

Why we will get an economic boost from leaving the EU on 29 March 2019

Many commentators wrongly assume the EU will impose some kind of economic blockade on the UK once we leave the EU. They are not making any legal provision so to do, and it is difficult to see how they would do it. They cannot break the many outstanding contracts to supply or to import. Were Calais to work a go slow the Belgian and Dutch ports would willingly divert the business and gain market share. The planes will fly on March 30th, and Airbus will still be buying UK made wings in order to meet its customer contracts. The EU has many powers over the UK government, but it has limited powers over importers, exporters and multinational companies when it comes to stopping them doing business. National governments employ the border and customs staffs.

What most commentators then ignore is the big gains we will be able to achieve from repatriating our money. The balance of payments will immediately improve by £12 bn a year as we stop sending net contributions to the EU. We will be able to spend more money on our essential public services, and have some tax cuts. If we spent the full £39bn they are proposing to spend on so called transition on the UK economy over a two year period, that would provide an immediate 2% boost to incomes and output over that time period, all other things being equal.

There is also the question of how much stimulus to the economy we could achieve by setting a different tariff schedule from the EU one that met our own needs. Imposing some tariffs on EU exports to us where we have capacity to make at home could provide a boost on a net basis, given that we import more than we export. Cutting tariffs on products from outside the EU that we cannot make or grow for ourselves would boost our real spending power. I am not going to put a number on this, as it would not be nearly as great as the impact of spending our own money, but it could also be a positive figure.

I am still awaiting a formal reply to my letter proposing the government now publish our tariff schedule for next March. They have told me informally they agree, so will they get on and do it.

Universal Credit

I attended the debate on Wednesday 17 October. I have lobbied the government to ensure people in need do not lose out from the transition to Universal Credit, and to encourage them to be more generous with benefits for the disabled. As the Secretary of State made clear in the House, and as the government statements which I published on Wednesday confirms, they are

improving the scheme. It will pay more to most disabled people than the old scheme. They will roll it out gradually, making improvements as they go if new issues arise.

The government has to understand there is no deal on offer from the EU

The government says it wants a deal. It means by this it wants an all embracing agreement on the future relationship including a free trade deal within it. The Opposition says the government must have an agreement, whilst making it clear it will seek to vote down the kinds of agreement the PM has in mind. All this is an irrelevance. The EU has been clear and consistent throughout. All it is offering is a one sided surrender Agreement or Withdrawal Treaty. Its main aim is to sign the UK up to this to take £39bn off us which they are not entitled to unless the UK is foolish enough to sign such an Agreement. Only if the UK signs up to such a damaging idea will they then discuss the details of a Future Partnership Agreement.

There are several good reasons why the UK must not sign any Withdrawal Agreement before we leave on March 29th 2019. We will leave in accordance with the two laws Parliament has passed to do so, unless Parliament repeals or amends those laws which this government assures us it will not do.

First, the UK will have no bargaining clout at all once we have signed the Withdrawal Agreement. The main thing they want is the money. If we also throw in accepting all their rules and regulations for another 21 months or longer, they have no incentive to move on or to make a decent offer.

Second, we need to spend that money at home on our priorities. That was one of the main reasons many of us voted for Brexit. A government which promised in its Manifesto to implement Brexit and take back control must not give the money away again.

Third, the UK needs to get on with implementing a fishing and farming policy that is good for home production and for our environment. We cannot stay another 21 months or longer in the CAP and CFP, as they are very damaging to us.

Fourth, the UK needs to put in place its own migration and benefits policies, as promised by the government following the Referendum

Fifth, we need to respond positively to the many offers of Free Trade Agreements from other countries, which we could not do if stay locked in the Customs Union.

Those who think there is an Agreement to be had need to come clean and accept

that as far as the EU is concerned the only thing on offer before we leave is a penal Withdrawal Agreement. There is nothing in the draft of that Agreement that guarantees something better in a possible Future Partnership Agreement.

As the government has failed to table a free trade agreement during the 2 years 4 months they have so far been negotiating, accepting the EU false sequencing of the talks, there will not be one on offer before March 2019. We must therefore just leave, and then table one the day we leave and see what happens. The reality of us leaving without signing a Withdrawal Agreement is the best way to a Free Trade Agreement in reasonable time. Otherwise the EU will continue delaying and they will be laughing all the way to the bank to pay our large contributions in. There is no cliff edge, and trade will continue after March 29th. It's more imports than exports, and the UK will not stop the food and medicines coming in to our ports which will by then be completely under our control.

More money for social care for Wokingham and West Berkshire

Earlier this month, the Health and Social Care Secretary announced £240 million for the social care system over winter, giving councils a significant boost to prevent people from going into hospital unnecessarily and getting them home as soon as they are ready.

This funding will ease pressure on the health system, and follows the announcement of £145 million to improve emergency care within the NHS this winter.

The money will pay for home care packages to help patients get out of hospital quicker, reablement packages to help patients carry out everyday tasks and regain mobility and confidence, and home adaptations.

I have lobbied extensively for more money for social care for our local Councils and am glad we will receive some of this latest increase.

Wokingham will gain £401,589 and West Berkshire £500,898.

No more delays – just get on with it

As the EU does not want to do a deal on our future relationship anytime soon the UK must leave in March 2019 without signing the one sided and damaging

Withdrawal Agreement they propose. We can then proceed to negotiate a free trade agreement with them if they want to. Many Conservative MPs are making it clear to the government that we will not support legislation seeking to prolong transition, nor will we support 21 months transition and large payments for no good reason. So far there is no sign of any deal better than just leaving. Extending our period under their control would take us into another 7 year spending period where the EU would not doubt want even more money from us.