

Letter to Wokingham Borough Council

Dear Councillor Jones

I am very willing to represent the Council to government where it has a good case, and think we would serve Wokingham better if the Council consulted me before sending letters to Ministers. Ministers are busy people who do not have continuing conversations with every Council in the country issue by issue. They are my colleagues where I am in regular contact with them over Wokingham issues in the context of national policy.

I see you have recently written to the Health Secretary proposing a pausing of the social care plans. I have been recommending to Ministers that they put more money into social services in Councils like Wokingham where a case is made based on need, and have proposed a rethink of the social care policy. I wish to see the extra money concentrated on providing better services for those who are in need of social care support and wish them to improve the quality and range of service provision.

If you wish to influence government over a local matter it is best to concert efforts with local MPs, to have a well researched case for more money based on need and existing financial provision where money is involved, and to only seek a meeting with a Minister where there is some new issue or new way of thinking the Minister needs to understand through a meeting.

I continue to receive complaints about the money being spent on closing and narrowing roads and the plans for more restrictions of traffic on main roads.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP DPhil FCSI

Remembrance Day 2022

I am grateful to the British legion and all who organised the Remembrance Day services and wreath layings.

On Remembrance Sunday I joined the British legion at Arborfield in the morning. We marched to the War memorial, where I laid a wreath and joined in the service.

In Wokingham during the afternoon I attended in the Town Hall where I and others laid wreaths before marching to St Paul's Church for a service. I read a lesson from the Gospel according to St Matthew.

Both events were well attended. Uniformed services presented their standards.

We did remember them



[My Speech at the Opposition Day Motion on Britain's Industrial Future](#)

Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con): I congratulate the Minister on a lively and informative speech. It was great to have a positive vision for the future from him. He rightly reminded us that many of the exciting new technologies and opportunities available to modern industry and business are being grasped by both the private sector and the Government working together. I congratulate him and his Department on that work. However, I urge him and the Department to greater efforts in the range of more traditional industries that are still very much industries of the future. We have a choice. If we make the right decisions on taxes, regulations, support frameworks and orders, we can produce more such things at home. If we make the wrong decisions, we will end up importing too many of them.

I start with energy. The Minister's Department has a crucial role in organising our energy and the transition that it wants as well as ensuring that we have enough of the traditional energy forms when they are crucial to heating our homes and turning our factories. In this period of transition, we can do more to extract more of our own oil and gas. That is greener than importing it, because, in burning gas that comes down a pipe from the North

sea, far less carbon dioxide is generated than if the gas were extracted somewhere else, transformed into liquid form and transported—at least half the CO₂ is saved that would otherwise be generated. More importantly, that is a safer supply. Even more importantly, if we are still to have high taxes on it, we will collect those taxes. At the moment, the more we import, the more dead money goes out of our country to pay somebody else's taxes, doubly burdening our industry with the extra cost of what are sometimes extreme market prices to secure the supply—when there is not a long-term contract—and extra transport costs that must be put into the equation for effective delivery.

I urge the new ministerial team to take up from where the old team were moving to and understand that there are quite a lot of good proven reserves out there now. Production licences could be granted in a timely way, and we could have more of our own import substitution and more secure supplies for the future. It is possible to work with the industry on existing fields so that maintenance schedules can be kept to a minimum and output can be maximised, particularly over a difficult winter. We all know that if anything goes wrong with the UK and European gas supply over the winter, it will be our industry that gets caught first; industry is very reliant on plentiful gas supplies for much of its important processes.

We must be careful about carbon accounting. I think a lot of us feel that it does not make a lot of sense to say that the heavy gas-using industries and other fossil fuel-using industries in the United Kingdom, such as cement, glass, ceramics, steel and so on, will be penalised because they are generating carbon dioxide in their process, only to substitute imports of those same products that will certainly produce more CO₂, not only because of the long-distance transport, but quite often from the processes as well, as this country has often gone a bit further in more efficient processes than some import substitutes. So that, too, is an area that we need to look at very carefully.

On the car industry, I would like to expand a little on the intervention. Again, a difficult transition is under way and it can only go at the pace that the customers are willing to let it go. At the moment, as we have been hearing, a relatively small minority of the cars built in this country are full electric cars—something to do with price and range, and people getting used to the idea of the electric vehicle—and so during the transitional period we again have a choice: either we produce the diesel and petrol cars that people still want to buy, or somebody else does that and we end up importing them. Again, I do not think that that is a good course. I would not want to be ahead of some of the other leading car producers in the world in definitely ruling out producing vehicles that still sell well, when we have put a lot of investment collectively into developing more fuel-efficient vehicles, which have much less coming out of the tailgate.

My final brief point builds on one that the Minister eloquently made in certain contexts. We can do a lot more, as the Government are trying to do, with sensible purchasing of our own products. Of course, we do not want to buy products that are less good quality or too expensive. There has to be competition within the UK market to reassure the Government they are getting

value, but just as we have always done with things like warships, so we can do for more essential products. We should give the home base the best chance and, if necessary, help people come in as major investors with their factories in order to do so.

Length and number of posts

I am getting too many long posts. I will simply delete some when the site is overburdened.

What can you expect for £1,087,000,000,000 a year?

Since 2018 public expenditure has surged. This year we see government spending nearly £1.1 trillion, up by more than a quarter compared to the 2028-19 level. We need to ask what do we get for all this money? Where does it all go?

Each household this year will pay on average £35,000 in tax to receive on average £38,000 in government activity. The system is very redistributive so the higher earners contribute many times the value of the benefits they receive, and some pay more in total taxes than they get to spend on themselves and their families on everything else.

These huge sums are leading more and more people to question why the level and quality of services is in many cases so disappointing. As an MP running part of the extensive complaints system for government which is an important part of the job I am in receipt of too many justified complaints.

There is the Home Office, unable to process migration claims quickly and fairly to ensure illegals go back whilst those we welcome can soon adjust to their new lives and get a job. There is the failure to stop the people trafficking across the Channel, the failure to prevent protesters blocking main motorways for hours on end and delays in reporting on people's suitability to undertake jobs with children and vulnerable people.

There is the Probate Office, unable to process the long and complex information they require in a timely way. This leads to difficult delays in sorting out a deceased person's estate and can be very upsetting for the families involved.

There are the delays in getting a doctors appointment or treatment at a local hospital. During covid managers of the NHS failed to use all the capacity taxpayers were paying for in private hospitals when these extra beds were meant to be there for non covid cases. They closed down wards in state hospitals for fear of cross infection and did not use the Nightingale covid hospitals provided. .

There are delays at the Passport Office, impeding people from travelling owing to unreasonable delays in renewing passports.

There are delays in the granting a wide range of licences that individuals and businesses need. North Sea oil and gas production has been held up by a shortage of licences and delays in granting them.

The Transport Department grants cash to schemes that reduce the capacity of main roads, making like more difficult to get to work, cutting access for emergency services, and making it more difficult for supply trucks to the shops.

In most of these cases Ministers are keen to see improvements in service levels and have agreed large increases in cash to achieve this under the general 27% increase in 3 years in total spending. It is time for public sector managers to raise quality and efficiency across the board.