread consumer buy in, which will need better and cheaper products than heat pumps and dear electric vehicles

3. Some of the proposed products of electric transition increase CO₂ especially as quite often our system cannot supply renewable power to run them.

[My Intervention on the Ministerial Statement – Telegraph Media Group Ltd: Acquisition](#)

Sir John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

I strongly welcome the Secretary of State's clear statement of policy that foreign states should not be allowed to take over press and media in this country, which is a welcome development. I hope that in the proposals for amending the law it will be clear that the policy relates not only to Governments but to nationalised industries, public authorities or companies in which states have significant influence because of their shareholdings. If that is not set out, such bodies may try to find ways around the law. I am sure my right hon. and learned Friend is up to that, but can we please have an amendment that absolutely nails press freedom in the way we want it to exist—free of influence from foreign states?

Lucy Frazer (Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport):

I understand my right hon. Friend's points. When we bring forward legislation, it is important that it does not have loopholes. As a Department, we thought very carefully about how we can protect against that. When the Bill comes back to this House this afternoon, he will see that we have defined foreign state ownership very broadly. We have extended the definition to include not only ownership but control and influence.

Climate realism

The Prime Minister and Energy Secretary have changed the language about net zero. In her most recent speech she wisely points out that you cannot get to net zero without the active co operation and spending by consumers who would need to change their way of life. This policy has been a top down legally driven process run by governments and big business. It cannot work unless it comes up with affordable and popular products, services and vehicles.

The government now needs to modify more of its policies to bring them in line with this realism. They have delayed the ending of petrol and diesel cars, recognising that many do not want one of the current models or find them too expensive.

I have raised with them the need to cancel the proposed fines on car manufacturers who sell too many petrol and diesel vehicles. It is an absurd and potentially damaging tax.

They need to confirm gas boilers will remain available until better affordable alternatives are available. More work needs to be done on whether it will be better to produce enough low carbon gas instead of pulling out all the gas boilers.

They need to do a lot more work on how more electricity can be generated from low carbon sources, how the grid can be expanded, how surplus power can be stored and how demand can be met when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine.

It remains a bad idea to get our CO 2 emissions down by importing high energy using products and energy itself. There is more work to do to produce more affordable energy at home and to get energy costs down to improve industrial competitiveness.

The Bank of England was given a very limited independence by Gordon Brown

Gordon Brown made the Bank of England independent, as everyone thinks they know. Truth is it was a very limited independence.

He did it give it the sole power to settle the Base rate of interest. This is done by an independent Monetary Policy Committee coming up with its own forecasts of inflation and the economy. No-one is challenging that. Many just wish they would get better at it.

At the same time Gordon Brown took away the Bank's power to regulate individual commercial banks and gave it to a new Regulator, the FSA. This reduced the Bank's ability to influence credit and money.

In 1998 he gave the power to issue government debt to the debt Management Office, taking that away from the Bank. This reduced the Bank's influence over the bond market.

This system worked badly during the banking crash of 2008-9 with split responsibilities for the banks between the FCA, the Bank and the Treasury, ending with the need for Treasury bank bailouts on a grand scale.

The introduction of Quantitative easing or money creation by the Bank to buy bonds was thought too big a power to give to the Bank. The overall sum of money created and bonds bought had to be approved in advance by the Treasury and Chancellor. Any losses that the purchases might lead to were indemnified by the Treasury. There is no way this can be construed as an independent policy. The government has every right to ask the Bank to cut its losses.

The Bank has always accepted that it acted as an agent for the Treasury in building and managing a large bond portfolio. It has also always accepted that budget judgements over spending, tax and borrowing are for the Treasury and Chancellor. The decision of the Bank to incur large and needless losses by selling bonds intrudes on government control of fiscal policy. Money spent on bond losses is not available to spend on public services or tax cuts, or it drives up the public sector deficit x the Bank which is the key economic control number.