

Let's take control of our economy

Leaving without an Agreement looks more likely given the bad response of most MPs to the proposed Withdrawal Agreement and delayed exit. So let's make the most of the money, the freedoms and the opportunities leaving brings. More than half the voters expect things to get better when we leave, and so they can. That requires the government to cheer up and take some action.

1. Relax the current tight money policies a bit – they are slowing our economy too much
2. Set out a new budget with an additional £15bn of spending increases and tax cuts for 2019=20 at least, financed by saving the Withdrawal payments
3. Encourage import substitution with a farming policy based on more home grown food
4. Allow UK vessels to land a much larger share of our fish by taking control of our fishery in 2019
5. Encourage more fish processing industry
6. Novate all existing EU trade deals promptly
7. Intensify negotiations with the USA, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia and the others who are keen to sign Free Trade Deals with us once we have the power to do so
8. Make clear there will be no new checks at our ports on imports from the EU in the short term, and any longer term extra checks will be done away from the border or with sufficient capacity at the port to avoid delays
9. Set a new tariff schedule which lowers our external tariff, removing all tariffs from imported components for manufacturers and from items here the tariff raises little net revenue

It's high time the media allowed a proper debate on how to take advantage of the opportunities of leaving after months of just recycling false scare stories about the costs.

Publish the legal advice

It is normally right for the government to withhold its legal advice from freedom of information requests or Parliamentary questions. Where the government is pursuing a court action to collect more tax or prosecute some criminal or to justify its actions, it should keep its own legal advice to itself to give it the best chance of a successful court outcome. The case of the legal advice on what the consequences of an International Treaty will be before we have signed it is altogether different. Parliament is to decide whether to sign this Treaty or not. Parliament therefore needs to know the legal implications of what we are being asked to sign.

Not that many of us need the Attorney's advice to grasp just how dangerous

legally this Treaty is. It is a Treaty with many long term commitments that we cannot get out of. It is a Treaty which undermines the whole idea of Brexit, by bringing back considerable powers for the EU and for its European Court of Justice. It is a Treaty which prolongs the uncertainty over our possible exit from the EU, damaging business. It is a Treaty which removes most of the bargaining powers the UK currently enjoys when we embark under its provisions to try to negotiate a Future Partnership Agreement. This is not a deal, but a straightjacket. This is not Brexit, but a new servitude.

I am against the whole idea of a Withdrawal Treaty. I voted to come out of the extensive Treaty commitments we currently have under the EU Treaties. I did not vote to enter a new binding Treaty with the EU I cannot get out of. Nor did I vote to end up in an Association Agreement with the EU, which is what they have in mind for the so called Future Partnership. Two Treaties to replace one, and probably at a similar expensive financial price, is not what we Leave voters voted for. We did at least like Article 50, the leave clause, in the current EU Treaties. The two new proposed Treaties have no get out clause!

The Attorney General had a successful career at the criminal law bar and doubtless wrote a detailed and careful opinion. He is also a politician and Minister who will be asked to explain parts of his advice to the Commons under the control of the government's overall message on this Agreement. Parliament wants to see the full advice as some MPs think the most critical sentences about the Agreement are likely to be played down or ignored in any edited highlights for the Commons. It will certainly be a testing session for the Attorney to deliver enough of the shocking truth about this Agreement whilst defending the government that wishes to sign it.

Whatever happens on the publication of some or all of the advice, of one thing readers should be clear. There are quite enough of us MPs in the Commons who have read the draft Agreement and have serious doubts about the wide ranging powers it gives to the EU over us to ensure Parliament with or without the full advice will hold a debate knowing the main legal pitfalls of this unwise Agreement. You do not have to be a lawyer to understand the prose of this Agreement. In so many clauses of this document it places more burdens and restrictions on the UK long after we are meant to have left the EU.

[The mood amongst Wokingham Conservatives](#)

Mrs May is consulting the party and the wider electorate about her Withdrawal Agreement. I have been taking soundings for some time, ever since the Chequers climb downs exploded into the media. On Friday I had the opportunity to sound out 100 Conservatives at a party lunch, on top of the many

conversations, emails and comments I have received in recent weeks.

The opposition to the Withdrawal Agreement is very strong, and there is overwhelming support for the stance I am taking in proposing to vote against the Agreement. Very few party members believe this is the best we could do, and a majority of enthusiastic leavers think leaving without an Agreement will be considerably better. The minority in the local party that regret the decision of the referendum are also against this Withdrawal Agreement, but want a return to negotiations or a delay in the Article 50 process following the vote against the Agreement.

Opinion on Mrs May herself has been more mixed, but recently the majority has moved against her continuing in office. There is a general feeling that she should not continue if the Agreement is voted down, a mood I have voiced in interviews. I would assume she would want to resign if her Agreement is defeated by a substantial margin. Were she not to I expect more MPs would send in letters requiring a vote on her continued leadership. I have urged her not to proceed with the Agreement in the interest of the nation, the party and her own future. I did not vote for Mrs May to be the Leader of the Conservative party and do not support the course she is taking.

How do I represent my constituents on the issue of our exit from the EU?

A whole series of emails are arriving in my email box and doubtless in the email boxes of other MPs drafted to ask How will I represent the constituent, given their view. There are different versions, with some of the drafts used by people who want to leave, some who wish to remain, and some who want a second referendum. Some are individually worded by constituents. There are several different views, but an MP of course only has one vote.

There is, however, common ground in the vast majority of the emails I receive. Whether coming from Remain or Leave supporters, the big majority dislike the Withdrawal Agreement. Both sides sees this as an attempted compromise which suits few. Both see the Agreement turns us into a rule taker and bill payer. It removes our bargaining levers by legally binding us to give the EU what it wants before we have secured what we might like. Most people see this rightly as a very bad deal, with no agreement on what we might get out of an eventual Future Partnership Agreement. Some Remain voters think it would better to stay in the EU to have vote and voice as well as taking their rules and paying the bills. Leave voters say the Withdrawal Agreement is not leaving, as we stay in the single market and customs union and carry on paying large sums to buy more time for talks.

This makes my task that much easier. My judgement has been throughout that this Agreement has to be voted down. In the light of the extensive

correspondence I have received I do not have to worry about whether I am speaking for my constituents in so doing, as a majority tell me they too want it voted down. The question of what we should then do produces a variety of answers amongst constituents. I will return to these issues over the period of the vote and the sequel to the vote. I feel I need to honour my promises to electors in the 2017 General Election when I said I would support carrying out the will of the nation in the referendum.

The resignation of yet another Minister, the eleventh to go on this matter so far, is a reminder of how Mrs May cannot win this vote unless Labour change their minds. Ministers give up interesting jobs reluctantly, in order to vote against the government. That is eleven more votes against the Agreement so far. It is difficult to see how the Prime Minister could carry on if she goes down to defeat on this central policy she has designed.

The sooner we tell the EU we cannot sign the Withdrawal Agreement the better. The sooner we table a proper Free Trade Agreement and see if they want one the better.

Advice to Michael Gove

The Withdrawal Agreement you are recommending denies us the Brexit you campaigned for. The alternative cannot be staying in the EU , which would be against everything you promised and against the Manifesto you and I stood on in the 2017 General Election.