

Those indicative votes

It was no surprise that there was no majority for any of the proposals put to the vote. That was highly likely and reminds us why Parliament works best when government proposes and Parliament approves or modifies.

Three of the options I supported were not put to the vote. One was a constitutional proposal to avoid this kind of Parliamentary chaos. The second was a set of proposals to ensure just leaving takes place with a range of sensible agreements on things that need agreement. The third was a general proposal which had plenty of names on it to reaffirm Parliamentary support for leaving the EU, designed to get majority agreement by reminding most MPs they were elected to get us out. Nor was there any ability to vote for the comprehensive free trade proposal I and others have been putting to the government. One of the problems with not putting some first choice preferences to the first vote is it leaves MPs feeling unhappy that even their first vote had to be a compromise with what they really want.

It was another opportunity for Parliament to vote down the bad idea of a second referendum and to vote down yet again the idea of staying in the customs union. It is true Parliament also voted against No deal, but as the Prime Minister often reminds us the only way to leave avoiding no deal is to name a deal we want that the EU will grant. Once again Parliament failed that test. It is a pity Parliament was not allowed to highlight leaving with a range of deals without having to sign the Withdrawal Agreement, which could unite many voters if not MPs.